THE COMPLETE
WORKS OF RICHARD SIBBES, D.D.
VOL V.

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OF

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The Christian Work

To the Reader

Good Reader, to discourse the worth or commendations of the author (especially the pens of others having done sacrifice unto him in that kind), I judge it but an impertinence, and make no question, but that if I should exchange thoughts or judgments with thee herein, I should have but mine own again. The book itself, judiciously interpreted, is a volume of his commendation; and those, though from his own mouth, without any touch or tincture of vanity or self-affectation. The best sight of a man is to hear him speak—loquere, ut rideam—the tongue being a voluntary and pleasant rack to the heart, to make it confess its treasure, whether it be good or evil. The diligence and care of those that have interposed for the preserving of what came from him in this way from perishing, have made the Christian world debtors unto them; and great pity it had been, that what he spake in public should have died in secret, and not be made seven times more public than speaking could do. The sparks of such fires as he kindled would have been ill quenched till the world had been further served with the light and heat of them.

It is true, heaps of books is one of the oppressions of the world, and the invention of the press hath been the exaltation of weakness and vanity amongst men, as well as of learning and knowledge. Yet know I no way better to retain the oppressed in this kind, than for men of worth and grown judgments and learning to appear in books also among the multitude. The time was when there were, as the apostle speaketh, 'gods many and lords many in the world,' 1 Cor. viii. 5; when the world was pestered with devils of all sorts, instead of gods; but the only means of discharging the world of them, was the setting forth and preaching of the one true God and Lord Jesus Christ. So the furnishing the world with such books, as are books indeed, that breathe spirit and life, and are strong of heaven, speaking with authority and power to the consciences of men, is the only way to famish the multitude of idle books, and to have them desolate without a reader. It is, questionless, with men in respect of books, as it is in respect of men themselves (and indeed how there should be any difference between men and books I know Dot, the book being but the mind of a man, and the mind of a man being the man himself). Homo homini Deus, homo homini hipus. There are men that are gods to men, and there are men that are wolves to

men; and the more men-wolves there axe in the world, the more men-gods there had need to be; otherwise the darkness would overcome the light, and make the earth as the shadow of death. So there are books that are laden with divine and true treasure; that will recompense the reader, his labour and pains sevenfold into his bosom; that will open his mouth and enlarge his heart to bless God, that hath given gifts unto men. Again, there are books also that will deal cruelly and deceitfully with men, consuming their precious time and opportunities; taking their money for that which is not bread. Now the more dreamers of dreams there are, there had need be the more that see visions. The weak, hungry, loose, and empty discourses the world is overlaid and encumbered withal, the more need it hath, by way of a counter recompense, of a full provision of solid and masculine writings, that may make men men, and not always children in understanding.

But I must remember that prefacing authors with long epistles is no employment of any sovereign necessity. Therefore I will no longer separate between thee and that which I desire to recommend unto thee more than anything of mine own. The blessing of Him that giveth the increase be upon the labour of him that planted and watered much in the courts of the house of his God; that though he be dead, he may yet speak to the edification of thine and of many souls.

Thine with a single heart and multiplied affections in the Lord,

I. G.

The Christian Work

Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling.—Phil. II. 12.

The first word, 'wherefore,' carries our minds back to things formerly delivered. Before, the apostle had taught them out of the example of Christ that they should not mind their own things: 'He went about doing good,' and humbled himself. Now when God is humble, how shall any man be proud? Having therefore such an example as Christ, without all exception, as he hath done do you, be obedient, &c. In the words consider,

First, The duty, 'work.'

Secondly, Directions to the right manner of performing this duty. Thirdly, The motives to this duty.

The manner of performance of this work: First, it must be in sincerity; secondly, in obedience; thirdly, it must be earnestly and thoroughly; fourthly, it must be constant; fifthly, it must be ever tending to assure to us our salvation; sixthly, it must be in fear, or holy jealousy. The motives to this duty: First, Christ, he was obedient, follow him; secondly, 'my beloved,' that is, as you show or deserve my care of you and diligence to do you good, obey; thirdly, you have done it heretofore: it is no new thing I require; it is not impossible; you have done it already; fourthly, if you do, it shall not be in vain. It tends to the assurance of salvation here, and to the accomplishment thereof hereafter, therefore 'work.'

1. 'Work.' The estate of a Christian is a working estate, not idle. Christianity is not a verbal profession, nor speculative. 'If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them,' saith Christ, John xiii. 17. Observe, he placeth the word 'blessed' in the midst, to unite those two which the world so ordinarily divides. I mean knowledge and practice. If words would go for excellent payment, many there are that would be admirable Christians; but we must know that a Christian's estate is accomplished by works; and that not only outwardly but inwardly, and by all manner of works: works of preparation; works of propriety; and these inward, or outward and all, is in our general or particular calling.

Works of preparation are those that prepare men to believe; as hearing, reading, meditating; for these make not a Christian, but by these a Christian is prepared to be wrought on by God's Spirit. In these a Christian must be still working, and from these he ought to proceed to works of propriety: as belief in God, hope more strongly; love more ardently; pray fervently; do works of charity cheerfully—the three first duties being inward, the two last outward. And these concern our general callings as we are Christians, and then in our particular callings, to love, to reverence one another; seek the good of others, and to be bountiful to others. A Christian he must work in all these.

Use. The use of all this is, to cause in us a right conceit of religion. Many are good talkers, use fair words, are excellent in discourse; and these pass for current Christians. Nay, many there are that come not to this degree of speaking well. No; cannot endure to hear others speak well, but endeavour to turn their speech to other matters. Yet those go for good Christians, and

think they shall be saved as well as the best, when, alas! they never came one step to salvation. Thus for the work. Now,

2. To the manner. He said before, 'As you have heretofore obeyed, even so work now,' showing the first thing:

(1.) That all our works must be done in obedience. Whatsoever we do, it must be done in obedience to God. Many are damned for misdoing their good works, because they did them not in obedience to God. To this end it is expedient,

First, That we should know what God's will is: Rom. xii. 2, 'That you may prove what is that good, that acceptable and perfect will of God,' saith the apostle; and in the Ephesians v. 10, 'Proving what is acceptable to the Lord.' And therefore an ignorant man is a rebellious man. When he knows not God's will, how can he do his will?

Secondly, This obedience must be to all God's laws, for partial obedience is no obedience. For he is a lord, and not a servant, that will cull and pick out his obedience. 'Then shall I not be confounded,' saith David, 'when I have respect to all thy commandments,' Ps. cxix. 6. It is the devil's sophistry to put men in heart with the consideration of some few good duties that they have done; when, alas! if a fowl or bird be catched by one wing or leg, it is as sure as if a man had her whole body in his hand. The devil hath a man as sure in one sin unrepented as in many; and therefore the apostle limits not this obedience, but lays it down indefinitely.

(2.) The second thing in the manner is, that this working must be in sincerity. 'Whether I am present to see you or not, obey God: he sees you.' A Christian must do all things sincerely, as in the presence of God. The Pharisees did many good works, but it was to be seen of men. Therefore Christ saith, 'they have their reward already,' Mat. vi. 2. I will pay them no wages; they did it not to please me. Many are this way faulty. They do nothing but for applause: pray in public for fashion sake, never in private; whereas Christ saith, 'Enter into thy chamber, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret,' Mat. vi. 6. Many can talk well and discourse well; but for inward graces they never look nor regard: and it is this that upholds many Christians. They see religion is respected of those of whom they desire to be had in some esteem, but God sees thy hypocrisy, and thou hast thy reward.

Joash was a good king so long as Jehoiada lived. Many seem to be good, so long as those in authority are good; but if they die once, all good goes away with them. But a good Christian is ever good; and in all places, occasions, companies, he will be like himself. Thus much of the second thing in the manner. Now for the third.

(3.) He says, 'Work out.' The word signifies, with toil to labour. So in the 6th of St John's gospel, 'Labour not for the meat that perisheth.' It is a good saying, no perfunctory thing can please God. To this end as Seneca says, of performing of duties natural; so in religious duties there is required, first, a right judgment of the nature of the things we do; secondly, an affection to do it; and thirdly, that affection must be proportionable to the worth of the things we do, else what do we; yea, as good not do it at all. And therefore the Scripture to every part of God's worship adds words of intention: 'Take heed how you hear,' Mark iv. 24; 'so run,' 1 Cor. ix. 24; 'pray fervently in spirit,' Rom. xii. 11; 'give cheerfully,' 2 Cor. ix. 7; 'repent throughly,' Acts xvii. 30. So that our affection must be proportionable to the thing we are about, serious in good. A thorough serious prayer is worth a thousand perfunctory; and one doctrine well digested and applied, worth all the rest, be they never so many, if they be done slightly; and the rather are we to look to this duty, for that the devil is busy in such duties to withdraw thy mind, and to steal away the seed sown. The poor husbandman lost three parts of his seed. Many feel such flashes of comfort while they hear the word, as they could wish they might be dissolved at that present; but being gone, pleasures, profits, and such like, take away and choke the seed sown. Many there are that will play or recreate themselves with all their might; but when they come to pray, instead of all their sinful life, think the saying of 'Lord, have mercy upon me,' or 'I am a sinner,' or such like, make even all accounts between God and their consciences. Those that are and will be Christians indeed, they see what they ought to do, and how they are to perform duties. They shall find themselves to be no losers, but gainers at the end; for by performing of things in this manner they shall strengthen the assurance of their salvation to themselves more and more. For God punisheth such slighting of duties justly, with slight assurance, and with many doubtings of salvation and of their secure estate. Well, the next thing to be considered in the manner of working is;—

(4.) Fourthly, It must be constant, not like the morning dew, or Lot's wife that looked back. For religion is a living and trade. It must be maintained with continuance in labour, and working in a constant course of

goodness 'all the days of our life,' saith Zachariah's song, Luke i. 75. 'Father,' saith Christ, 'I have finished the work thou gavest me,' John xvii. 4. He never left till all was finished. 'It is finished,' saith Christ on the cross, John xix. 30; and the apostle, 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course,' 2 Tim. iv. 7, and then he speaks of 'a crown of righteousness,' 2 Tim. iv. 8. The want of this makes many die in extreme grief. They wish they had done such and such things, when it is too late. To this end we must come with a resolution not to be scared from performance of duties, and therefore to furnish ourselves with patience. For we must meet with many discouragements from without and within. Brethren, saith the apostle, 'you have need of patience,' Heb. x. 36. For 'you shall reap if you faint not,' Gal. vi. 9. And then consider that all promises of a crown are made to such as are sincere. 'To him that over-cometh,' saith John, 'I will give,' &c., Rev. iii. 21. 'He that endures to the end shall be saved,' saith Christ, Mat. x. 22. Many decay in their first love, and God justly suffers them to fall into many gross sins, and he vomits up such as are grown cold.

(5.) The fifth thing in the manner is, that it must tend to salvation. We must go on in a constant course of goodness till we come, and that we may come, to the end of our faith. Let this end, viz., salvation, make you work in the duties of grace. For salvation is begun here; and the state of grace here is called salvation, even as well as the state hereafter.

The doctrine is, that all which we do here ought, to tend to the assurance of salvation.

We say in nature that all conclusions are to be reduced to their principles. So is Christianity. All is to be referred to our salvation as to a main principle; those things that tend directly to salvation to be done in the first place, and most especially. And then other works, they must tend the same way, for all works that are good, do either express holiness, or increase it in us; and thereby they increase our own salvation, as in our ordinary callings, if we perform them in obedience to God constantly, it expresses the gifts and graces of God's Spirit in us. Do we sanctify them by prayer? Do we refer all the good to the good of those amongst whom we live, especially to the good of the faithful? This strengthens the assurance of our salvation, and tells us that God's Spirit is in us. The poorest servant in his drudgery, he serves God if he does it as in the presence of God, Col. iii. 24. The poor woman, in bearing and bringing up of children, shall be saved; that is, notwithstanding that sentence, 'that in sorrow and pains she should conceive,' yet her

salvation is no whit hindered thereby, but rather furthered. So that it is grace that elevates earthly works, and makes them heavenly.

But take this caution withal, that we more highly esteem our Christian calling than our ordinary vocations and duties; and to that end we ought to redeem some time from our ordinary callings to meditate, and to examine ourselves, and to pray. And this to be done daily, for Christ saith, 'Labour not for the meat that perisheth,' in comparison of that meat which lasteth for ever. Especially on that day which God hath chosen to his own use, I mean the 'Lord's day.' Mingle not thine own callings with holy duties on such days, unless it be in case of mercy, and that also of great necessity. God made this day for his own glory, and for our good, knowing how earthly-minded else we would be, unless some time were allotted wholly to vindicate our minds from these earthly things. Take heed, therefore, how we be bold, on this day especially.

'Your own.' Here is contained another direction in this Christian work. In our works and doings we must begin with ourselves, contrary to the custom of many, who are in their own duties negligent, but lord-like in overseeing of other men's works. We are to know, true zeal and practice begins at home.

'Work out your own.' Whatsoever others do, look you to yourselves. So did Joshua: 'Let the people do what they will, I and my house will serve the Lord,' Josh. xxiv. 15. So that a Christian ought to resolve with himself concerning his own carriage; he that is wise is wise for himself. Better it is that you alone should work out your own salvation, than go to hell with others for company.

'Your own.' Every one hath a cup that he in particular must taste of, and every one a particular work to do. Though all go one way that are saved, yet some go by more sufferings than others. Some hath harder tasks set them to perform than others. Some must live in some callings, and therein 'work out their own salvation,' others in others. Eph. ii. 10, 'Every one is created to good works which God prepares for him.'

For the sixth direction, contained in 'fear,' &c., the time is too short to speak of; and therefore I come,

3. To the motives.

(1.) The first is taken from the example of Christ, comprehended in the word 'Wherefore.' Christ, he did as he would have us to do; he did all in obedience to God; he came to do his will; he was sincere, cared not for the world. What he did, he did thoroughly; he healed all; did all good; did all things well; and he finished his course. Now we must imitate Christ in all these; never give over till we may say with comfort at our deaths, 'All is finished.' This must needs move us, if we consider what an honour it is for us to be like him and to follow him; and then it will be gainful to us. He got honour by it—was exalted; so shall we therefore be like him. And then he is a pattern without all exception. We cannot offend so long as we propound him for our example. It is a foolish opinion therefore that men may be too religions. Can any go beyond Christ, nay, or come near him?

(2.) The second motive is taken from the apostle's love, 'my beloved.' Shew that you will answer my care and love to you. Whence observe,

That it ought to be a motive to Christians to take good courses, that they may thereby comfort those that have care of their good. The apostle, Heb. xiii. 17, bids the Hebrews, 'that they obey them that are their guides.' Why? 'That they may give account with joy, and not with grief, for it is unprofitable for them.' But to leave this personal manner of speech. Christians ought to seek good courses, to give content to the souls of those Christians with whom they live; for they make it a matter of joy to see one grow in religious behaviour, and contrarily are grieved when they see it decay in any.

(3.) The third motive is drawn from the possibility of it; as if he should have said, You have already begun; you know what it is I require; it is no new thing, nor is it impossible; do but work out that which you have begun. He that hath set one step into religion is half way. It was a great commendation in the church of Thyatira, that their last works were more than the first, Rev. ii. 19. We should labour to grow on still, from one degree to another, even as the sun 'shines more and more to the perfect day,' Prov. iv. 18; and therefore it is a Christian course to compare ourselves with ourselves daily, and if we find a decay in ourselves, rest not contented till thou findest thyself amended. We pity men when they decay in outward things; but of all decays, the decay of goodness is the most lamentable; and therefore as you have obeyed, so obey still.

'Now much more in my absence.' These words I take not to be so meant, as if the apostle had spoken of what they already had done, but rather what he would have them to do, as if he should have said, 'I know now that I

am absent, you shall want no allurements nor temptations to draw you away; and I know now I am gone grievous wolves shall enter in, not sparing the flock,' as it is in Acts xx. 29, 'therefore now be much more careful, and watch.' Hence therefore observe, the want of means that formerly men had is no sufficient plea to excuse decay in grace in any man. 'Redeem the time.' Why? Not because goodness increases amongst all sorts, but 'because the days are evil,' Eph. v. 16. The world would have reasoned clean contrary. Because the days are evil, be thou also evil, follow the fashion. Religion teaches us to reason otherwise. Because you have not the helps you formerly enjoyed, double your diligence; God will graciously supply you. If you be not wanting to yourselves, he will never depart from you though I am gone. He was a sanctuary to the Jews in Babylon when they wanted the sanctuary; and yet then were they in greatest glory. And it is remarkable, men have been still most glorious for religion in want of outward means.

(4.) The fourth motive is laid down in the end. It is to our salvation; which as it carries the form of a direction, so as it is an end it hath a power to move us to it. Considering we are not yet perfect, go on till you come to perfection. It is an encouragement to us to begin, and when we have begun, it doth encourage us to go on forward. See this in Titus ii. 11: 'The grace of God teacheth us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly,' &c., and encourageth us on, looking for the glorious appearing of Christ. We are sons; shall we be rebellious? We look for salvation; shall we not then work it out? Yes. Moses chose rather to suffer afflictions with the children of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. Why? 'He had respect to the recompense of reward,' Heb. xi. 26. We have an evidence here [that] we shall be saved hereafter; and this makes us strive to ascertain it more and more to us. And indeed, he that carries his salvation in his eye, needs no better encouragement. What made them, in Heb. xi. 38, to wander about and to forsake all? They looked for another city, whose builder was God. Thus it is in ordinary affairs. What seasons war but the hope of peace? the troubles and the tempests on the sea, but the hope of the haven? the labour and cost in sowing, but the expectation of harvest? Shall not we much more endure a little labour here, for endless happiness assured to us hereafter? This is much forgotten. What makes persons so dull in good duties? They either know not, or forget this reward; for he that sets his mind on it cannot be cold or dull. But here's the pity! Men labour, sweat, take pains and travail, spare no cost; and all this to go to hell, to heap up wrath against the day of wrath. The devil has more servants in his barren and fruitless service than God gets with all

his promises and good things that he liberally gives. Besides, I add one or two directions more.

First, Labour to get a platform of wholesome words. If we would work, we must have an idea of the thing we work in our head. We must labour to get a form of practice and doctrine out of the word of God, and to carry it still about with us.

Then cast thyself into that mould thou hast thus framed, Rom. vi. 17. Be moulded in that form of doctrine; believe what he will have us to believe; love that which he will have us to love. And having this frame in thy mind, in what estate soever thou art, whether single or married, governing or governed, thou shalt have still with thee a platform of duties, fitting for the carriage of thyself; and there will be no duty thou hearest taught but thou wilt be able to draw it to thine own practice. The want of this makes most men unfruitful, heaping up thereby damnation unto themselves.

Lastly, Observe the good motions of God's Spirit in thee; further them to the most advantage; turn them to present practice; lose nor delay them not; for the devil will steal thee away from them.

Now when we come to another part of the manner of a Christian's work, it must be done 'in fear and trembling,' Not to stand on the divers kinds of fear; in general, it is an affection planted by God in our natures, whereby we, foreseeing dangers which may hinder our being or well-being, are afraid of them. This is incident to our natures, and it was also in Christ. And were it not for this, men would be prodigal of their lives, and would rush into desperate dangers. There is a carnal fear, as when we fear the creatures of whom we are lords; and this proceeds from a carnal distrust in God. But in this place is meant a spiritual fear, which may be branched into three divers kinds. First, a fear of reverence, which is a fear mixed with love; when we fear one or stand in awe of him for his greatness, yet love him for his goodness to us; and thus a Christian fears God. Secondly, hence proceeds the second kind of fear, which is a fear of watchfulness; and thirdly, a fear of jealousy, lest we should offend against God; and this arises from the consideration of our weakness and the falseness of our hearts. So that he hero saying, 'Work out your salvation with fear,' bids them that they proceed on in their course with reverence, watchfulness, and jealousy. As for the word 'trembling,' it is none other but an effect or symptom of the passion of fear, arising from excess of fear in regard of fearful objects. For then the spirits retiring in to comfort the heart, leave the outward parts destitute, so as

they tremble. And on the contrary, in objects of delight and comfort, they come outward, to the outmost parts as it were, to meet with such pleasing objects as are presented to the sense. It being thus in nature, it is also in us spiritually; for we beholding the majesty and power of God, and considering our own baseness and infirmities, are drawn to a kind of fear, which, if it be some-what more than ordinary, it produces a spiritual trembling. Having thus opened the words, we will come to some doctrine; and first, in general observe,

Duct. God requires all duties that are done to him to be done with affection. The careless Christian thinks the deed done to be sufficient to please God. No; verily he requires work, but it must be done with affection. The affection must first he obedient, and then the outward man. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, and strength, and thy neighbour as thyself,' Lev. xix. 18. 'My son, give me thy heart,' saith Solomon, Prov. xxiii. 26. I might infer this doctrine to shew how many are faulty this way, but I come to this particular affection of fear. All things that are done must he done in the fear of God; and this must we do before our calling and after our calling: before our calling to work ourselves into our salvation, and in our calling to work out our own salvation. Before our conversion fear is necessary for us. God uses it to bring us to Christ. Legal fear is always or most commonly before evangelical. It is as the needle that draws faith after it as the thread. Such is God's goodness to us, that lest we should fall into hell ere we are aware, he hath left us objects of terror and threatening judgments, to keep us from hell; and all to provoke fear in us that we may be saved. There is a spirit of bondage before the spirit of adoption: Rom. viii. 15, 'Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption,' implying that once they had received the spirit of bondage. For verily, first men see their miserable estate by nature, and this convincing their consciences, comes to stir up fear in them, which drives them to the rock of salvation, Christ Jesus. I speak this the rather, for that it is evident many never yet came to this spirit of fear. They live in a course of known gross sins, between whom and damnation is but a step. They know they are abominable sinners, yet fear not hell. How can men think well of such? They never yet came to the spirit of bondage to fear. Tell them of hell, they tush at it scornfully, being herein more brutish than an ass. Lay burdens on him, he will bear them patiently; but press him never so much to go into the fire, you cannot make him come near to it; whereas wicked men, they cannot be kept from running into hell with all violence. They are worse than the devil, James ii. 19. They neither tremble

nor believe, but live contemptuously and presumptuously in their courses. Well, let such look to it. What they do now they shall do it hereafter, when there will be no comfort left for them, though they seek it with tears.

Thus have I shown that before conversion fear is necessary. I add, moreover, that men after conversion, believers, they ought to have fear of reverence; wherein we will speak somewhat of fear in general; then of the manner of it; and lastly, of the motives thereto. For the fear that here is spoken of observe that,

First, It must be general at all times, in all actions. Job said, 'I feared all my works,' Job iii. 25, and indeed in this estate we must continually fear till we be in heaven. And as it belongs to all works and times, so to all Christians, nay, and to them most of all, for that the devil is set against you. And your actions, if they be ill, are the most scandalous; and by them is God most of all dishonoured. And therefore the more grace a man hath he will fear the more. Even as a rich man, the more riches he hath the more care he taketh, lest they should be stolen from him.

Secondly, This fear must be serious. It must work a kind of trembling, by reason of the dangers that we meet withal, which are like to be many and great.

Thirdly, This fear must be total, in the whole man. For that the image of God is in the body, even as in the soul, and as in other affections a proud man is known by his proud eye and careless carriage, even so the countenance will be way whether the heart be humble, loving, careful, and the like. It is an idle speech that many have, they wall say their heart is good. Let such know, where grace is, it works a change, and that thoroughly in body and soul. David therefore joins prostration with calling on the Lord: Ps. xcv. 6, 'Let us fall down;' and in other places, casting up of the eye, and extending of the hands.

Means to this duty; observe,

[1.] First, We must consider God's love to us. It is the first and main thing in reverence. This will breed fearfulness in us; for the more assured we are, the more fearful will we be of offending.

[2.] Secondly, Set before your eyes the other attributes of God, as his justice. What though it be true, he revenges not the sin of his children, so as

it were better for him that he had not offended, for he will not suffer sin to dwell in his children.

[3.] Thirdly, Add the examples of those that have felt his justice, especially of the best servants of God. Moses, for a few words, never entered the land of promise. David, for a proud conceit in numbering the people, lost seventy thousand men of the pestilence. The Corinthians, for unworthy receiving of the Lord's supper, many of them died. And if it be thus with his dearest children, have not we cause to fear? Yes, assuredly. God will be honoured in all those that come near him.

Obj. It will be said that there are no examples of late of God's justice in this kind, as to strike with sudden death.

Ans. I answer, true. But God strikes with hardness of heart, which is far more worse. And God doth strike men with temporal judgments, although they think not of it, even for those sins they think not of. And if it were not thus, let such men know there is a judgment to come, and that God is the same God now that he was ever, a powerful, just, and all seeing God. And it will make them, if they belong to God, to set themselves in the presence of God even in their most secret closets. This is, notwithstanding, forgotten everywhere. And many sins are committed which sinners would be loath that a child should see, yet are they not afraid of God, that sees them and sets them down in a book. Well then, a Christian after conversion ought to fear with a fear of reverence.

It follows, in the second and third place, a Christian must have a fear of jealousy and watchfulness, and thus 'work out his salvation.' For by this means we keep ourselves from displeasing God, it being a carefulness wrought in us by the Spirit of God, causing us to take heed how we offend God in any thing. For a Christian, knowing the falseness of his own heart, is jealous thereof, there being a spiritual marriage between Christ and us, lest it should offend. And this is the ground of this spirit of jealousy, and therefore none deceives another, but he also deceives himself; for his corrupt heart is as a traitor in his own bosom. Another ground is Satan, that ever joins with our corruptions; for so long as there is a false heart there will be a fawning devil. Now this should make us to examine ourselves, and to fear our hearts, and to 'try our thoughts,' Ps. cxxxix. 23, before they come out into word or action. For sin is like Elijah his cloud, at the first small, but afterward covers the whole heaven. See it in David. One eye-glance! What a world of sins followed. And therefore we must take heed of beginnings. And then look

that thou drawest not the guilt of other men's sins on thyself. Take heed of 'scandal.'f See how Jeroboam is branded; ever mention being made of him, 'Jeroboam that made Israel to sin,' 1 Kings xiv. 16. Then again, labour to set thy corruptions in thine eye continually, and to stir up our hearts to hate them. For they trouble us more than the devil, although most men study to gratify their enemy, and how to satisfy the lusts of the flesh. And who are their enemies but such as tell them and bid them beware of their enemies? Now to the reason.

Verse 13

For it is God that worketh in you to will and to do according to his good pleasure.

It is as much as if he should say, because God works, therefore work you, lest he should take both the power of working from you and also the act. For he gives both 'to will and to do,' not only the power to will and to do, but the very act of willing and doing; and this he doth out of his free grace and pleasure. In the opening of which words, observe with me these things. First, that a Christian hath a power in him to will and to do good; secondly, that God works this in him; thirdly, this work is a powerful work; fourthly, it is an inward work; fifthly, this work is entire; sixthly, observe how this work is a ground of fear and trembling.

1. For the first, that a Christian hath a will and power to do good, this is necessary. For in all estates, whether a man be good or bad, his will is the chief; and therefore, in conversion of any one, the will and judgment is first wrought upon and converted. And therefore this may be noted to show us our estates, whether we he good or not. If we be good, we will that which is good, and choose the better part; for those that choose the worst ever are opposite to the best. Their estate is naught, let them boast what they will. The Christian therefore ever hath a will to do, though many times he doth not what he will, being sometimes (for secret causes best known to God) kept by him from performing their wills. David would have built a temple, and Abraham would have sacrificed Isaac. Other times hindered by corruptions. The will, or to will, saith Paul, is present, but not the deed, Rom. vii. 18; and Christ saith, 'The spirit is ready, but the flesh is weak,' Mat. xxvi. 41. If we do therefore any good, the deed is God's. If we will it, the will is God's. And then we please God when we will that which God wills, and not when we do that which God wills not.

2. Secondly, This power that we have, we have it not from ourselves, but God gives it to us. Some things are done for us which were neither wrought by us nor in us; and thus Christ's death was wrought. Some things wrought in us, not by us, as our first work of conversion. Other things are wrought both in us and by us, and these are all good works after conversion. This will whereof we speak is wrought in us by God, as we be his temples, and the deed is wrought by us as instruments of God's working in us. Thought is not so much as will, it being but a way to it. Yet can we not think a good thought without the Spirit of God working in us. For we have no life at all, but are 'dead in sins and trespasses,' much less can we have any motion to that which is good for ourselves.

Quest. But it will be demanded, how can the work be done by God, and yet we work the same work?

Ans. I answer, in every work that is done, there is God's power and man's joined together. But how? So far as we think or will, it is from us, but to think or will that which is good, that is from God. We work not as horses draw together and equally. We are not co-ordinate, but subordinate. We work as understanding creatures. But God guides our understanding to this or that as he pleases. We hear, but God he bores the ear first. Lydia believed, but God opened her heart, and framed it to believe, Acts xvi. 14. We think, but God gives us to think well.

3. In the next place we are to shew, that this work of God in us is a powerful work. It determines our will. God deals not per omnipotentiam to constrain our wills to this or that which is contrary to the will, but he gives us to will that which he wills. Now when God intends that man shall do anything, he gives him a will to do it; and in this respect his work is powerful in us. Magnify therefore this power, that preserves us in the midst of temptation, even as it preserved the three children in the fire from burning, Dan. iii. 27; that makes earth to be in heaven; and labour to find experience of this power in thee, the want of the sense whereof brings much want of inward comfort of God's Spirit.

4. In the next place, note that this work is inward within us, not without us. He uses exhortations, monitions, allurements, but he puts power to these to prevail: Fortiter pro te, suaviter pro me, Domino, saith the Father. For God may work fortiter, strongly, and yet liberty be preserved too, as it is evident in the angels. For freedom consists not in doing this or that ad libitum as we say; but then are we free and at liberty, when we do anything

out of a sound judgment. The angels see good reason why they should depend on God, and man seeing that happiness only lies in the enjoyment of the favour of God, do voluntarily depend on him. God therefore enters into the heart, changes the stony heart into a heart of flesh, takes away all rebellious dispositions of our heart, and makes them pliable to his will.

5. Come we in the next place to consider the perfection and entireness of this work. God, he is 'Alpha and Omega, the author and finisher of our faith,' Heb. xii. 2, and the beginning and perfection of every good thing is from him. Omne bonum, a summo Bono; and therefore he is the cause of the not doing of that which is not done; he is causa quiescendo, as well as agendo. For why is a thing not, but because he gives it not a being? So that all the ill which we will not, is of him. We should therefore be as thankful to him for any sin he keeps us from, as for any good that he causes us to perform; for there is not any sin that another hath committed, but if God had pleased I might have committed. This is an excellent point to teach us humility. Note therefore hence,

Doct. That perseverance is from God. He gives to will and to do. 'He that hath begun will finish the good work,' saith the apostle in the first of this epistle, and the sixth verse. It is not in our strength to hold out; for after we are once changed, God gives grace sufficient to restrain us and to hold us up. God deals not with us as the husbandman does, sows the ground and leaves it. No. God watches and weeds us, and continues his labour upon us, till he brings us to the end of his promise. If he uphold us not, we are ready to return to our first principles again.

Use. This enforces a particular and resolute dependence on God, in full assurance that what he hath promised, he will perform. He will put his fear into our hearts, so as we shall not depart from him.

Doct. And this is done freely of his own good pleasure; and thus he doth all things. Not of necessity; he is not forced to this or that, either by any foreign power, or internal; he is not bound to this or that, as fire burns necessarily: as the school saith, necessitate natures. Indeed, he is good necessarily, for it is his nature; but in his acts he is free from all manner of compulsion, for none can compel him, neither is he drawn to this or that by any merit in us, for we merit nothing but destruction. It was his own will that he made any creature at all; that he ranked them into angels and men; that he passed by the angels, and redeemed man; to give means of salvation to some and not to others; to make the means effectual to some and not to others;

that some are called sooner, some later; some have more strength, some less; to some more comfort, some less; and to those that have more, to give more at some time and less at other times, as is his free will. What meritorious disposition can there be in a dead person, as the apostle saith we are? Oh, but it will be objected that one grace deserves another; and God giving us, for example, the Spirit of prayer, we deserve the thing we prayed for. I answer, nothing less. God indeed uses this order, but hereby do we not deserve anything. God says, 'Ask, and it shall be given,' Mat. vii. 7. But how(? Not by desert in praying; but he hath established this order, that men shall ask before we have.

Uses. (1.) Hence have we a ground of thankfulness to God.

(2.) Secondly, take not offence though thou seest thou hast less grace than others have. All are not strong; some are babes; and it is God's will it should be so, even as there are divers degrees in ages. If thou beest in any esteem with Christ, thank God for that thou art. I speak the rather, being many are vexed because they are not so holy and pure as such are to whom God hath given a large portion of the grace of his Spirit. No. God gives according to his good pleasure.

(3.) Despair not therefore. If thou wantest grace, go to God for more. He gives according to his own good pleasure. Many complain they are sinners, dead, dull, indisposed. Go to God. He gives sharpness of wit to the dull, but according to his good pleasure. More hurt and hindrance comes ordinarily from the abundance of God's gifts of this sort than good. For it may he God sees thou wilt be hereby lifted up and extolled, as Paul was; and therefore for thy good he withholds it from thee. Yet not thyself therefore for the want of that which, if thou hadst it, would turn to thine own bane.

Take heed how thou insultest over others, that as yet are not wrought upon. It may be their hour is not yet come; and therefore use thou all means to do good to Such as stand in need. God appoints times and seasons, when and what means he will bless. Thou mayest be the instrument to convert thy brother.

And above all take heed of self-conceit. God gives thee all, and if it be not of or from thyself, why shouldst thou boast, or be lifted up? Be therefore content, and repose thyself on God. What though perchance thou wantest outward means and worldly riches? Pass not for them. Thank God that he hath wrought a spiritual change in thee. He hath given thee the main. I am

sure thou wouldst not change thy estate for all the riches in the world, nor pomp and pride thereof. And if thou findest a decay of the sense of God's love and favour towards thee, seek it of him, but with submission. What if thou findest an ebb of goodness in thee? and that it is not with thee now as formerly it hath been, that thou art more easily overcome with temptation, and that thou canst not wrestle as once thou couldst against thy corruptions? Know, God he gives his power to work and fight, as his pleasure is. God by suffering thee thus to be foiled, tells thee that the work is not thine own, but his, and that he gives and bestows increase as he pleases. Take notice therefore of these things. Thus far have we spoken of the words simply considered.

Now, let us come to them, as they have relation one to another, and particularly of the force of the reason. 'God gives the will and deed, according to his own good pleasure:' therefore fear, and take heed how thou neglectest the means. Fear exaltation of spirit, and trust not on outward means. David, that holy man, he had a touch of this: Ps. xxx. 6, 'I said in my prosperity, I shall not be moved.' Fear how thou vowest anything in thine own strength in time to come; for in that St James gives a good instruction, 'You ought to say, If the Lord will,' iv. lo. Submit thyself to him, for he gives the power 'to will and to do, according to his own good pleasure.'

Doct. It ought therefore [to] he an encouragement to a Christian to work, when he considers that God works the trill and the deed, according to his good pleasure. That God is willing to give 'the will and the deed' in obedience to his ordinance, will make a Christian confident in every good work; and therefore, to that end, he must learn to know God's will, as favourites in court they learn to know what will please the prince, and accordingly they fashion their behaviour. And when we know his will, then come boldly to him for to desire strength in doing his will. For he hath made us gracious promises, 'to take away our stony hearts, and to give us hearts of flesh,' Ezek. xi. 19, and 'to lay no more on us than we are able to bear,' 1 Cor. x. 13. Let us repair to him for the accomplishment of these promises and others. Take heed how we distrust his promises. It made the Israelites travel forty years, till all the generation of them perished, and entered not into that good land. God hath promised us, not an earthly inheritance, but an heavenly, and victory over our sins. Let us then set on this conquest boldly and with courage, for God hath made himself our debtor by his promise, and he is faithful that hath promised: where, by the way, observe the difference between our estate in the 'first,' from this present estate of ours in the

'second Adam.' The first Adam had no such promise to continue in that estate of integrity. But we have. We are assured. We are united to Christ more surely than he was to his estate in paradise. Magnify, therefore, this condition of thine. And in the fourth place, labour to know aright the nature of the covenant of grace; for it is a part of his covenant with us, that what he enjoins us he will enable us to perform.

'If we believe, we shall be saved,' saith the covenant. Well, God, he gives us to believe, he bids us to repent, he gives us power to repent. The commandments which are given us concerning faith and repentance, and the like graces here, they' shew the order that God uses in saving man.

'To you,' saith Christ, 'it is given to know and believe,' Mat. xiii. 11. This ought, therefore, to comfort us, seeing this covenant of grace is, not only a covenant which requires duties of our parts, but also it is a testament wherein these graces are given us in way of legacies. If we knew the privileges that in this covenant do belong unto us, it should surely make us bold. God promises the will and deed, that we may apply these things unto ourselves; which if we do, we may go about our works with resolution, that they shall be prosperous to us: our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord. In reverence, therefore, use all means. Trust not on the means, but use them in reverence and in fear; and hereby thou shalt avoid many corrections, which otherwise thy sins will draw on thee, For the difference in the performance of duties makes the difference of Christians. Some are more careless in their performances than others. Is it not just with God to punish such, by letting them fall into many gross sins? See this in David and Peter. They trusted to themselves, and called not on God for his gracious direction in temptation. Mark their sins. Observe what comfort they lost. And surety those that are watchful Christians are ever careful of their rules; and God to such gives what he requires of them. He sends us not to seek straw ourselves as Pharaoh, Exod. v. 7; but he provides it to us.

Obj. But it will be objected that, by this doctrine of trusting and relying on God, men will grow idle. God will work his will in us though we sleep, say they.

Ans. But to answer them. First, such men as these will be ashamed to argue thus in outward and worldly businesses. For example, in husbandry, God hath promised every good thing to us; therefore, let me sit still: the corn will grow, though I sow not nor till the ground. Would not such an one be thought mad, that should reason thus? Because we know that as God hath

appointed every end, so he hath ordained order and means, whereby such things shall be effected. Thus is it in grace. He gives 'the will and the deed,' but he prescribes prayer and other ordinances, as the means attaining to this will, for we have it not of ourselves. And therefore he bids us hear, read and meditate, watch, and such like, and depend on God for a blessing in the use of the means he appoints us. Do that which is required of you. God will do that [that] belongs to him. He will give 'the will and deed.' Christ he knew that the Father loved him and would honour him, but yet he prays, 'Father, glorify thy Son,' John xvii. 1. So in sickness, to whom God purposes and decrees health, he shall do well. But how? Without means? No. They must use advice of physicians, as one of God's ordinances. Thus is it with our souls. We are all naturally sick and dead. God hath predestinated some to live. But how? 'Faith comes by hearing,' Rom. x. 17. He must be conversant still in the use of means appointed to that end. But the comfortless and weak soul will say, 'Alas! I use means, yet feel I no grace; I am not the better.' To such I say, 'It may be thou art not so instant and urgent in the use of the means as thou mayest and should be.' And secondly, thou must not measure thyself by thy will; for a Christian's will is ever beyond his ability, tending still to that perfection which they cannot come to in this world. Rich men that are covetous think themselves poor, and still desire more. 'I know thy tribulation and thy poverty, but thou art rich,' saith the Spirit to the church of Smyrna, Rev. ii. 9; and therefore discourage not thyself. God is faithful. Use the means, and depend not on the means; but depend on God in the use of the means, else thou shalt find but little comfort. And if thou findest thy affections any whit enlarged to good duties, and lifted up, and cheered in the performance of them, and art glad that thou art not so conversant in sinning as formerly thou wert, but that thou makest a conscience of thy ways, thank God and give him the glory, and abase and humble thyself. David was much conversant in this. 'Blessed be the Lord, that hath kept me from shedding of blood,' saith he to Abigail, 1 Sam. xxv. 32, 33, seq. And his psalms are full of praises and thanksgiving. And if thou hast any good motions in thine heart, practise them with all speed, and strengthen them.

Verse 14

Do all things without murmurings and disputings.

This,verse contains a new precept of Christian modesty, enforced by removing of contraries. 'Murmuring' is well known among us, it is so ordinarily practised of us. It arises from discontent against God or one

another, breaking into words, works, disputings; whereby one endeavours to defend that with reasons which in the heat of his affections passed from him, lest he should be thought inconsiderate and rash. But to come to the particulars, consider with me, first, the kinds of it; secondly, the causes of it; and thirdly, the cure and remedies of it. For the kinds of it, it is either against God or against man.

First, Against God. Man since the fall quarrels with his Maker. When as heaven and earth must be judged by him, man thinks this unequal, and therefore he first murmureth against God's counsels and decrees. God he appoints some to this, others to that. This is unequal, saith the proud man; all of us are alike, saith he; I am as good a man as another. 'Who art thou that contendest with God?' Rom. ix. 20. Remember thou art clay, and God is the potter; he hath power to make one vessel to honour, another to dishonour, Rom. ix. 21. God's decrees are divine and above thy reach. If that men could apprehend them by reason, then they were not divine. Lay thy hand therefore on thy heart, and cry, 'O the depth of the counsels and wisdom of God,' Rom. xi. 33. Shall not we give him leave to do what he will, whereas he is the just Judge of all the world? Can he do any wrong?

Second, It is usual with natural men to murmur against God's providence, in doing better to some others than unto themselves. They think themselves much wronged when they see some others rich and have all, whereas they themselves are poor; and this sin is many times found in the children of God, in David, Job, Habakkuk, 'Why do the wicked prosper?' They found fault with?the wicked's prosperity, till they went into the sanctuary of the Lord. There they found the end of such men, Ps. lxxiii. 17. Therefore judge not of any but by his end. Think not all things run round, because thou seest no reason thereof, for God's wisdom is unsearchable. Observe the sweet end, issue, and event of all things. Princes they have arcana imperii. Shall not we suffer God to enjoy such privileges? Can we endure that our servant should know all our counsels and minds? Let us therefore yield to God liberty in that which belongs to him; yield glory, who disposes all things sweetly.

A third thing which men often murmur at is God's ordinance in magistracy and ministry. Such men, they think God is not wise enough, but they will teach him whom he shall advance to high place, and whom not; and thus they despise not only the magistracy, but God himself. 'They have not cast thee off, but me,' saith God to Samuel concerning the people, 1 Sam.

viii. 7; and indeed what are they but lawless and wild persons, that cannot away with order? They will have none to overrule them; or, if they be content for shame to admit thereof, yet nolumus hunc regnare, Christ must not rule over them, nor this nor that man. But know, whosoever thou art, that all power is from God, and he will defend his own ordinance against all such as malign it. Ministers are not free from murmurers. How many have we that think it tedious to attend on God at public service! how many that think and are not ashamed to say they can profit more in their private studies! and that this observation of the Lord's day causeth them to lose a whole year in seven! Ay, but consider, God justly curses thy calling whereas thou makest them a stay to good duties. It is also thus in families; wife murmurs against husband, and husband against wife, blaming themselves in that they matched with such, whereas they think they might have done better with others. No. Thou couldst not have done better. God he hath decreed this, and his decrees are not to be blamed. Servants also are troubled with this disease. They murmur against their masters, and learn to dispute with them; and therefore St Paul wills servants to count their masters worthy of all honour, that the word of God be not blasphemed, Tit. ii. 5. And that they do not contend in 'answering again,' verse 9. It is also much in children against parents, and likewise parents against children; so that this sin reigneth over all estates and degrees. Take notice therefore hereof, that thou beest not overtaken in it.

Causes of murmuring.

1. The first cause of murmuring is ignorance of God's particular providence; his excellency and thy baseness. Job when he came to see the glory and power of God, then said, 'I abhor myself, I will dispute no more,' Job xlii. 6. If we did likewise consider of his majesty, power, wisdom, and goodness, would we contend with our Maker? Consider this in thine own cause, will any of us endure a murmuring servant? shall we think it is reason in us, and that God must notwithstanding suffer with patience our murmurings and disputations with his sacred Majesty, who is justice itself, and is not bound to render account of his actions to any.

2. The second cause of murmuring in us is self-love. Man thinks himself worthy of all honour, never considering his weakness and infirmities. Moses was very meek; he gave no cause to Dathan and Abiram, and the rest, to provoke thorn to murmur. God yet having set them in some place in the congregation, they were so lifted up with desire of honour as they were too good to be governed, Numb. xvi. 3. Thus is it with every one of us. We

willingly puff up ourselves in our own conceits of self-sufficiency, and hence arises discontentedness, when we think God is not so good to us as our merits do deserve. We look on those good things that God hath given us, we think not of our infirmities. Hence it is we are never thankful for that we have, but desirous of that which we have not. Hence also arises unfruitfulness, for such look for greatness, but never or seldom to do good with that they have, whether power, or riches, or such like.

Cures for this.

The cures of this disease consists partly in meditation, and partly in practice. First, labour to have a right understanding and knowledge of God's justice without all exception. Secondly, that he is infinitely good, disposing all for the benefit and good of his own children. Thirdly, labour to know and observe his particular providence to these baser creatures, as that the hair falls not without his providence, and that he regards the sparrows, Mat. x. 29. These will make us practise these things. First, in justifying God in whatsoever is done and decreed, as David, Ps. cxix. 137, 'Just art thou, O Lord, and holy, and righteous are thy judgments.' This was Eli his practice, 1 Sam. iii. 18: 'It is the Lord,' said he. And Hezekiah, 'the word of the Lord is good,' 2 Kings xx. 19; and in the 39th Psalm, David held his tongue, ver. 1. The reason he renders, 'It is thou, Lord, who art good, and dost all for good.' Therefore learn a holy silence as David leads us, 62d Psalm ver. 1: 'My soul waiteth on God with silence,' for so is the signification of the word. Thus did Aaron: though his sons were destroyed, 'yet he held his peace,' Lev. x. 3. And when thou findest any discontented thoughts to arise in thine heart, check thyself in the beginning, Ps. lxxiii. 22: 'So foolish and like a beast am I,' saith David; and 'why art thou disquieted, O my soul? and why art thou troubled within me'? Ps. xlii. 5. And examine ourselves: Is it fit that God should answer me? is he not wiser than I? 'What am I?' Am I not wicked, dead, dull? Have not I infinitely displeased him? Let me judge myself, that he may not enter into judgment with me. What though God hath not heard my prayers! I have not hearkened to him when he called me; He may justly neglect me, I have neglected him. Yet hath he been wonderfully good to me; I have received much good from him, and no evil; he hath often spared and doth now spare me; his corrections are gentle and loving, above that we deserve. In his judgments his mercies are great: 'It is his mercy that I am not consumed,' Lam. iii. 22. Propound to thyself the example of Christ. He suffered more than we do, when there was no ill found in him. What says he? 'Not my will, but thine be done,' Luke xxii. 42. Indeed, we may wish

afflictions to be removed as grievances, but joining them with the will of God, then our will must give place to his. Resign thyself into his hands. It is God that will have it thus with me; and therefore take and bear with meekness. And as Paul did, also pray that the will of the Lord may be done. Let his wisdom be thine, his will thine. And why? It will be so; it shall be so; subject thyself therefore to it. Though we behave ourselves as stubborn horses, he will tame us and overrule us well enough; he is too mighty for us. Our stubbornness is the ground of all our crosses and afflictions; for if we will not easily be brought in, God, that out of his mercy chose us, will bring us in to yield. For he will have his will in us, or of us. He will glorify his justice upon us, if his mercies will not work. Lastly, consider the greatness of this sin, to whet us on to the duty enjoined. Though we seem to murmur only against men, we murmur against God; for what saith he to Moses? 'They have not cast off thee, but they have cast off me,' 1 Sam. viii. 7. God takes part with those in authority, as Moses was. For there is no contempt of man, but comes from a contempt of God. The breaches of the second table do spring from the breaches of the first. Observe also, this sin hath ever been grievously punished, it being a sin that pulls God out of his throne, and makes men dare to teach God how to rule. It robs God of his worship, fear, trust, reverence; for it proceeds from the want of them; and lastly, it brings with it great unthankfulness, making men forget all God's goodness bestowed on them.

'Disputing or reasoning.'

It issues from murmuring. For when we are come to that pass that we murmur, lest men should think us rash in doing it without cause, we then endeavour to defend ourselves with reason; and indeed there is nothing that a carnal man does, but he will have reason for it; and he will have the world see that he doth not anything without reason. He will dispute with God by questioning whether this or that duty is necessary, and against civil authority by questioning the lawfulness or necessity of such duties as he is enjoined. This is a great sin. In divine truths, disputing is partly about probables, and therefore it is excellent to find out of probables the truth; but in divine truths, to dispute or make question, is little less than blasphemy. And it is observable that in those times when there was most disputing, as among the schoolmen and the like, about religion and divinity, there was least divinity practised, and very few good men. For the heart of man was then taken up in the consideration of this or that quiddity; and quite neglected the practice of those truths that were known.

Quest. But it will be asked, is all disputing evil?

Ans. No. The Turk will have none about the Alkoran, and the pope he will not have men dispute about anything that concerns him. The devil and his instruments they ever run into extremes. Either men must call in question all the grounds of divinity, or else receive upon trust whatsoever is delivered to us. No. We must know in doubtful things, this is good and required to find out certainty. The end of motion is rest, and the end of questions and doubts tends to truth. Yet have we many spend all their life in this or that question or doubt, and edify little or nothing. Like those physicians are they who contend and question about the goodness or badness of this or that meat, when a strong labouring man eats it, and finds as good nourishment out of it as out of any other. While men dispute and talk about this or that doctrine, a sound downright Christian receives it, digests it, and is nourished thereby, while the others do even starve themselves. Let therefore God alone with his secret will. Homo sum, said Salvian, secreta Dei non intelliyo. God does what is done, be thou content. In human authority also we ought not to dispute, for the subject hath no calling to know the mysteries of state. It may be a sin to command, and yet a virtue to obey. It is thy duty to obey, not to question.

But if in thine understanding it be plainly evil which is commanded, obey not. Job did thus, and Job would hear his servant speak, Job xix. 16. But if it be uncertain to thee and doubtful, certain it is thou must obey. Obedience must be without syllogisms. The servant ought to obey, the master must question.

Verse 15

'That we may be blameless, and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.'

This verse contains a reason, drawn from the end, why we should do all things without murmuring or disputing. The reason is threefold.

First, that you may be blameless. Secondly, harmless. Thirdly, that you may be the sons of God.

'Blameless.' This word, if it be taken generally, is a thing that none can attain to. God cannot be without blame, for wicked men will quarrel with

him, be he never so good. Christ could not live without blame, though he went about doing good continually, Heb. xii. 3. It is said he endured the cross and despised the shame; nay, the best men are subject to most shame. Stop wicked men in their lewd courses, they I are thought presently to be enemies. And the wicked take that for a wrong, whereas they receive so much good from others that they cannot requite it. But the proper signification of the word is in effect thus much, that they should so behave themselves, as they should not give any just occasion of offence, either to their own consciences, or that of other men. Walk towards God without all manner of profanation or irreligious course, and let your gesture towards men be just, that your conscience may clear you of all fraud or guile; and let your carriage toward your own self be free from all abuse of your person, by gluttony, drunkenness, and the like. In a word, be holy, righteous, and sober.

'Harmless.' The word signifies simple, without all mixture or composition; or else void of hurt, without horn, as the word imports.

The doctrine is, that it is the property of Christians to do no harm. The reason is, because our nature now is changed from that it was; for by nature we are to one another lions and wolves, as Heb. xi. 33. Now therefore our nature being changed, our actions also become changed. The gospel makes us tame. The Spirit of Christ in all our members is as Christ himself. His miracles were for good, and they were beneficial to men. He did all things well. Those therefore that are led by this Spirit of his do no harm, so far as they are Christ's.

Use. For use note this as a main difference between the Christian and another man. For all other people are harmful creatures. The four monarchies were as so many beasts, because to the poor church of God they were as so many beasts, cruel and devouring. Nay, the civillest man of all, to his neighbours he seems to be harmless, but towards the church none so fierce as they.

On the contrary, Christians are meek as doves. The wicked are as ravenous birds, like eagles' feathers; self-love turns all to its own end.

Among the beasts, the Christian is as a lamb, innocent, fruitful; a common good. 'When he is exalted the land rejoices,' Prov. xi. 11. Contrarily the wicked are termed lions and bears, and the like. Among the plants wicked men are as briars: a man must be fenced that deals with them, 2 Sam. xxiii. 7; the godly as lilies, sweet, not fenced with pricks. Among earthly creatures the

godly are as the worm; the wicked, a generation of vipers and serpents. They will do no right, take no wrong, but a word and a blow; a word and presently to suit, right Esau's and Ishmael's. Nay, they glory in it. Oh, say they, he is a shrewd man. Hence comes duels, combats, and the like. Men now are come to that pass, they will not put up a word. Nay, those that are innocent, and will pass by injuries, tush! they are fools. But know, thus to be foolish is to be wise, to be Christian like; and such fools as these are shall find comfort on their deathbeds, when those wise men shall wish they had been such fools.

Such fools as these are, I mean the innocent, shall have God for their help and shelter, for want whereof these worldly wise men come often to ill ends, and to be made fearful examples. The Psalms are full of encouragements herein: Ps. xviii. 2, 'The Lord is my rock and fortress,' said David; and so in Ps. xxv. 8, 9, 10, &c. Wicked men have horns, but God is a hammer to break the horns of the wicked. The innocent person, and he that is harmless, brings peace to the land, and a blessing to the place where he lives. Here prayers and intercessions are as the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof. Let those things be noted to provoke us unto this duty.

'Sons of God.'

This is the third ground whereby we are incited, to be without murmuring and disputing, that you may be 'the sons of God;' that is, that by this you may appear to your own comfort to be the sons of God, or that herein you may be as the sons of God, in showing yourselves harmless and blameless, which may testify it to yourselves and others.

Doct. Therefore Christians that are harmless and blameless indeed, are the sons of God. The ground of this is the love of God, who freely gave his own Son to take our nature upon him, and to die to save us from the sting of death; he became the Son of man to make us the sons of God without rebuke. And as God gave him to us, so by faith doth he give us to him; and by this God gives us power to be his sons, John i. 12. Our nature is hereby changed; for whom he makes sons he sanctifies them and makes them new, and thus become we his sons. God hath adopted us, not as natural men, for this or that respect, to an earthly inheritance, but God freely adopts us to an heavenly inheritance that fadeth not; neither doth God adopt us as men do men in sol amen orbitatis, for God hath a Son in whom he is pleased; neither again can men's adoption make their adopted sons to be good; but when God adopts us, he makes us as he would have us to be, like himself. Fourthly, other adopted sons, many of them are not sharers together of the

inheritance to one allotted; but we are made heirs and fellow-heirs with Christ himself. This love of God was such as the apostle could not express in any fit terms; therefore he saith, 'Behold what love hath the Father showed us!' 1 John iii. 1. David thought it not to be a small thing to be the son-in-law of an earthly prince, 1 Sam. xviii. 28; behold, we are sons of the King of kings. By nature we are sons of the devil, and rebels. Now, that God should freely, out of his own free love, set his love on us, passing over angels and other men, and not sparing his own Son, have we not hence cause to cry, 'Behold what love!' and 'Oh the depth of that love!' Earthly fathers adopt sons because they die, but God is eternal; he never dies; his Son is everlasting. Consider this as a point of comfort, for this relation is everlasting; he never leaveth us nor forsakes us. Servants are cast out, but the Son abideth for ever; servants know not the counsels of their masters, but sons they know the whole will of God. Consider this as a ground of protection in all dangers, and of provision of all good. 'I have a father,' saith the prodigal; 'what need I die for hunger? I will go to him,' Luke xv. 17. In a word, the word Father is an epitome of the whole gospel. All the promises therein contained are sealed up by and in this one word, God is our Father. Can we go to our Father for pardon of sin and not obtain it? By Christ's death and satisfaction he is become our Father; and therefore Christ is Christ after his resurrection. Can we then want any good thing? How can we think he will deny us his Spirit, or that inheritance in heaven, which as a Father he hath promised! How then, or at what shall we be dismayed and discomforted? What can trouble us? Mark what is promised in Ps. ciii. 2, seq. All good that may any way concern thy soul or body. Dost thou fear thy corruptions? The Spirit tells thee that God is thy Father; there can be no condemnation to thee, Rom. viii. 1. Dost thou fear want? Surely he that hath given thee Christ, his own Son, how shall he not with him give thee all things, Rom. viii. 82. Thou shalt want nothing for thy good. Thou mayest fall into sin, but God is still thy Father. This relation is everlasting. He will not forsake thee. From hence thou mayest have an argument against all suggestions. This brings with it comfort; but to whom? It must be to such as are sons, not to the traitorous and rebellious. It hath been treason for any man to term himself the son of a king, not being indeed so, yea, though the king were dead; and is it not high treason for a presumptuous traitor to come into the presence chamber of the great God, and with an impudent face to style God his Father? Verity God's answer will be to such, 'You are of your father the devil: his works ye do,' John viii. 44.

1. Those that are God's sons, he renews to do his will and commandments. 1 Pet. i. 16: 'Be ye holy,' saith he, 'for I am holy.' But when men hate goodness and good men, nay, and persecute them, defame them, murder them, John viii. 44, they are of the devil. They are murderers and liars; and that religion that teacheth them is devilish.

2. Again, If God be thy Father, thou wilt have a spirit of prayer. We are no sooner born but we begin to cry, as Paul did at his first conversion, Acts ix. 11. Every child of God, in respect of his measure of grace, he will do his endeavour to sigh and sob out his grief to God: and as the grace increases, so will this duty be more perfect, till at length he comes to provoke God, by his promise to urge and bind him by reasons to hear him. Those, therefore, that pass day after day, never finding time for the performance of this duty, they have not God's Spirit; for by it we have access to God, Eph. ii. 18; Eph. iii. 12; and there is no child but will use this privilege; and those that use it not may well suspect they are not children.

3. Thirdly, If thou be the child of God, and hast his Holy Spirit in thee, thou shalt have, whensoever thou standest in need, a sweet consolation; for that ever reveals to thee what thou art, and comforts thee in all distress. For, Rom. v. 1, 'being justified by faith, thou hast peace with God.'

What cross soever troubles the child of God, this will ever comfort him. Well! I am the child of God; I am assured God is reconciled to me; I have my confidence in him, that when he sees fit I shall be eased; in the mean time I am assured I shall not be overcome. This is that which no natural man can have; he cannot rejoice in affliction.

4. Fourthly, If thou beest the son of God, thou art not overmuch careful for the things that concern this life. Thou usest the means that God hath ordained, and thou trustest God with the issue and event of all. It is the property of orphans to care much for their living, and for the things of this world; not for those that have such a father as God, that provides for all his children liberally; and men in thus doing shew themselves orphans, or bastards, and not sons.

Quest. But some will ask, Is it not possible to be the son of God, and yet ignorant thereof?

Ans. I answer, Yes. For the child at the first knows not his father; but by little and little he comes to know him as he grows in years. So is it with the

child of God. At the first he only cries and bewails his miserable estate; but as they grow up, out of the word they learn to see their estates that is laid up for them, and to know their Father that hath been so good to them, and to call upon him as their Father for anything that they want.

They know that the Scripture gives it as a note of one that is born of God, that 'he sins not'; that is, that not with delight and continuance in sin, but that his new nature stirs him up to repent, and to beg pardon and to strive against it, so as at length he comes to grow so perfect as no temptation shall overthrow him, though it may foil him. But he always considers his estate when any temptation comes: Shall I, that am a prince, a son and heir to God, do thus, and offend against him? 'Without rebuke.'

This is comprehended in the former words, and therefore I speak the less thereof. The words are not to be taken in a strict legal sense, but in an evangelical sense, implying that we should walk so as we may be free from rebuke of the best, from gross sins, from common infirmities and personal corruptions. Whether it be rashness, anger, worldliness, intractableness, the child of God must labour to free himself of them. He ought to endeavour to attain to perfection, though we cannot attain to it in this world; and we ought to pray as the apostle, Eph. iii. 18, 'to know the length, breadth, depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, that passeth knowledge;' and thus doing we shall dignify this estate of ours.

'In the midst of a crooked and perverse nation.'

The word 'crooked,' or,' perverse,' is a borrowed word from timber, whose excellency is to be right and straight; and if it be not, must be squared by the rule. Here it is applied to the disposition and nature of men, who naturally are of a crooked condition, especially those that are in the bosom of the church. They are so crooked as they cannot be squared aright by means; and so it is with those that are right, they are very right.

Doct. The doctrine then is, that wicked men are all perverse and crooked, Deut. xxxii. 5,

Reason. The reason hereof is, since the fall of Adam we are under sin and Satan. Sin is nothing but crookedness. We lying in sin are therefore crooked inwardly and outwardly, in will and in judgment. Even in the church, men perversely judge of a Christian's life, and of preaching. So that till we be converted, our wisdom is enmity to God. But the will especially is perverse.

Men they will die. 'Why will ye die, O house of Israel?' Jer. xxvii. 13. 'How often would I have gathered you,' saith Christ, 'and you would not!' Mat. xxiii. 37. Endeavour to bring men to rules: they will not; they will perish. Bring them to make conscience of private prayer, good company: away with it, they will not yield. Our affections are also perverse. Do not most men love their bane? Ill company, bad courses, swearing and blaspheming. Men will die rather than they will leave their courses. Men are also naturally perverse in opposition to means. God commands, promises, sends mercies and judgments, but who regards? They will go on in their ways; nay, as in Deut. xxix. 19, 'they will bless themselves in them.' This is the nature of most men in the visible church, more perverse than the Jews.

'Signs hereof.'

1. The first sign of this perverse estate is, bring thyself to the rules of God's truth; if thou do it unwillingly, and art brought to it by violence, if you shun the word and the means of salvation, if you shun good company, it is a sign you are crooked; nay, so crooked, as you desire to be crooked still.

2. But be it so that thou canst be content to apply thyself to the rule, then whether do you tremble to apply the rides to your lusts and corruptions? You have many are so set on their sins as they will justify sin by the word, and wrest the meaning thereof to their own lusts. This is a sure infallible sign of a perverse estate.

Cure hereof.

1. Bring thyself to God's ordinance, where thou shalt know thine own crookedness and the danger of it.

2. But especially do this when thou art young; for those that are settled in their dregs are not to be dealt withal. It is good therefore to do as nurses do, strengthen ourselves when we are young and pliable.

3. Thirdly, Keep good company, and such as by their life will discover to thyself thy corruptions and perverse estate; and thus when thou findest it,

4. Consider what a miserable estate thou art in. We amongst us account it a great eyesore to see a body that should be straight to be crooked. Oh that we had eyes to see this spiritual crooked estate we are in! Oh what fear and grief would possess us! How would we labour to free ourselves of it, and to

straighten ourselves every day, lest we should be found unfit for God's building, and good for nothing but to burn! With such as walk perversely God will deal perversely, Lev. xxvi. 28. It may be he will seem to sleep for a while, but at the hour of death it will shew that he looked for better courses at thy hands.

5. Pray with the psalmist, Ps. cxix. 5, 'Oh that my ways were so direct, that I might keep thy statutes!' Observe again, that the godly here live in the midst of lions and wolves; those that are of a froward and perverse heart. For those that live under the means of grace, and will not be wrought upon, they are much worse for it. There is more innocence in a Turk than in some that profess better. And those that profess most, if they be hypocrites, of all other make the most bitter opposition against the truth.

The reasons hereof are: First, God hereby shows his power, in that he can and doth preserve his children among lions from the wrath of the lion. Christ he must rule, but it is in the midst of his enemies; and therefore his church must be in the midst of his enemies, for he is king of his church.

2. Again, in regard of the wicked, it justifies their just condemnation. They cannot say but that they had the means, as well of the gospel as the examples of those that were good. Thus did Noah justly condemn the old world, and Lot Sodom.

3. Furthermore, those that are not desperately wicked, but of whom we may conceive some hope, surely they by living with the godly may be won; as when they see religion in others bringing forth good works, they see religion is no impossible thing, for they see men troubled with the like infirmities that they are that practise it; and they see it is sweet, because it makes men tractable and loving.

4. Moreover, in regard of the godly, God suffers them to be amongst the wicked, for it refines them. Envy and malice are quick-sighted. God's children know they live in the midst of envy, therefore they are wary. Lot lived more uprightly in Sodom than when he was out of it. Wickedness binds in religion, and makes it more forcible, even as by an antiperistasis it unites it and strengthens it. It makes the godly to be more careful, to be unblameable, and to watch to keep themselves from doing hurt, and from taking hurt; for wicked men are watchful to take advantage of any ill example in the weak Christian, and to follow it. But, on the contrary, the weak Christian is

overcome, and carried away with the streams of vice, and therefore are the more watchful.

'Directions for life.'

1. Remember thy calling—that you are sons of God; and forget not your profession, and fetch reasons from your callings. You are God's children; you are called with a holy calling. Shall I do thus, and offend against my Father? and shall I disgrace that holy calling, and scandalize it? Shall I give cause to make the enemy to blaspheme?

2. Again, Observe the persons with whom thou conversest. Are they malicious and envious?

3. Beware how thou give them offence; especially watch thy natural corruptions and weaknesses. Take heed of secret ill thoughts.

4. Carry the example of David about with thee; see in him what his thoughts wrought. That which thou tremblest to do, tremble to think on; for God justly leaves such in great sins that solace themselves in ill thoughts.

5. Again, Look to duties of the second table. These sins are great sores in the eyes of our enemies.

6. Use a loving, pitiful carriage towards them that are without. Though they be never so wicked, give them their due, and consider the goodness thou hast was given thee. Therefore be not puffed up in thine own conceit, but fear continually.

'Among whom you shine as lights in the world.'

These words contain another reason why the children of God ought to be unreprovable. For, saith the apostle, 'you are lights.' All God's children are lights, but so as there is an order of them. God is the ground of all light; he is the Father of lights. Christ he is the Sun of righteousness. These are the grand lights. The word of God is also a light and a lantern to light us in the dark ways of this world. From hence light is derived to the saints, who receive it from Christ by the word and Spirit. You being therefore thus enlightened, you are to converse amongst men as lights, saith the apostle. For the better understanding thereof, consider in what things God's children resemble light; and,

1. First, We know this creature of light is an excellent creature, showing the excellency of all other creatures; and it is a beautiful creature. Thus is the word, and children of God. By it all the world is discovered to be as Egypt, and the church to be as the land of Goshen. And this is beautiful in the eyes of God, who loves that which is like himself. He is light indeed, and nothing but light is lovely to him. He loves those sparks which our natural corruption hath left unto us; and therefore much more the light of his own Spirit which he places in us.

2. Secondly, Light is pure, and admits of no contagion, though it be in the most contagious places of all. So is the word: it is pure, and makes us pure and sincere, and that we should not be defiled with the lusts and corruptions of this world wherein we converse.

3. Thirdly, Light makes us to discern of differences.. It shows itself, and discovers other things. Thus doth the word shew itself where it is, and the man that hath it doth discern of things that differ. He judges of the wicked, and censures their lewd courses. The child of God is above all wicked men, and themselves are justly judged of none; for the wicked men cannot judge of those that are lights, no more than a blind man of colours, for they are blind by nature. The world would indeed censure them, when indeed they cannot discern themselves, when contrarily he discerns himself and knows his infirmities and his slidings.

4. Again, Light is a heavenly quality. So is the word of God, holy, pure, transforming godly men to its own likeness, to be heavenly. His bread is from heaven; his affections, desires, thoughts, endeavours are heavenly. His way is upward. He is heavenly-minded; while he is on earth he is in heaven.

5. Moreover, Light is a most comfortable thing in darkness, expelling terrors and discomforts. Thus is a Christian that is enlightened by the word. Terrors are in the word, but the word comforts the heart of a Christian. It makes him able to judge of his way and estate; to know' he is the Son of God; that all the promises are his; that heaven is his; that he hath God's mark. Contrarily, the wicked have no light at all; for while they live here their life here is as a death, full of discomfort; they having no comfort in anything, save a little glimpse of false joy in the creatures; which when they leave them they are in the more terror,—all their comfort befog in this, that they see not that miserable estate before they fall into it and feel it.

O. Furthermore, Light makes a thing full of evidence. All the world cannot persuade a man contrary to that they see. Thus the word so discovers to us our estates in grace, and so surely as all the world can never shake the foundation of our faith. 'Though he kills me,' saith Job, 'I will trust in him,' Job xiii. 15. But for the wicked, their life is full of staggering, full of doubtings; and hence is it that the children of God are counted by God holy, pure, comely, fair and dear, because they live with a resolution. The papists, they will tell us that the word is obscure; let them tell us the light is obscure, for we may as well believe one as the other.

7. But to proceed: Light is a quality of surest motion. It spreads suddenly. Thus do the children of God. They communicate to others. They shine, spreading forth the grace, first of all to those that are next them, as children and friends, then to such as are further off. Those that have not this nature, that do not desire to do good to others, they are not children of the light; for it is the nature of all good to communicate.

8. Light, we know, hath a secret influence wheresoever it is. Thus also is the grace of God in his children. It is ever operative and working. What light soever they receive from the Sun of righteousness, they diffuse it and spread it to others, like the moon; and therefore he adds further: 'As lights in the world.'

We that are 'lights in this world,' we are, it is true, in a dampish place, yet must we shine, though but dimly. Therefore ministers, let them look both to their doctrine and life, for they are great lights, or at the least should be so, and they will be noted. We know when the sun or moon are eclipsed. We all observe it as a wonder. And thus will it be with such lights as ministers should be. Men continually eye them. If they be eclipsed, it will be wondered at and observed of all. Let therefore not only ministers but others also look to themselves, that they take heed of those things that will eclipse them. We know whence the eclipse in nature of these heavenly bodies do come; from the interposition of dark, gross, earthly bodies. Thus it is with God's children. Their cares, griefs, and studies in this world being ever more carnal than is meet, they eclipse us and make us dark, keeping us from the presence of that light which should enlighten us. But especially, and above the rest, self-love, that blinds us and eclipses all other lights from us.

9. Again, Heavenly lights are perpetual. Even as stella cadentes, so is it with the wicked man. Though he seems to shine fairly, yet because the causes of this light in him are earthly, no marvel if after the force of them be spent

they suddenly vanish. But the godly man's light is of another substance and nature. It is heavenly, and is ever like himself. It may indeed be obscured, but never wholly eclipsed. Either worldly sorrow or joy doth for a time sometimes darken them, and may be so obscured as neither the world, no, nor themselves can discern their estates for their own comfort; yet for all this will they at length recover their former brightness and glory again. Saint Paul, he saith, a Christian life is concealed and hid with Christ in God, Col. iii. 3; but yet when he shall appear, then shall we also appear.

Use. The use of all this is to try us whether we be lights. Surely if we be, we will have no communion with those that work the works of darkness. So saith Saint John, 1 John i. 5-7. Again, if we be lights we shall wonder at our glorious estate we are in; we shall think all our life before we came into this estate to be dark; yea, though formerly we were civilly disposed. And especially shall we wonder at that which we have in future expectation and hope, reserved to us in heaven. A carnal man wonders still at worldly matters, as stately buildings and the like; a Christian thinks all base in respect of the immense love of God freely set upon him.

Directions how to attain to be lights.

1. First, If we desire to be lights, communicate thyself with the chiefest light, as the stars are ever in the presence of the sun, and from his light they receive theirs. Be sure thou placest thyself in God's eye continually.

2. Secondly, Use the means, use the glass of God's word. Thou shalt not only see thy estate therein, but by it thou shalt be transformed into God's image, 2 Cor. iii. 18. Other glasses have no such power like this mirror of the gospel. It makes us like God, because it hath the Spirit of God ever accompanying with it, whence it is the word of light. Those therefore that are out of the sunshine of the gospel, no marvel if they be dark. The moon, so far as it is averse from the sun, is ever dark. So is a Christian. So far as he is turned from Christ, so far he is dark. Let thine eyes therefore be ever towards him in the use of the means, the word, prayer, and the sacraments, and such like.

3. Again, In thy conversation have no correspondence with the world, for what fellowship is there between light and darkness? How foully do they therefore deceive themselves that will be wise. They will be protestant or papist, zealous or profane, according as their company are. God will turn such worldly wisdom into mere folly, who will be ashamed of such when he

shall come in his kingdom. It is a comely thing to be Christians with Christians. Light with light augments the light, even as the multitude of stars joined in the heaven make the galaxy. A company of Christians meeting in one make a glorious light indeed, and such a lustre as will dazzle the eyes of the wicked world. Be stirred up therefore to use good company.

4. And follow the example of those that be lights, and the directions thou findest in the word, and thou shalt shine as the sun in the kingdom of God. It is true the wicked they will labour to cover this light with clouds of disgrace and detraction, and thus they reward God for his goodness, but they have their lesson. There is no surer sign of a wicked man than when they endeavour to deprave these lights and to obscure them. And yet this practice is very usual, when they see especially any new light risen up, they deride and scoff at that man or woman; they hate him for his light. Like Cain are they, that hated his brother for his goodness; and herein are not only imitators of Cain, but they shew themselves to be of their father the devil, for his works they do. Well, as we desire not to be of this sort, let us see that we use the means. Go and be where the word of light is, where it shines; for those that live without it live in darkness. Set not thy carnal reason against God's wisdom. He bids thee do this. And as thou desirest the peace of Zion,

5. Pray for this light that it may grow more and more unto the perfect day thereof.

6. And labour to see the contrary estate of such as are in darkness, where the king of fear ruleth, and where is nothing but terror.

7. And entreat God that he would open thy dull eyes, that the glorious light of the gospel may shine therein. So doth the apostle, Eph. i. 18; and thus shalt thou at the length come to shine here in this world, without which thou shalt not shine in the world to come. The light of nature and reason cannot bring thee to the light of glory.

8. And when thou art converted, 'strengthen thy brethren,' Luke xxii. 82; labour to bring others into this marvellous light. 'He that gains a soul shall shine as the stars,' Dan. xii. 8. But will some men say, May we converse then or live among wicked men? Yes, verily; for the Holy Spirit saith that we must 'shine in the world.' Christ did not pray that God would take his disciples out of the world, but that he would keep them in the world from evil, John xvii. 15. But that which is forbidden is familiar conversation and amity with them; otherwise we may live with them so as by example to gain them. And herein

the Christian reasoneth contrary to the world; for the world saith, Do this. Why? Because it is the custom, and most men use it. Nay, saith the Christian, we must live so as we ought to endeavour to make others, which are wicked, like ourselves. We must gain others by our good example. We must 'redeem the time, because the days are evil,' Eph. v. 1(5. Because others are perverse, be thou good. Noah was not as the old world, nor Lot as Sodom. We as they ought to be preachers of righteousness; and if we cannot bring others to the light of the truth, yet to grieve and pity their estates. And as David bewailed, 'Woe is me, that I am constrained to dwell in Mesech,' See., Ps. cxx. 5, and yet to comfort ourselves in this, that it will not be always thus with us. The time will come that we shall be freed from them, and we shall have communion with the Trinity and with all the saints. In the mean time shine here; swear not with them; be not dissolute with them, but be constant in going against the stream. Call to mind thy calling, that thou art the son of God. Thou art to be a light to those that are in darkness. Reason not for thy corruptions, but ever against them. I am a Christian; shall I hate him that I profess to follow? I am a son of God; shall company make me perverse? I am a light; shall I cease to shine? No, Lord; while I am here give me grace that I may grow more and more fit for that light and glorious estate that thou hast in keeping for me against that great day of accounts.

Verse 16

Holding forth the word of life.

That which is of light is life, saith John, i. 4: 'The life was the light of men and therefore he saith we should be as lights, 'holding forth the word of life.' It is not enough for us to shine to ourselves, but we ought to shine to others in speech and conversation. By 'the word of life' here especially is meant the gospel; for the law is a killing letter. We being in our corrupt estate, the law pronounces us dead as concerning ourselves. Then comes the gospel, that sends us out of ourselves to Christ; and in him it pronounces life to such as come to him; and it describes to us the way that leads to life, and the degrees of life, as redemption, grace, and glory, 2 Tim. i. 10. It again begins this life in us, and works faith in us, whereby we lay hold on life; and therefore it is also called the word of faith. It is called the word of the kingdom; for it offers the kingdom to us. It is also called the word of reconciliation; for that it tells us where it is to be had, and works it in us. It is therefore the word of life; and those that believe it not, are dead in law, for the sentence is already passed upon such. He is already condemned as dead

men. He wants sense, motion, and comeliness. For sense, he cannot relish any goodness, either in hearing or seeing it. He is blinded, and he stops his ear at the voice of the charmer; and this makes him wonder how others are affected with any good thing. For motion, he cannot set one step onward to salvation. And for that comeliness, we all by nature are more loathsome than the dead carcass. Abraham could not endure the sight of his own wife when she was dead, though living she was so dear to him, Gen. xxiii. 4. Thus are we by nature altogether rotten and polluted; speech, fine discourse, favour, and all other outward good parts, they can put no comeliness upon us. They are but on us as flowers stuck upon a dead carcass. All men know that it is rotten and stinking, and void of all comeliness notwithstanding them. This then must teach us to regard more this word of life, and to pity them that have it not; and how to judge of such that withhold this word of life from them that live in darkness, as the papists do. Surely there is no cruelty like this cruelty to starve men's souls. Observe we therefore from hence, he that refuseth God's ordinance he refuseth life.

What shall we then think of those private devotions, wherewith many men put off God's ordinance, thinking that they can get as much good in their warm chamber by reading of hooks, as in the public congregation by hearing God's word taught? These are fools, setting their foolish inventions against God's wisdom, as though they could tell God better means to beget and strengthen faith, than he himself can appoint. Oh, but men will say, it hinders us from our callings; in seven years we lose a year. But dost thou not live by this word? Shalt thou do well to be ashamed of that, and lightly esteem of that word that brings with it life and glory? But why is this word no more esteemed? Surely men deceive themselves with self-conceit. They think themselves good, when they are stark naught; and that they are alive, whereas like to the Laodiceans they are dead in sin and iniquity, Rev. ii. 16, seq.

(1.) The reason hereof is, they want the Spirit, to convince them. For the Spirit convinces us of death. Where this Spirit is not, none will seek for life; for they know not that they are dead by nature; they believe not God's law that should convince them. No marvel then if they affect not a change.

(2.) A second reason is, for that such men as these are carried by sense. They see they want no outward content, and for other things they think God will be merciful; they think God loves them, for that he gives them worldly riches. There is another sort of men, and these are brought to despair; how is

it that these, seeing their misery, do not esteem of this word aright, and come to it as to the word of life? I answer, they consider not of this word aright; they think their sins so many as that the word cannot enlighten their darkness. To such I say, they are most fit for this word of life; for Christ bids such come to him as are 'weary and heavy laden' with their sins, and he hath promised release, Mat. xi. 28. And he saith he came 'to bind up the broken in heart and the bruised in spirit,' Isa. lxi. 1; and therefore, let such be encouraged by these and such like gracious invitations and promises to come to the word, and with attention to search into the depth of these promises made to them. But thus much of this, that the word is a word of life. Now we come to the next, that Christians must 'hold forth this word of light or life.' And this is done in speech and action, profession and confession, when they are called thereto. For every Christian is a light that must shine. What use is there of light under a bushel? Many are of contrary judgment. They think it wisdom to be close in their profession; in company of papists, to be popish; of religious, to be religiously disposed. Surely this wisdom is carnal and devilish. What use is there of such light? They are like false lanterns, which are commonly called thieves' lanterns. They carry their light to themselves; none is benefited thereby; they are fit for works of darkness. Of such, Christ hath already said, 'He wall hereafter be ashamed,' Mark viii. 88. Others there are inwardly one thing, outwardly another, contrary to the Christian's duty, which is to hold forth the light that he hath. And this do they, whereas in all passages of their life they are turned into the word, and cast into the mould thereof; then it teaches us to pray, to be patient, to joy, yea, in the midst of afflictions, and to do good even to those that hate us. And if we, according as we are taught, do these things, then do we hold forth this word of life, and it will be an exceeding great comfort to us in life, in death, in all estates. It will assure us that we are transformed into the image of this word, and the holding forth of this word in our lives thus, will cause a far louder report in the ears of God than all the verbal profession we can make.

In temptation, if we find ourselves even at despair, by considering the curse of the law, due to us for our sins, if in this estate we can apply the gospel so to us, as thereby we find comfort out of it, and such as upholds us, surely this is a great sure sign that we are transformed; and by this we hold forth the power of the word, and thereby the light thereof. In the hour of death, when the devil is most busy to shake our faith, we notwithstanding are not daunted, but ground our faith on the word, and can comfortably apply that speech of St Paul, 'There is no condemnation to those that are in Christ.'

We hereby do set forth the power, comfort, and truth of the word. Contrarily, those that are impatient in trouble, and puzzled with every temptation, swallowed up with fear, and shew no assurance of faith in them, notwithstanding the great means they have had, these live as though there were no word. Nay, they do in a manner slander the word in their lives, making show as if the word had no power, comfort, or strength at all in it. For our parts, let us not leave till we have digested all the promises and comfortable assurances the gospel doth everywhere lay out to us. Hereby we shall shew ourselves far above all other men, and in all estates we shall be the same, not moved at all. Let us be therefore thankful for this word of life, and joyful in it, and treasure it up against the evil day, setting our minds ever upon it; let it be as a paradise to us, where the tree of life is placed. Christ in the word is as the tree of life. He that tasteth of this tree shall never die. By the 'first Adam' we come to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, by woeful experience, by the which we all died, but by the second Adam we come to eat of the tree of life, by which we live perpetually.

Of the Providence of God

Philippians 2:24

But I trust in the Lord that I myself also shall come shortly.

In the former verses the apostle Paul shows his care and love that he bore to the Philippians, in that he would not leave them destitute of a guide and director; and therefore he sends Timothy, whom he commends, to shew his love the more; and for his greater commendations, he shows the wickedness of the contrary sort, that thereby Timothy his sincerity may the better appear; 'others seek their own, but Timothy as a son hath served me.' He lays down the causes of this his sincerity. He first had learned the Scriptures of a child; then he had a gracious grandmother and mother. It is an excellent comfortable thing where as children can say, 'I am the son of thy servant and thy handmaid,' Ps. lxxxvi. 16. And a third cause or help was his conversing with him. He drew in the sweet spirit of the blessed apostle. God, he derives good to men by good society. They are therefore enemies to themselves that regard not good, choice company; for it makes of good excellent, and of those that are not yet good, if they belong to God, it makes them good.

In this verse he shows a further degree of his care of the Philippians. There are divers ways to come to the knowledge of men's estate: as first by report; secondly, by messengers; thirdly, by letter. St Paul had used all these; but his care was such as all these would not content him. He must see them himself, which is indeed the surest means and way of all.

In these words, therefore, consider the manner of the delivery of this speech, 'I trust in the Lord.' Then the matter, which contains a purpose of his coming. Then the ground, his trust in God. Here, first of all, mark the language of Canaan; and the heavenly dialect,

1. To express future purposes with a reservation of, and resignation to, God's will and guidance. 11 trust in God,' saith the apostle; for the hearts of men, yea of kings, are in God's hand, to turn and wind them as the rivers of waters, Prov. xxi. 1. This shows Christ to be God, for he is the object of trust. Observe in the second place,

2. God's providence extends to every particular thing. He guides our incomings and our outgoings; he disposes of our journeys; nay, his providence extends to the smallest things, to the sparrows and to the hair of our heads; he governs every particular passage of our lives.

Use 1. This should teach us to set upon our affairs with looking up to heaven for permission, power, and sufferance; and this St James enforces by reproving the contrary. 'Go to,' saith he in his fourth chapter, and ver. 13th, and adds the instruction thereupon; 'for that ye ought to say, if the Lord will, we shall live and do this or that.' Let us therefore in all our affairs he holy, and not bind or limit our holiness only to coming to church; but seeing at all times and in all places we are Christians, and ever in the presence of God, let us place ourselves still in his eye, and do nothing but that we would be willing God shall see; and labour to behold him in every good thing we have, and give him thanks in all the good we enjoy.

Use 2. And secondly, it ought to give us warning, that we ought not to set upon anything, wherein we cannot expect God's guidance; and so consequently cannot trust on him for a blessing upon what we do. For if we do, we must look to meet the Lord standing in our way, as Balaam did, in opposing our lewd and wicked intentions.

Use 3. And thirdly, it ought to teach us to take nothing but that for which we may give God the thanks and praise; as contrarily many do, who may thank the devil for what they have gotten, and yet make God implicitly the giver of their most unjust exactions.

Verse 25

Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus.

Paul thought it not enough to plant the seeds of the word amongst them, but he would be viewing it and watering. 'I purpose shortly to see you,' saith he; but because I am now in prison I cannot come myself, but I purpose presently to send you Epaphroditus, and afterwards Timothy; and this he thought necessary—for well he knew that the residence of the pastor is necessary to the flock of the Lord, in some sort. But to stand upon this doctrine is not my purpose. The next thing I come to is, the commendations of Epaphroditus, which is divers; out of which generally thus much we learn, that it is our duty to give them commendations that are praiseworthy, even to this end that thereby we might raise a good opinion of them, especially of the

ministers of the gospel; for hereby is the gospel itself glorified by us. And indeed it is a great sign that the spirit of the devil rests in that man, that doth detract and disparage the good children of God. For it comes hereby that the gospel of God is also blamed, and neglected. For the commendation of the minister is a preparative, and makes way for the word.

My brother.

The word in this place signifies one of the same office. As judges call one another 'brother,' so doth St Paul call Epaphroditus 'brother,' in regard of his office and spiritual function; and hereby he shows his love to him; for 'brother' is a name of love and friendship. Secondly, it shows his care of Epaphroditus; for one brother will care for another, unless they be of a Cainish nature. Thirdly, it is a name of equality, for brothers are equal. And hereby the apostle shows his humility, who being an apostle and pillar of the church, descended so low as to call one of inferior rank and calling, 'brother.' He had another spirit before his conversion; he persecutes the church of God. But afterward those that he formerly persecutes are now his 'brethren.' Now he thinks he is a debtor to all, both Jew and Grecian, Rom. i. 14. The proud man thinks all are debtors to him, that all do owe him respect and reverence; and indeed it is the spirit of the devil that 'lifteth up.' Antichrist is his eldest son indeed, who lifteth himself up against, and above all that is called God. Contrarily Christ humbles himself to the death to call us brothers. Shall we then disdain to live together in terms of equality and love? Is there not infinite difference between Christ and us? Was there not in him such a glory as passeth our apprehension? and what had we, or what have we, that we should lift ourselves up after this fashion? If we will strive to be above and outgo others, let it be in humility. Go each before others, in giving honour to others above ourselves. Observe, therefore, grace takes advantage of all bonds to increase love; bonds of office as well as of nature. Men of the same profession emulate and envy one another. Thus it is naturally, but let religion teach us better, and take away this natural poison from us.

Fellow-labourer.

The apostle commends him yet further. He calls Epaphroditus his 'fellow labourer,' in regard of the pains he endured; and 'fellow soldier,' in regard of the perils and dangers he jointly did undergo with the apostle. The doctrine that hence arises is, that ministers are fellow-labourers. They are not, or should not be, fellow-loiterers, as many are. He. The Scriptures compares them to the most painful and laborious professions; to husbandmen, whose

labour is circular, every year renewing as the year doth renew. Such is the ministers' labour, converting and strengthening others. It is a great labour to break the shell of the word; to lay open the right interpretation thereof; to divide it aright; to convert a soul; to preserve it from the devil. It is as the peril of women in travail; 'My little children, of whom I travail in birth till Christ be formed in you,' saith Paul our apostle in Gal. iv. 19. Idle people are therefore unjust esteemers and judgers of the pains of ministers, they knowing it is out of their proper element.

Use. If ministers then be labourers, you to whom we preach are God's orchard; you must submit yourselves to be wrought on. If we be builders, you must be lively stones of this building. You must suffer yourselves to be squared, and cut, and made fit for this building while you are here. At the building and finishing of the material temple there was no noise of hammers, or such instruments; all were fitted in the mountain. Thus must we expect to be fitted here while we live; for in that beautiful temple in heaven, there is no fashioning or fitting, either by crosses to hammer us, or by any other means. We must here be conformable to his death, that we may also be conformed to the similitude of his resurrection hereafter. If ministers be husbandmen, you must be 'ground,' and such as may bring forth fruit to perfection, else all our labour and pains that we take with you will be to no other end than to make you to be near cursing, Heb. vi. 7. And know, it is not sufficient that you bring not forth evil fruit; but every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, must be hewed down and cast into the fire, Mat. iii. 10. Remember Christ cursed the fig-tree for unfruitfulness; and with what curse? Even unfruitfulness. Thus will God do with us. If he finds us unfruitful, he will take away his Spirit, and we shall be unfruitful still; and this by woeful experience we see daily, with many that come indeed within the sound of the word every day, but mend not one jot; nay, they become every day worse. May not God complain, as he did of Judah in the parable of the vineyard, Isa. v. 5, that he hath hedged us and fenced us about with government, and authority, and good laws, and hath taken out of us the stones and thorns of popery, and profaneness; and yet we bring forth wild grapes. And might he not break down the wall; and that justly, and suffer us to be devoured. Surely yes; and yet must needs we acknowledge him to be just. But it follows, the apostle calls Epaphroditus hero his,

Fellow-labourer. It is observable here, concerning God's goodness, that he suffers not his faithful labourers to be alone. Christ sends them out by 'two and two,' before his face, Mark vi. 7; and this he doth that they might be

a mutual aid, strengthening and comforting one another. Thus did Christ in old time, and thus he doth also in later times. He sent Augustine and Jerome, Luther and Melanethon; where, by the way also, observe God's wisdom in sending men of diversity of gifts: Jerome, severe and powerful; Augustine, meek and gentle; Luther, hot and fiery; Melanethon, of a soft and mild spirit; one to temper the other's over forwardness, and thereby to prevail with some that liked not of the strictness of the other. And by this means God sent teachers suitable to the natures and fitting the several humours of men, among whom some desire to hear the 'sons of consolation,' others the 'sons of thunder.'

Fellow-soldier.

Every man's life is a warfare, but most of all and above all, the minister is continually in war and strife. They are soldiers, leaders; they carry the standard, but they of all others are in the most danger, they stand in the brunt of the battle. The reason hereof is: the devil, having malice against the whole church in general, specially aimeth at them that pull men out of his service into the church, even as beasts do rage against such as take their young away from them. It is the minister that treads on the serpent's head: no marvel, then, if the devil endeavoreth to bite them by the heel. Thus dealt he with Christ, when he first set upon his office of mediator; and thus did he with Moses and Paul, in the main plots contrived against them. Such as those are great eyesores to him, and this is it that makes them soldiers and captains. But how? I answer, even as Paul, 1 Cor. x. 4. So the ministers do fight against the strongholds of corruption within us, against natural reason, corrupt affections, proud conceits; they fight against these imaginations, and in them, against the devil himself, who doth use these instruments to bring his purposes to pass. In ministers, therefore, it is required principally knowledge in the stratagems of the devil, in especial manner in those amongst whom they should converse; by observing the corruptions of the times, places, and the corrupt customs, and also the general corruptions of callings. He, therefore, that would be a good soldier, had need be continually resident in his charge; for the devil having gotten hold once, he seeks to sing them asleep with 'Soul, thou hast much goods,' &c., Luke xii. 19. This is dangerous. The minister had need look to it; for men do soothe themselves up in pleasure, thinking that religion may well stand with the love of the world. The watchman must tell them plainly, 'You cannot serve God and mammon.' If these false conceits, this false divinity that is in us, were once removed, we should easily resist the devil. Our enemies are within us, and

therefore what saith Christ? 'The prince of this world cometh, and hath found nothing in me,' John xiv. 30, and therefore he got nothing. 'Be not deceived,' saith St Paul; thereby showing that their offence did arise of a false conceit and an error in judgment. If then the ministers be soldiers under Jesus Christ our general,

Use 1. Then all by nature are in an opposite kingdom. We have natural lusts in us against every commandment, and there is no act of faith in us, but we have false conclusions in us to fight against them. We are by nature not only void of all goodness, but we have a nature opposite to all goodness.

Use 2. The second use is for instruction. If we would be brought and redeemed out of this estate, let us not hold forth against the ministry of the gospel. Some will have such carnal conceits, that do what we can, they will not see; they are wilfully blind. Such as these are by the ministry of the gospel hastened to hell. Their course is made more swift, their fall more desperate. Let it not be with us so; but let us come with yielding hearts to the word, not resisting the Spirit. God will not always strive with us, but will give us up to our own courses, to live and die under the dominion of the devil, and so will glorify himself in our confusion. For the word is as the man on the white horse which is spoken of in the Revelation, it goes forth conquering, it condemns men already, Rev. xix. 11. It is like Jonathan's bow, it never returns empty from the blood of the slain, 2 Sam. i. 22. Christ he continues to preach to us here by his Spirit, as he did to those in the time of Noah, 1 Pet. iii. 19. If we will not hear, we shall into prison, as they are now without redemption, for blood shall be upon our own heads.

Use 3. In the third place, if ministers be soldiers for us, let us help them by our prayers. 'Curse Moroz,' saith the angel of the Lord. Why? 'Because they came not to help the Lord,' Judges v. 28. If those are cursed with a bitter curse, that came not to help them that fight for the Lord, what curse remaineth to them that fight against them, and deprave them that fight for the Lord?

Use 4. Lastly, Seeing we are here in a working estate, nay, in a warring estate, it should make us more willing, nay, to desire, to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, where all assaults and trials shall cease, all tears shall be wiped away. And therefore, if we see afflictions, be not terrified, for God will give thee strength here and hereafter. Thou shalt be recompensed in the resurrection of the just.

But your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.

The word in the original that is translated 'messenger,' signifieth an apostle, and it may be taken, either for a messenger sent by them to the apostle Paul, or for a messenger sent by the apostle Paul to them. However, it is an honourable office to be an ambassador to the church of God, or to be a messenger from the church of God; and therefore the Philippians sent him that was most dear to them to the apostle Paul, out of the love they bare to him; and Paul again would not keep him long from them, because he loved them. It is a happy contention, when men contend who shall express most love and affection toward each other. This Epaphroditus brought refreshing to the apostle, being then in durance, from the Philippians. Whence observe,

Doct. 1. That the child of God is subject to wants here whiles he lives. Thus it is with them at all times. Thus is it with us. Sometimes we want this thing, sometimes that; but [he] gives them what they most want. Thus was it with Christ. He wants water, and was constrained to beg it of a poor silly woman, John iv. 7, seq. And if it was thus with Christ, we must not look for better. And therefore, let us be comforted against it; for, as it followeth in the next place,

Doct. 2. The children of God shall he satisfied. Rather than Elias shall perish for hunger, the ravens shall feed him, 1 Kings xvii. 4. If rich Dives will not have mercy on such, the brutish dogs shall, Luke xvi. 21. For Paul, God provides one Epaphroditus, or Onesiphorus, 2 Tim. i. 10-18. In Acts xvi. 25, Paul's trials wore many; but see, those places which of themselves were places of horror become so comfortable as in them he sings psalms; and those persons that were his tormentors, become his great friends and comforters in his adversities. So that assuredly, one way or other, God will provide for his children, especially for his ministers. And therefore Christ bids his apostles, that when they went to preach, they should not carry anything with them; for well he knew that those that were converted would not suffer them to lack anything that was necessary. It must encourage us to our work. God, he will give us wages, even for the performance of our ordinary duties of our callings, if we do them in obedience to his laws. And indeed, if we could live by faith as we should, we would not care for anything, for God hath promised liberally, and if we could believe, he would not be less than his word, who doth suffer his children to want some few outward things, but it is for their good. And to such God ever gives patience to suffer, and to expect and wait the time of God's visitation.

Verse 26

For he longed after you all.

Epaphroditus, he longed after all the Philippians; yea, there was none but he had a regard of; yea, of the meanest, whom he knew to be as dear in Christ's acceptation as the greatest. For the soul and salvation of the meanest cost him as dear as the salvation of the greatest. Again, the weakest are soonest discontented and most subject thereunto, who therefore ordinarily are soonest brought to complain. It is a ground therefore for the ministers so to behave themselves, that they also have a respect unto all the meanest even as the greatest.

And was full of heaviness.

It grieved Epaphroditus to think that they mourned for his sickness. Grief returns by reflection on the party loved. Observe then the wicked nature of men that make music in the sorrow of others. Surely they have a poisonous heart within them; and it ought to reprove those that regard not to grieve those by whom they were brought into the world. Surely if such had the principles of nature within them, such a slavish condition of serving their own unbridled lusts could never settle on them.

Because that ye had heard that he had been sick. For indeed he was sick, &c.

Observe here how one wave follows another. After Epaphroditus had endured a long and dangerous voyage, he meets with a long and dangerous sickness. It is the nature of us. Let us not dream of any immunity. God's children are subject to sicknesses while they live. Daily experience proves it; for they have bodies that have the seeds of sickness in them.

Their heaven is not here; for they are not clean from corruption, which bringeth death and sickness, by which also God intends good to the body. For if such recover, their bodies are purged from many bad humours; if they do not recover it, God by little and little unties the marriage knot between the soul and the body, and so death comes more easy. And thus also grace is strengthened in the soul; as the outward man is weakened, so is the inward man renewed, 2 Cor. iv. 16. For by sickness we are put in mind to make even our accounts with God, and by it he also makes pleasures of the world to be bitter unto us, that we may the more willingly part with them; even as nurses

use to anoint the pap with some bitter thing to make the child refuse the pap. Observe in the second place, that God often suffers his children to come to extremities, yea, even to death itself, and into desperate estates. Thus did he suffer Hezekiah, Job, Jonas, David, Daniel, and the 'three children' to run into the jaws of death. Thus suffered he also his disciples to be overwhelmed with water ere he would seem to take notice of it. Nay, thus suffered he his only Son Christ upon the cross while he said, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' and by this means it comes to pass that when all natural and ordinary means fail them, their trust is not placed on the means, but on some more durable and constant help, upon God's own good will and power. For else our nature is such as soon we should idolize the means, and set them in the place of God, if means should continually recover us. And this offence was Asa guilty of in his sickness; he trusted not the Lord, but physicians. God is jealous of our affections. And hence lest Paul should be lifted up, he gave him over to some base temptation, which he calls 'the messenger of Satan.' In the second place, God suffers his children to fall into extremities, to the end that we having experience of God's helping hand in them, we might come to rely more confidently on him in all adversities. He suffers us to receive the sentence of death in us, to the end that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God, 2 Cor. i. 9. For God is never nearer than in extremities. His power is seen in man's weakness. In the third place, God suffers us to fall into extremities that he might try what is in us, and that he might exercise the graces in us. And commonly it is seen, those that rely upon means in such extremities make themselves executioners of themselves. Thus did Saul, Ahithophel, and Judas; for while they trust on the means, they failing them, what marvel if they seeing no remedy run into despair, whereas God's children go to their own Father, exercising their faith, hope, prayers, and all Christian graces and duties. And therefore afflictions are called trials, because they try our graces. For if it were not for them, we should not know what faith, patience, hope, or grace were. Fourthly, hence it comes that the communion between God and us might be more sincere; for whereas nothing is between God and us to rely on, then do we come more sensibly and experimentally to taste, see, and feel God more to our comfort; for where ordinary helps fail, God's help begins.

The use of all this is, That we should not be dismayed, though we be in the most forlorn estate; for in extremity God is most near us, and then shall our graces be strengthened, and we shall have experience of God's favour strengthening us. And in the second place, when thou seest any in great afflictions, pronounce not thy sentence rashly on him, for even then he may

be nearest God: Ps. xli. 1, 'Blessed,' saith the prophet, 'is he that considereth the poor aright: the Lord will deliver him in the time of trouble.' The papists, indeed, are unmerciful in this kind. See what he is by his diseases rind sicknesses, say they of Calvin, who, as Beza writes of him, was much afflicted that way (“). But see even in Epaphroditus, of whom Paul said none was minded like to him, yet he in a good cause was afflicted, and came to great extremities. Seeing then we cannot avoid sickness nor death, but we must all come to it, let us consider briefly how to tit ourselves for it beforehand, that it comes not suddenly, and takes us before we are aware thereof. And herein let us consider what we are to do before sickness, and what in sickness.

(1.) Before sickness labour to make God thy friend, who is Lord of life and death. Is there any hope that a prisoner which abuses the judge continually till he be on the ladder shall have pardon? How can he imagine that a man that all his lifetime followed his own wilful courses of sin, and persecuted, by scandalizing and slandering good men; that continually blasphemed God and abused him in his word; how can this man think to command comfort in sickness? How can he think God will be pleased with him? No. All such repentance in sickness may justly be suspected to be hypocritical, that it is made rather for fear of punishment than loathing of sin; and therefore God often leaves such men to despair, and that justly. See what he saith, Prov. i. 25, 'Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; I will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh,' and so forth to the end of the chapter. It is just with God, seeing when he called you would not answer, that when you call he should not answer. Be wise therefore to foresee the time to come.

(2.) In the second place, if thou wilt be sick to thy comfort, disease not thy soul beforehand. Those that will avoid sickness, they will abstain from such meats and other things as may increase their malady. Let it be thus in our soul sickness; find what thou art sick of, and take heed of hunting after such temptations and occasions as may inflame thy soul. Those that are profane swearers and loose livers they think they shall never hear of their wickedness; they think it will be forgotten and borne withal, whereas, even while they are thus wretched, they distemper both their souls and their own bodies also. Thus do they eat their own bane. Take away the strength and power of sickness. Take heed of sin beforehand. For it is the sin that thou now committest that breeds sickness. And he that tempts thee now to sin, when sickness comes will tempt thee to despair of pardon.

(3.) Thirdly, Wean thine affections from the earth; for else when any cross comes, we shall not be able to endure. The saying is true, qui nimis amat, nimis dolct. In what proportion a man loves this world too much in the enjoyment of it, in that proportion he grieves too much at his departure from it. It is an easy matter for one to die that hath died in heart and affection before. And to help this, consider the uncertainty and vanity of these things, and how unable they will be to help thee when thou shalt stand most in need of help. Men when they are well, they consider not what these things will do, but they consider what they cannot do. Friends in adversity are true friends. Alas, when thou art sick, what will thy friends or thy riches do! Yea, what can they do for thy recovery!

(4.) In the fourth place, make up thy accounts daily, that when sickness and weakness comes we have not our greatest and most laborious work to do. It is an atheistical folly to put off all till sickness, whereas they know not but God may call them by sudden death, or if he warns them by sickness, God may suffer their understanding and senses to be so troubled as they shall neither he able to conceive or judge. Now, what madness is it to put off our hardest works to our weakest estate. There is no day but the best of us gather soil, especially those that have much dealing in the world. We had need to wash ourselves daily, and pray to God that he would cleanse us.

(5.) Fifthly, While thou, art in health, Jay a foundation and ground of comfort for sickness; and still be doing of something that may further thine account, and testify of the reconciliation between God and thee. It is strange to see how many account of death; send for a minister, be absolved, and take the communion, and say, 'Lord, have mercy on me and we presently conclude he is assuredly saved.'Tis true, these are good if well used; but if there be not a foundation laid, these are but miserable comforters. A good death is ever laid in a good life. Absolution to such as these that so lights esteem of their estate is no other than as a seal to a blank. It is true, we ought to deny absolution to none as will say they repent; but know this, you may be hypocrites, notwithstanding our absolution. We spend all our wits and powers to get unto us a little worldly pelf; and shall we think to go to heaven, and to be carried thither, through pleasures and ease? No. He that made thee without thee will not save thee without thee. This is one reason why we condemn popery; and though we in show hate it, yet are we popish in our conceits. It is the good that in our health we do that comforts us in our sickness; for considering how it hath pleased God not only to put into our minds but into our wills to do this or that good—Such a good man have I

raised; such a poor man have I relieved—we think of it as an evidence of God's Spirit in us. Contrarily, when we think how brave our apparel hath been, how gallant our company, what pleasing plays and spectacles we have seen, what can this comfort us? Nay, will it not discomfort us to consider we have spent our means and time unprofitably; we have delighted in worldly delights? How shall I account with that just Judge for my time and means ill spent? Doth not this argue want of grace, want of God's Spirit? De wise therefore with Joseph against times of famine, of sickness, of death; prepare such cordials as may strengthen thee. Now,

2. In the next place consider we how we are to behave ourselves in sickness.

(1.) First, therefore, know and consider that as Job saith, 'Sickness comes not from the dust,' Job v. 6; but consider thy ways, especially thy antecedent course of life, which of late thou hast passed over next before thy sickness. For God corrects not for sin in general so much as for some one sin that rules. If it appears not, pray to God to help thee in this thy search: and when thou hast found out the Jonah, the Achan that thus troubleth thee, 'then judge thyself and justify God,' Josh. vii. 19.

(2.) 'Judge yourselves, that ye be not judged of the Lord,' 1 Cor. xi. 91; lay thyself open by confession; renew thy repentance, and confess thyself thoroughly, and spare not thyself. It is cruelty to be merciful to thyself in this thing. And justify God; say with the holy prophet, 'Just art thou, O Lord, and righteous are thy judgments,' Ps. cxix. 75; and thus by meeting with God we do allay our sickness. For God uses it no other than as a messenger to call us to meet with him, who else would never look after him; and when the messenger hath his answer, he is gone. When we repent and amend, the sickness departs, unless it be sent for a better end, to call us out of this miserable world, to perfect his promises to us. When therefore God summons thee, do not as the common course is, send first for the bodily physician, and when thou art past natural care, then for the divine; but contrarily let the divine begin, Ps. xxxii. 3, seq. Until David had confessed his sin, 'his bones waxed old with roaring, and his moisture was turned to the drought of summer.' But when he confessed his sins, ',Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin for indeed the sickness of the body begins from the iniquity of the soul. Begin with it; look to heal it, and comfort in thy bodily estate will follow; and it is just with God to suffer those that trust so to the physician to continue in hope of health, till they be past recovery, and then to

send them to their own places, as it was said of Judas, without thinking of their soul's good. Thus, when thou hast found out thy disease, and laid it open to God,

(3.) In the next place, look for evidences of comfort; desire God to witness to thy sold his pence with her; and upon every warning of sickness, look for thy evidence afresh. This will strengthen thee as it did Job. Whatsoever discomforts he saw, 'yet I know my Redeemer liveth, and that I shall see him,' Job xix. 20. And thou thus going to God, if thou lookest on the earth, thou wilt count all as dross and dung, as Paul did, Philip, iii. 8. All worldly matters will be despised in thine eyes.

(4.) In the fourth place, labour for love. Consider how the world is with us. We know not what will become of us. Begin with justice, in giving every man his own, and then with bounty; then forgive. We cannot go to heaven with anger. Thus did Christ, 'Father, forgive them,' Luke xxiii. 34; and Stephen, 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge,' Acts vii. 60. Be far from revenge. If thou lookest to come where Christ is, do as he did. This is hard to fleshly minds, but it must be done. Thou must first deny thyself before thou canst be saved.

(5.) In the next place, labour for patience; but such as must be ruled by reason, and not blockish. To this end consider, first, whence the sickness is. It is from God who is powerful. [Consider] that we shall get nothing by striving or murmuring; that we cannot resist him so but he will have his will fulfilled upon us; and therefore let us humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God. Then also, consider it comes from God, who is thy Father, and therefore loveth thee. What then though the cup be bitter? Shall I not drink of the cup which my father giveth me to drink of? Know also, that all the circumstances of thy sickness are ordered by him, the degree and time are limited by him, he knows what is needful and fitting, he is Lord of life and death, resign thyself therefore to him; and then hath God his end he looks for, viz., that his children should cast themselves on his mercy. In the next place, remember that thou deservest much worse, and that he shows thee favour in this gentle correction. Remember what Christ hath done for thee, what he hath suffered, what he hath delivered thee from, and what these things are in comparison of those that thou justly deservest.

Consider also what will be the fruit and end of all these thy troubles and griefs, even the quiet fruits of righteousness; all shall be for our good. Is it for thy good rather to drink of a bitter potion than sickness? what though it be

bitter? It is for my health; God is working my good. Though I feel it not now, hereafter I shall in his good time. And thus shall we justify God, as David did, and behold him as in Christ a most loving Father who was an angry judge, and being turned, all are turned. Corrections they are now, which were before punishments, and they are become trials of graces.

(6.) In the last place, let us being sick be ever heavenly-minded, thinking on nothing but that which may administer to us spiritual comfort. If we have not this, look not to come thither. It is not fit our minds should be on these earthly things, whereas our souls are going or should he going to heaven. It is God's just judgment to suffer men's minds, being ready to depart the world, to be taken up with the world, and as they have lived, so to die. If we would have a pattern of dying well, look on Christ; before his death, when he was troubled, he will have his disciples with him. So when we are vexed with any temptation or trial, use such company as may bring spiritual comfort to thee, and thereby to strengthen thee. As Christ left his 'peace behind him,' John xiv. 27, let us study also how to preserve peace after our departure. As Christ did all the good he could so long as he lived, so should we, that our sickness may be fruitful of comfort. As Christ studied how to do all his work, thus should we endeavour to do what we have to do, that with a clear conscience we may say as Christ did, 'Father, I have done the work thou gavest me to do,' John xvii. 4. Christ had care of his disciples and friends before he died: of his mother, 'Woman, behold this son,' saith he, &c., John xix. 20. 'I go away, but I will send you the Comforter,' John xv. 26. We also ought to be careful for the well-leaving of them whom God hath committed to our care to provide for. Christ was not vindictive; 'Father, forgive them,' saith he, Luke xxiii. 34. So we, specially when we die in peace, forgive all the world, yea, our enemies, for so also did Stephen. Lastly, Christ commends his soul to God: 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit,' saith he, Luke xxiii. 46; dying, he dies in faith and obedience. Thus also ought we to imitate him; die in faith, be sure of God that he is thy Father, and obediently submit thy soul into his hands when thou diest. Thus when we die we shall die with comfort, and we shall count it exceeding joy when we fall into any trouble or adversity whatsoever.

But the Lord.

Doct. Observe this comfortable exception: God brings his children low, but he raises them up again, if it be for their good: Ps. cxviii. 17, 'I will not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord.' Nay, then especially, when

they are past all worldly means of recovery; and as it is in sickness, thus also is it in other troubles; and this God doth.

Reason 1. First, To glorify his power the more.

2. Secondly, That his enemies might not triumph still in overcoming us.

3. Thirdly, That we being thus delivered, might consecrate our lives and breath to him anew, as having received them from him, even by a new gift.

Use 1. The use hereof is, If God helps us above and against means, we ought to hope above, yea, against hope, believe in the greatest extremities; 'though he kill us, yet trust in him.' God is not tied to Galen's rules. He can work above physical means, as he showed in the cure of Hezekiah. Especially in soul troubles let not our faith fail us, for he hath absolutely promised his helping hand in them.

Had mercy on him.

Observe the language of the Holy Ghost, showing the recovery of Epaphroditus, by the ground and cause of it, 'God had mercy on him.'

Doct. Observe, therefore, God's mercy is the spring of all God's dealing with us. Both his benefits and his corrections of us all comes from his mercy; all his ways are mercy and truth. We are sick, well; we live, we die; all comes from his mercy. Seeing, therefore, all comes from his mercy, yea, our greatest extremities, because he might have dealt worse with us,

Use 1. Let us look that we wilfully neglect not or cast away mercy, in what estate soever we are.

Doct. In the next place observe, God's mercy extends to this temporal life. We think his mercy is only for things that belong to life everlasting. No. The same love and mercy that gives us heaven, it is the same that gives us our daily bread; and therefore the same faith we must have to God for the things of this life that we have on him for the other life in heaven. And thus did the saints, as we may see in Heb. xi. 4, seq.

Use 2. This should direct us not to rest in deliverance, but to look to the ground of it, the mercy of God, and endeavour to taste the love and mercy of God in his gifts, for all his gifts are less than his mercy. This will cause us

to have more comfort in our daily bread than the wicked have in all their abundance.

Use 3. Thirdly, We should learn from hence, in giving, to give thy soul and affection; let thy brother have thy heart with thy gifts, and thus shalt thou imitate thy heavenly Father.

Use 4. Lastly, If the very recovery from sickness comes from God's free love and mercy, what can we look for by merit? If health for Epaphroditus his body came from the free mercy of God, how can we expect for to merit the salvation of our souls. No. It must be from God's free grace and mercy in Jesus Christ.

And not on him only, but on me also.

As if he had said, It may be for him it had been good to have been taken away, and to have remained with Christ, but God had mercy on me in sparing him.

Obj. But it may be objected, How can it be the mercy of God that spared him, whereas God had rather showed his mercy in taking him away from the evil to come, and in placing him with himself in glory? and Paul, he desired 'to be dissolved and to he with Christ,' and said it was far better for him so to be.

Ans. I answer, life, and especially health, is God's mercy, for without it life is no life. But why, and how?

1. Because by it we recover our spiritual comfort and assurance of heaven, Ps. xxxix. 13. To this end David prayed, 'Spare me a little, that I may recover my strength.'

2. Secondly, In regard of others' health, life is a blessing. Thus, Hezekiah desired it, that he might get assurance of his salvation, and praise the Lord, Isa. xxxviii. 22.

3. Thirdly, Life is to be desired as a blessing from God, in regard of the church, that we might do good; for after death we are receivers only, and not doers. All the good we convey to others, we must do it while we live here. Therefore it is not unlawful to desire to live to see thy children brought up in the fear of God, and yet let that be with a resignation to God's will and

purpose. We see Christ, that had contrary desires, who came to perform his Father's will and to die willingly, yet he said, 'Let this cup pass from me,' Mat. xxvi. 39; for the soul is to be carried to desire as the objects are offered. If thou beest well, rejoice in it, and count it as God's blessing. If thou beest sick, patiently submit thyself to God's will, and count it as Lis merciful dealing with thee. Indeed, as we look on death being an enemy to our nature, and a destroyer thereof, we desire it not. Yet, considering it as God's decree and will, say still, 'Thy will he done, O Lord, and not mine.' Paul, he considered for himself it was better to die, but looking to the Philippians, 'nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is better for you,' Phil. i. 24. Learn from hence the sweet estate of God's children; whether he lives or dies, all is mercy; and this they have by being assured they have their part in the covenant of grace. Labour therefore to find an interest therein for thyself. Observe, in the next place, God does good to us by others, as here he conveys good to Paul by Epaphroditus his life. Let us therefore praise him for parents, friends, benefactors; for by them God hath mercy on us. God uses man for the good of man, that he might knit the communion of saints together more straightly. No doubt but the apostle Paul had begged Epaphroditus his life from God, and he here acknowledges it as a great mercy of God. Thus ought we to acknowledge God's mercy on us, by taking mercy on others for our sakes.

Verse 27

Lest I should have sorrow on sorrow.

Our blessed apostle had sorrowed much for the sickness of Epaphroditus; if he had died, he had had wave on wave. Observe, God's children have not sorrow on sorrow. We have matter of sorrow while we are here, as our corruptions, and the troubles of the church. These minister unto us matter of grief while we are here in this vale of tears. Let us not therefore be delicate nor dainty. We must sow in tears here, if we would reap hereafter in joy. We must shed tears, if we would hereafter have them wiped away. Yet is the sorrow of a Christian mingled ever with joy to support them. The Lord he weighs and measures the distresses of his children. The rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the godly man's back, Ps. cxxv. 3. And this mingled estate must be till we come into heaven, whore all tears shall be wiped away.

Obj. But it will be objected, David had sorrow upon sorrow: one depth calls another, saith he, Ps. xlii. 7.

A us. I answer, It is true there may be divers occasions of grief, but God doth so temper them as he giveth joy upon joy, grace upon grace, and comfort upon comfort; faith upon faith, patience upon patience; and it is much better to have access of comfort in extremities than to want extremities and occasions of sorrow, by reason of the good we receive by such trials. And there is no distress but we may gather ground of comfort to ourselves in them. Art thou sick? Bless God that he hath left thee the use of reason and thy wits. Hast thou lost friends, and hath not God taken all away? He leaves thee some, nay, he leaves his Spirit to accompany thee. Paul was in prison, it is true, but did he want comfort? No. God will raise us up with one hand as he casts us down with the other; it is his 'mercy we are not consumed,' Lam. iii. 22. But the wicked they shall have sorrow on sorrow. He lets them ruffle a while here, but at length their judgments come suddenly and unavoidably. He hath no mercy for them if he once begins. Thus did he add judgment to judgment on Pharaoh till he was consumed; and therefore upon little griefs they run into desperate courses, as Cain, Ahithophel. God suffers the wicked to add sin to sin, and so doth he add sorrow to sorrow. Lay up this for our comfort against the ill time. God will not suffer us to be tempted above measure. He will either abate our trouble or enlarge our grace, so as it shall not overwhelm us. Note this example of God as one for us to imitate and to follow. When we see any one afflicted, let us not vex them the more by adding sorrow to sorrow. David he complains of a kind of men that were of the nature of the devil, going over where the wall is lowest, like ill humours that resort all to ill affected places. No. God's children have pitiful and compassionate hearts. Examine therefore thy spirit, whether thou canst weep with them that weep; for as the Spirit of God helps us in misery, so do those that are led by his Spirit. It is the custom, and hath been, of God's children, to comfort those in misery. Thus did Job's friends, although they erred in the performance thereof.

Verse 28

I sent him therefore more carefully.

In this verse St Paul sets forth the end of sending Epaphroditus, viz., that they might have the more joy, and he the less sorrow. But it will be said, Paul had use of Epaphroditus himself; he was in prison; he had none to comfort him. But it is no wonder for him, that could set light by his own soul for God's people, to part with a friend for the comfort of his people; and this ought we also to respect, namely, the comforts of God's people above all.

Thus did this apostle. He was content to forbear the joys of heaven for the good of the Philippians, in the first chapter. The children of God are of excellent spirits. They can overcome and deny themselves.

That when you see him again you may rejoice.

The Philippians hereby had a double cause of joy. First, sight of their pastor whom they loved. Seeing friends is more comfortable than all ways of hearing from them; and the joys of heaven are commended to us by the beatifical vision we hear of these joys here. But when we see them, then is our joy accomplished. The second cause of joy was in this, that now they should see Epaphroditus, as given them anew and sent from God; whose love, mercy, goodness, and power is more clearly seen in delivering men from danger than in preserving of men from falling into danger. It is more honour to God, and more comfort to men. For the Philippians received him as a token of God's love to them, and as an effect of their prayers. Let us take notice of the enlargement of God's love to us in delivering and enlarging any of our friends to us free from afflictions.

And I may be the less sorrowful.

The apostle was, and we must be sorrowful in this world; but sometimes more, sometimes less. For a Christian's estate is ever full of ebbs and Hoods. But of this I spake formerly.

Verse 29

Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness.

Our apostle first entreats them generally 'to receive him;' then he shows the manner, 'in the Lord with gladness;' thence he grounds a general, 'make much of such.' But it may be urged—the apostle might have spared this exhortation, for no doubt but the Philippians being glad to see him would receive him. It is true; but this is not all: they must receive him in the Lord,„' as a man of God; as a man sent you from God; as a messenger of Christ; and receive him with a holy affection.

Doct. A Christian must do all things in the Lord: marry in the Lord; love in the Lord; salute in the Lord. All matters, both of necessity and courtesy, must be in the Lord. A Christian must 'live in the Lord,' and he must 'die in the Lord.'

Reason. The reason is, for that a Christian in all looks to God. Whatsoever befalls him he receives, whatsoever he does, he does in the Lord, looking only to him, and depending on him. Carnal men contrarily do all things carnally: marries, loves, salutes carnally; he lives carnally, dies carnally. But the Christian's life is ever to die and behold Christ in all things; in all estates; in all his thoughts, words, and deeds; in life, in death. Let this acquaint us with the manner of a Christian's life and estate, and with the language of the Holy Ghost.

And hold such in reputation.

Others read it, 'make much of such'. The sense is the same with the former. 'Esteem of such as they are;' esteem of such ministers that are faithful as he is; of such Christians as he is; such excellent Christians as he. So as the words have a double reference, as to both his general and particular calling. For his particular calling of the ministry, see how he is formerly commended; that he was painful and careful, and neglected his own life. Ministers, if they be such, they must be had in repute and esteem. If they be not of the best sort, surely they are of the worst. Angels and good men, none better than the good; none worse than them if they turn. But especially ministers, if they be not good, they are unsavoury as salt; neither good for the ground, nor yet for the dunghill.

Reason. The reason of this is, for by such as these are God conveys greatest good to men. He builds by them, he plants by them. They are watchmen, husbandmen, they are God's labourers; nay, they are his angels, discovering to the church the secrets of God's counsel. They are as Job saith, but as 'one among a thousand.' Such surely as these are worthy of all respects.

Obj. But it will be objected, they are ever opposite to us, they cross men.

Ans. Even then when they are most opposite they are to be esteemed the more, for they are 'the light of the world.' Their office is to discover the works of darkness. They are husbandmen to break up the fallow grounds of our hearts; and it is our part to embrace them in doing their duties. For it is a note of a wicked man to count such as these troublers. It was Ahab's speech to Elijah, 1 Kings xviii. 17. God's children loves them and reverences them when they are most sharp; for they know that they themselves do want such reproofs to check their corruptions; they wish their corruptions might be ripped up thoroughly. This is impossible that carnal men should allow of

this. They have beloved sins. When they are met with they are touched to the quick, no marvel therefore if they repine. A true Christian will acknowledge and esteem the meanest part of them blessed and beautiful. The carnal man may esteem ministers indeed, but such as cry 'Peace, peace, when there is no peace,' Jer. vi. 14; and surely such a prophet is a fit prophet for such a people. But let the true Christian love and reverence those that are the messengers of peace, and esteem of them by so much the more, by how much their degree in grace is the greater; for there will be an affection suitable to the proportion of grace they have.

And to this end observe with me some motives to incite us to this duty; and first, 1. It is the character of the child of God, and a sign we are translated from death to life, if we love and reverence the brethren. If we be brethren as we profess ourselves, we are led with the same spirit; and therefore we ought to love those most especial that are means of begetting the grace of the Spirit in us. It is a part of grace to desire grace. Now there is no desire of grace but there must be a love of it; and therefore if we will prove ourselves to be marked with the mark of God in our foreheads, and that we are his children, let us get this character for a witness to us.

2. The second motive in regard of God,—the former was in regard of ourselves,—those that God esteems most we ought to male most account of. God spared not his own Son for their sake. The saints are precious in the eyes of the Lord. And in the second place, Christ he esteems of them above his own blood; he gave himself for them freely. Thirdly, the angels they esteem of them. Christ says, Offend them not, for the angels in heaven behold the face of God continually, Mat. xviii. 10. Fourthly, the ministers esteem them. 'I suffer all for the elect's sake,' says Paul. The Spirit of God esteems them; they are his temples to dwell in, 2 Tim. ii. 10.

3. In regard of themselves they are to be esteemed, they are lively. They have the 'new creature' in them; they have God's Spirit ever in them. All created excellency is as 'the flower of grass.' It withers suddenly. But they have that which continues for ever, grace and the Spirit of God. They have the image of God seated in them. They have the word and the promises made sure to them. They are free-born; free from hell, death, wrath. They are of disposition free; they can want and they can abound. They are rich in the best riches, strong in the greatest strength. They overcome the devil, the world; they overcome and conquer death, who is the king of fears.

4. In the next place, in regard of the good we reap by them they are to be esteemed. God blesses us by them. They are the pillars of this tottering world. In regard of a few of God's elect not yet brought in, this world continues yet; but if the number be accomplished once, God will no longer withhold his coming. Lot's presence in Sodom stayed God's wrath; he could do nothing till he was gone. So Noah in the old world, Joseph in Egypt, Moses among the Israelites, they stopped the passage of God's wrath; and therefore Job, xxii. 30, saith, 'He shall deliver the island of the innocent.' They are 'the chariots and horsemen of Israel;' their prayers are our protectors. And thus mayest thou try thyself and thy estate; for dost thou despise those that are good, thou art ranked amongst vile persons. Look 2 Tim. iii. 3, and such as are signs of the last times, wherein corruption shall abound. Many things are much set by, but where are those that have their delight set on the excellent of the earth? A wicked man, I deny not, may esteem some one that is good, but it shall not be for that they are good, but it may be for some by-respects of profit or pleasure that they shall reap thereby. They will commend stars that be within their own horizon; praise martyrs being dead, whom, if alive, likely it is they would he the first persecutors of them; for thirty pieces of silver, a little gain, sell even Christ himself, and make shipwreck of their faith. Yet the time will shortly come when these despised shall be had in greatest honour, and those that scorn them now would be glad to keep them company, and ever be with them.

Quest. But it will be asked, Where are these men you speak of? how is it they are not respected?

Ans. I answer, They are not known, 'the world knows them not;'— First, Because it knows not their Father; for if it esteemed him, it would esteem also of them; and therefore, Secondly, they are 'strangers and pilgrims,' although excellent in themselves. Thirdly, 'Their life is hid with Christ,' Col. iii. 8. They are eclipsed and disgraced. Disgraces, scandals, miseries, and their own infirmities, these make the children of God to be unknown; yet those that know them will even in their infirmities see many things worth observation and practice. Contrarily in wicked men what is to be respected? Shall we think of them the bettor for their degree, state, comeliness, riches, or the like? Surely these end in death, whereas all respects are taken away; but goodness is more accomplished in death, it shall never be at an end; and therefore to be the rather respected and esteemed, and men also as they are good. Wicked men may be also esteemed, but not otherwise than as they are marked with the image of God, as they are in place of

magistracy and government; and so they are not esteemed, but their images they carry about with them of superiority. And therefore among these of the like kind those are to be most esteemed that are most good, and this is, as I said before, a note of a good man; for what saith David, Ps. xv. 4? 'He shall enter into the tabernacle of God, in whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the Lord.' To this end begin with thyself. How dost thou value thyself? Dost thou do it carnally? How then canst thou esteem aright of others? Be therefore of Theodosius his mind, 'value thyself according to thy measure in grace and assurance of salvation'. What though the world think basely of thee! So did it of those saints, Heb. xi. 88. They thought them unworthy to live. But remember God is not ashamed to be called our God and Father. Heaven is ours, Christ, grace, and glory are all ours. Thus by esteeming thyself aright thou shalt begin to reverence that in others which thou so much accountest of in thyself; and we all together shall find what God esteems most of, and of whom, when we shall be together crowned with joys unspeakable, which are hidden from the eyes of the world. It appears not to them what we shall be, the glory being such and so great as they, judging carnally, cannot conceive thereof.

Verse 30

Because for the work of Christ he was nigh to death.

This work of Christ especially aims at works of mercy to Paul while he was in prison, and for these he is said to be nigh to death. By his long and tedious journey he took a sickness, and thereby was nigh to death. And these are called 'the works of Christ;' partly because all good works are from Christ —for he commands them, he allows them, he did them— and partly also because in the doing of them our aim is at Christ's honour. So then the excellency of good works consists not in doing those which are good in their own nature, but in well doing of them. All our particular actions must be done with having an eye on and a respect to Christ. What if therefore thou doest any good thing with an eye on credit or a good name, nay, if of mere pity, without respect of Christ's command, example, and obedience thereunto; all that thou doest in this manner cannot merit the name of a good work, or a work of Christ. For Christ saith, that which you do to any of his little ones you do to him. And do you think that he will take it done to him, when he seeth in thy heart that thou regardest by-respects, and never intendest him in the thing thou doest? No. You did it for commendation, to get popular applause, or for your own profit, or the like. Let it not be with us

in this manner. Let us do all things commanded in the second table, as in obedience of the first, to glorify God. Let us do good works thoroughly, though they cost us labour, cost, and danger; also pray zealously, give cheerfully. 'Cursed is he that doth the work of the Lord negligently,' Jer. xlviii. 10. Give freely therefore to every one in whom Christ comes a-begging to thee. 'This is pure religion before God and undefiled, to visit the fatherless and widows,' James i. 27; but see that you keep yourselves 'unspotted of the world.' And these things done as they ought to be, will comfort us on our deathbed, and be an assurance to our consciences of our faith, and will strengthen us when all other works, done for any self-respect, shall be so far from comforting us, as they shall weaken and discomfort us, and bear witness to our guilty consciences of our hypocrisy. But to proceed. It may seem St Paul was ill advised of his work of Epaphroditus, that he called it a work of Christ, when it had like to have cost him his life. Yet ought it not to seem strange, for by this very pattern we learn not to avoid or fly from the doing of any work of Christ; no, though by doing of it we incur danger of our lives. For the best good must take the chief and first place with us; and by how much the soul is more excellent than the body, by so much is the good of the soul to be preferred before the good of the body. He that hates not father, mother, yea, his own life, in respect of God's glory, cannot be the disciple of Christ. God would have us exercise our judgments in these things beforehand, that we may go about all such things with a holy and zealous resolution. Hence we may gather grounds to answer divers doubts.

1st Quest. As, first, whether in time of persecution we ought to lose our lives or deny the truth?

Ans. To this I answer, out of the example of Epaphroditus, affirmatively, that we ought rather to lose our lives than deny the truth; for God's truth is better than our lives. It was commendable in Priscilla and Aquila that they laid down their necks for Paul's life, Rom. xvi. 3, 4; much more is the truth of God's word to be esteemed above man's life. And they are counted wise that have that esteem; as the martyrs, whoso estate is accounted a blessed estate.

2d Quest. Furthermore, it will be asked, Whether a minister ought to leave his congregation in the time of pestilence, or not?

Ans. I answer, upon the same ground, he ought not; for he is not, in regard of the work of God, to esteem his own life. But so as he is not bound to a particular visitation of every one whom it hath pleased God to visit with

sickness, neither ought the sick party to require this at the hands of the pastor; but rather to reserve him to the general good of all of them, and the rather to spare him. Thus did Beza. And in the law the leprous person was to go about and to cry 'Unclean, unclean,' to the end that others might not unawares be polluted by him. And therefore every one ought to be a good husband for himself, to lay up with himself grounds of comfort against such a time as it may please God to afflict him in any such manner. Another question may hence be answered.

3d Quest. Whether a man may equivocate to save his own life?

Ans. I answer: If a man be lawfully called to answer for himself, he must know that he ought to tell the truth, and not to be ashamed thereof; for why do men live but to live honestly, and to keep a good conscience? And it is more necessary that truth should flourish and be cleared than that thou shouldst live. Those that now are ashamed to confess the truth, the God of truth will be ashamed of them hereafter. And therefore a fourth question may arise.

4th Quest. Whether a man may break prison to save himself?

Ans. I answer: Thou oughtest not to do anything that may endanger another man to save thine own life; and therefore mayest not, by breaking of prison, endanger the jailor's life to save thyself. And the reasons are, for that it shames the truth and equity of thy cause; and therefore when the prison doors were open Paul would not fly, Acts xvi. 28, seq. Peter did it indeed, he came out of prison; but it was an extraordinary and miraculous deliverance by the command of the angel, Acts xii. 11. Secondly, it is a contempt of magistracy and law; for every man is to be governed by and to submit himself to the law.

5th Quest. Again, some have doubted whether a minister, being called to a place of unwholesome air, whether he may leave it.

Ans. I answer: Lot them consider before they go whether they shall be able to endure or not; but if they be once called, and are there, let them look to the salvation of God's people, and provide for themselves as they may. We see Epaphroditus neglects his own life for the service of God.

6th Quest. A sixth question or doubt may hence be resolved, Whether, in case of persecution, a minister may fly.

Ans. I answer: We may fly for our own safeties; and a minister may, if there be those left that being good shepherds will stand for the flock, that it be not scattered. Yet if God gives thee a spirit of courage to hold out, consult thou with God by earnest prayer for the direction of his Holy Spirit, and he will assuredly direct thee; for if out of thine own confidence thou shouldst stand out, and afterward give back, it would weaken and discourage others, who else it may be would stand out. Yet if thou beest once taken, whether thou art a minister or not, thou art under the law, thou must obey.

7th Quest. And in the seventh place, we may and ought to be ready to lay down our lives for the commonwealth, for common good is to be preferred before private good. The hand doth endanger itself for the good of the head, and therefore a private man may venture himself to save a public person; and from hence is grounded the lawfulness of a Christian war.

Quest. But it will be asked, How shall we come to this resolution, to lay down our lives for the truth?

Ans. I answer: First, thou must labour to have thy judgment enlightened, discern of the order of good things; and this only a Christian can get to account of his life but slightly in comparison, knowing that it is 'but a vapour that soon vanisheth,' James iv. 14, and that the peace of conscience will never leave a man till it hath brought him to eternity. He knows also the terrors of conscience are above all terrors, and that it will never leave him. He knows the world cannot be worth a soul, that nothing can redeem it being once lost; and these things being truly learned, we shall be ready to deny father, mother, yea, our very life, if they once oppose Christ; and thus shall we beforehand get a resolution by daily considering these things, and a mind truly prepared for all trials. And to that end put cases with thyself. Now, what thou wouldst do or suffer rather than be drawn to offend God, if the time of trial were now to come. If thy heart doth tell thee that thou canst forego all, and countest them as nought in respect of Christ, surely God he accepts of this thy resolution. If thou canst not find this in thee, know for a certainty thy faith is but weak. And therefore consider with thyself, that if thou come to this, to lose all for Christ, thou shalt be no loser. The peace of conscience is above all good that can be desired; and [consider] that thy life is not thine own, for both it, our estate, friends, are all of God's gift to us, who may take them when he will. But if they be lost for God's service, thou shalt be no loser. It cannot stand with God's justice to suffer it. Let this bring shame upon many that will do nothing for the church, lose no credit amongst the

wicked men, part with no jot of their goods, take no pains nor labour. We see it that martyrs they will spend their blood. Esther counted not her life dear unto her: 'If I perish, I perish,' iv. 16. And yet these are loath to venture displeasure of some inferior, mean person. How can such ever think to get assurance of salvation? In this case those that thus love their lives do hate them, and that which they fear shall fall suddenly on them; as it was with those that, starting aside for fear, and denying their profession, thinking to save themselves from the fire, they fell into a worse fire, the hell of a guilty conscience, which cannot be quenched, nor they made insensible thereof.

An Exposition of the Third Chapter of the Epistle of St Paul to the Philippians

Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.—Philip. III. 1.

This chapter contains a general exhortation to several duties. In this verse you have the manner of doing them—all must be done in rejoicing. From thence he proceeds to back other particular exhortations, with reasons and examples of himself, which we will speak of particularly when we come at them. Now in this verse I will speak first of the compellation, 'brethren;' then of the exhortation, 'rejoice;' and lastly, of the limitation, 'in the Lord.'

1. The appellation, 'brethren.' By this loving compellation he labours to enter into their hearts and affections; well knowing that exhortations are of the more force, being directed to those that are persuaded of the good affection of the speaker. If exhortation comes from the pride of a man, the pride of a man in the hearers will beat it back, and give entertainment thereunto.

But why are Christians brethren?

First, They have the same beginning of life from, the same Father: as also they have the same common brother, that is, Christ. They have the same womb, the church; the same food, the word of God. They have the same promises; they are all heirs, all born to an inheritance.

Furthermore, the word brother is a word of equality and of dignity: of equality—though in personal callings one is superior to other, yet this takes not away the common brotherhood. This should fill up the valleys of men's hearts dejected here, in regard of their mean estates; as also pull down the mountains of the proud hearts of men, lifted up through these outward things. Kings must not lift up themselves in disdain of others, because all those personal respects end in death; we carry them not to heaven. And in those respects that we agree in here, as in grace and goodness, we shall continue united for over. And yet must we honour such as are in eminency, and acknowledge them as men worthy of all respect, and give them dignity according to their places.

But further, this is a name of dignity. It argues that we are not basely born, that we are sons of God and heirs of heaven. Christ after his resurrection, the first term he gives his disciples, 'Tell my brethren,' saith he, 'I go to my Father and their Father.'

This word is also a word of lore; and. therewith the apostle insinuates the affections of the Philippians. Examine therefore thy affections towards the sons of God. If we love and respect them as our own brethren, good is our estate; if we hate them, our estate cannot be good.

And in the second place, Let not this word be appropriated to some, and not to others, which are notwithstanding of the same number. For one brother cannot make another no brother; for it is one and the same Father that makes brethren. So long therefore as thou seest anything of Christ in any, break not off thy affection, and disdain not the name of brother to such; for where the Spirit is, it works in us a resemblance of God; and where it stamps his image, it makes them brethren.

2. Exhortation, 'rejoice.' It is not only an affection, but a duty that we are enjoined. Wherein first observe,

(1.) It is a Christian's duty to rejoice. It is commanded here. Ministers are enjoined to speak comfort to such, Isa. xl. 1, 'Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people;' and Christ came to 'bind up the broken in heart,' Isa. lxi. 1, and the ministers sent to shew men their unrighteousness, Job xxxiii. 23. The spirit that is in such is the spirit of joy; and therefore joy is reckoned as a fruit of the spirit, Gal. v. 22.

And why should not Christians rejoice? They are free from the spiritual Egypt, from greatest miseries. Nay, why should not we sing as the Israelites did after their deliverance? Our enemies and deliverance is far greater than theirs. And we have the greatest prerogatives. We have here an assured hope of eternal perfect happiness hereafter; we have 'peace with God,' Rom. v. 1. We have free access in all our wants to the throne of grace; and we have a God ready to hear all our prayers, and to help us. We have many gifts already received. Christ is already given us. We are in a state of regeneration. And for the time to come, we have promises from God, the God of truth, that nothing shall separate us from Christ. Surely these are great causes of joy in us; and having such things as these, we dishonour them, the giver of them, and ourselves and our profession, if we rejoice not in them.

(2.) In the second place observe, that it belongs only to Christians to rejoice. Others have neither cause of joy, nor commandment to rejoice. The ministers and prophets are bidden to bid such howl and lament, to shew them their miserable estate. And indeed what ground can a condemned person have of joy? For the wicked, till they have remission of sins, they are in a damned estate; and though they will snatch this to themselves and say that they are sure to be saved, yet is salvation not their portion. They joy indeed, but it is in sin; in seeing or doing evil to others. Or if sometimes they joy in the gospel (for a wicked man may do so), it is but a forced joy, and much like hot waters to a cold fit of an ague. It brings heat and expulses cold for the present, but it burns them after. So this joy seems to comfort them now, but when trial comes it fails him, and makes him more disconsolate to see himself thus beguiled. Fitter it were for such to be first humbled and brought to the sight of their estate, than to administer comfort to them. To speak peace where none belongs is to undo men. It is the broken that must be healed, and the weary that must come to Christ.

(3.) Limitation. In the third place, observe the limitation of this joy: it must be 'in the Lord that is, in Christ, who in the New Testament is often called Lord. And he is our Lord: first, by gift; God hath given us all to Christ. Secondly, by conquest; he hath gotten victory of Satan. And thirdly, by marriage; and therefore we may well call him Lord, and rejoice in him, because he is our Lord; for by him we come to conquer all our enemies; by him we have peace, Rom. v. 1. He makes us kings and priests, and brings us to heaven.

Now, for the practice of this duty of rejoicing in the Lord, that we may be encouraged, let us consider how it is a means not only of adherence to God, but also of obedience to his laws.

[1.] Adherence to God. Joy, if it be found, knits us firm to God, so as we rest contented in him as our only and sufficient joy, seeking for no other joy in any other thing. To us Christ is made 'all in all' that we should solace ourselves in his fulness, which if we truly do, we will count all other things as despised, assuring ourselves they cannot minister or add any jot of sound comfort at all; and therefore will not endure any thought of mixture of other things with Christ, thereby to make him more sufficient and complete for our joys to rest on.

[2.] Obedience to his laws: for joy stirs up cheerfulness to every duty, and makes all duties acceptable to God and man. For the want hereof many

are dead and dull in good duties; and where a large portion of this joy is, it will remove all lets and delays to duty. It doth not only enable us to, but in, duty. Cain no doubt came cheerfully to a good duty, to sacrifice; but for want of this cheerful and joyful spirit, what was his behaviour in the performance thereof? 'His countenance was cast down,' Gen. iv. 6. This God espies suddenly, and so he doth in all our dull performances. For he looks things should be done cheerfully, and reason too, for he hath left us a treasure of excellent promises to encourage us. We see it in men. They love when a thing is done cheerfully; they know it betokens love in the party that doth it: and can we then think it strange that God requires it? Again, if we can fashion ourselves to this duty, God hath promised to increase our joy more abundantly. And he performed it to Hezekiah, 2 Chron. xxix. 36. He will give delight as a reward to him that delighteth in his work. And therefore we ought to labour to bring ourselves to this duty; to the obtaining of which observe these directions.

Means to get joy. First, Consider that joy comes from faith. For it is the sense of our reconciliation with Christ that makes us rejoice, Rom. v. 2, and 1 Pet. i. 6. Now, therefore, whatsoever strengthens faith, strengthens also our joy; and contrarily what weakens the one, must of necessity weaken the other.

Furthermore, joy comes from grace. Whatsoever, therefore, disturbs our peace, must needs disturb our joy. Therefore Satan, to despoil us of our joy, he spoils our faith through our sins; and by them he weakens our hope and our comfort. What is to be done then? Surely repair to the fountain of health, the well of joy, the word of God, Isa. xii. 3. And from thence must we draw all our comfort. Use, therefore, the ordinances of God, but use them in the Lord, in obedience to his commandment, and expect the issue with patience. Many there are that use the means, but take no joy at all in them. Why? They do it not as in obedience to God's command, but they rest in the deed done, and they think God is bound to give them joy. God justly denies such that which they presume of.

In the second place: Pray that your joy may he full. See this in most of David's psalms. At the first he complains for the want of God's presence, of God's wrath and anger, but comes off with a large portion of comfort.

'Depart from me, ye wicked, for the Lord hath heard my prayer,' Ps. vi. 8. In the use of all means, therefore, join prayer: pray for faith, for hope, and such graces as may bring joy. Though at first thou findest thyself to be cold,

to have little or no comfort at all, yet give not over; thou shalt at length find plenty thereof. Remember the woman of Canaan: at the first despised and called dog, but what did her constancy gain? A gracious answer, 'O woman, great is thy faith: be it to thee as thou desirest,' Mat. xv. 28.

In the third place: Remember former times, as David did, Ps. lxxvii. 6. He was so oppressed, his 'sore ran in the night, and ceased not,' as he saith. But then, 'I remembered the days of old,' &c. Consider thou also in thy deepest affliction, times were once when thou hadst the clear and comfortable light of God's Spirit present with thee. He will not leave thee, his nature is unchangeable, &c.

In the fourth place: Have society with the saints, and keep company with those that are good. And as the two disciples' hearts did burn when they talked with Christ, so verily thou shalt find this heat of comfort by little and little to increase. For God blesses the communion of saints, and such as are discerning Christians can tell us more, and opportunely bring things to mind which thou thyself rememberest not, and can inform our judgments when they are blinded with grief and melancholy. Use, therefore, the company of the good, when thou findest doubts arise, and make thy griefs known to some wise and judicious Christian. For the devil is too strong for any one alone. He will prevail against thee. Thou wilt be too weak to wrestle with him hand to hand. It is no wonder, therefore, that melancholy persons are so destitute of comfort.

Quest. It will be asked, May we not rejoice in friends' society, deliverance from dangers, and the like good things of this world?

Ans. I answer, Yes; and yet joy in the Lord also; for whereas whatsoever we have, we receive it as a token of God's particular love to us in Christ, who both gives us our daily bread and the word of life; comforts both heavenly and earthly; these outward things then, I say, do strengthen the faith of a Christian, and thereby our joy is strengthened. Wherefore we may thus joy in them, nay, it is our duty to do it. The wicked they indeed receive them, but only as from God's care of the general good of the world, or the race of mankind; and therefore can take no joy truly from them as the child of God doth: who in the right use of them, first rejoiceth that he is the child of God, and is reconciled to him in Christ: that Christ is his; and then that he having the field, hath also the pearl, Mat. xiii. 45, seq. All blessings belonging to this life and a better are in Christ made his, and he so rejoices in them, as he refers the comfort and strength that he receiveth from them to the honour of

God. God's children receiving good things from him, are threatened for not rejoicing in them, Deut. xxviii. 47. In the 45th verse he saith, 'The curses shall be upon thee, for that thou servest not the Lord thy God with joyfulness and gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things.' And it is expressly commanded, Deut. xxvi. 11, 'Thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God hath given thee, and thine house.'

Quest. But it may be questioned, Why, if this he true, are God's children so disconsolate? none are so much troubled in conscience as they? I answer,

1. Their sorrow proceeds not from their good estate, in that they are Christians, but from the want of the perfections to make them absolute Christians indeed.

2. They either do not know themselves, or if they do, because they glorify not God, nor adorn their profession, God justly suffers his joy to be hid, by hiding the comfortable presence of his Spirit.

3. God's children's joy, though it be great, yet is not discerned of the world. It is a hidden joy. The feast is kept in the conscience. It is not seen of the world, which discerns all things carnally. Carnal joy is always outward, and easy to express.

4. While God's children live here, they have ever a mixture of the two affections of joy and grief, to temper one another; for fulness of joy is only in heaven. This life will not endure perfect joy; but ever when there is cause given of joy, we have something to humble us, and to keep us from being exalted above measure. As Paul had some base temptation, which he calls the 'prick of the flesh,' who therefore bids us to fear and tremble, that we lose not the sense of God's Spirit by the prevailing of our corruptions.

Obj. But it will be objected, that the Christian is fuller of sorrow than joy. To which I answer,

Ans. It arises either from ignorance of the grounds of comfort, or from want of application of them. When a man is a young Christian, newly begun, he knows not nor understands what grounds he hath of joy. They are as children, that know not their inheritance at the first, nor their father's love; especially if he correct them, they think he loves them not. Even those that are grown Christians fail too often in this, either by misapplying the grounds, and misjudging of their estate; or sometimes through the distemper of their

body, through melancholy. These judge of grace by the measure, when they should judge by the truth of it, be it never so little. For it is not the measure that is the evidence of the child of God, but truth of grace. For there are degrees of grace: in some more, in some less, and in one more in one time than in another. Take, therefore, a Christian in his right estate, one that is a grown Christian, whom neither melancholy nor temptation doth trouble; take him, I say, as he should be, he doth rejoice more soundly, with true joy and hearty, than any one can, being an ungodly man, be he never so merry. However, this we may be sure of, a Christian hath the greatest cause to rejoice, and, as I said before, he ought to stir it up in him by all means. And therefore, however indisposed he be thereto, he ought to search what good things God hath wrought in him. If he doth not know his estate, he cannot praise God as he should. He must meditate also of the vanity of all worldly things. They vanish, and they that put their trust in them ever failed of any true joy. It never comes to the heart of a man. They are not deep enough to comfort men that meet with afflictions. They only touch the fancy, as the fancy of a beast may be delighted.

Let him also compare all discomforts that can come, with this joy in the Lord, and he shall find that it countervails a world of sorrow. This has no end; they are momentary, they last but for a night. This is in the Lord, in whom is fulness of joy. This made the saints of God so resolute, that they set light by all afflictions whatsoever; and therefore, in their greatest afflictions they have the sweetest joy and greatest comforts. And lot him also consider, that by this he avoids the reproach of religion, and shows the force and efficacy thereof to be such as is formerly declared.

And let him take heed of the hindrances of this joy. As first of all, of sin committed and not repented. Let him repent betimes, else it keeps a man dead, and dull, and backward. So long as this Achan is unfound, it will keep him in discomfort, 1 Chron. ii. 7. Let him take heed of secret purposes, either to sin or to favour himself in any one sin, how small soever, for time to come. This will rob him utterly of comfort, for joy cannot lodge in such a heart. 'If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me,' saith David, Ps. lxvi. 18.

Furthermore, Let him take heed of negligence in good duties. For it is not enough to do them, but he ought to stir up the graces of God in him to do them thoroughly; and he must strive against his corruptions. For

Christians have never so much joy, as when they have laboured with their endeavours to overcome their imperfections in good actions.

Lastly, Let him take heed of casting himself into dull or dead acquaintance. It is true we cannot avoid conversing with them, but we must have no secret and inward acquaintance but with the best. A companion of fools shall be beaten, and the wise with the wise will learn wisdom. We are all travellers to heaven; let us therefore choose such company as may, as it were, be a chariot to carry us thither, with their good example and discourses. And with the prophet David, think it a great grief when we have not such society as may do us good. 'Woe is me, that I am constrained to dwell in the tents of Meshech,' Ps. cxx. 5. And therefore, if heretofore any of us have been faulty, let us take warning of this hereafter.

Verse 1.

To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe.

Although the apostle had formerly bidden them to rejoice, in the former chapter, 18th and 28th verses, yet notwithstanding he bids them 'rejoice' again, saying that it is safe for them to hear the same things often, and it is not grievous to him to write the same things twice. Besides, he doth also bid them to beware of such as may hinder their joy, as dogs and those of the concision, preventing thereby secret objections which they might make against repeating the same things. Whence we may in general observe,

Doct. 1. The wisdom of the Word and Spirit of God, to know secret objections that might be made, and to prevent them; turning away thereby whatsoever might hinder the force of the word.

Doet. 2. And in the second place, it teaches us that it is the duty of those that mean to prevail by instruction, to know the secret dispositions of those they deal withal. For when their minds are not quieted or cleared from doubts and hindrances, they are not fit to entertain any good counsel at all.

Doct. 3. And thirdly (for I cannot stand on these things), it shows our dispositions by nature, to count repetition of the same things to be tedious and irksome. For since the fall of man, we wander in our thoughts, affections, and intentions; and it is a part of our loss, to lose our constancy and settled disposition. Wherefore, we find it noted of the Israelites, that they

were weary of one kind of food, although it is called 'angels' food,' Numb, xi. 6.

Doct. 4. In the fourth place (which I intend more to stand upon), observe with me, that duelling on the same things is necessary, even for the best Christians. And the reasons are,

Reason 1. First, Because truth is supernatural, and our minds are carnal; and that which must change these our minds must be assiduous, or else our minds will sink into their first estate. We are naturally changeable, and therefore had need to have the truth, as at the first to change us, even so to be continually presented to our souls, to keep us perpetually in this spiritual change. And a Reason 2. Second reason may be, because tee often regard not the truth at the first, second, or third time urged and taught unto us. Wherefore, Job xxxiii. 14, it is said, 'God speaketh once or twice, yet man perceives not.' Therefore, if the caution and point be necessary, the reception must needs be necessary also.

Reason 8. In the third place, there is such a breadth and depth in the points delivered out of the word of God, that although we hear often the same thing, yet we never come to understand the full extent of them. Our souls are narrow. We cannot at the first so soundly and deeply consider of them, neither can we understand so many particulars as otherwise we should; for in every Christian truth there is milk for children and strong meat, which requires digestion and likewise repetition.

Reason 4. A fourth reason may be, because our corruptions daily increase and grow upon us, and variety of occasion and worldly business being natural to us, and therefore more delightful, are too powerful, and do thrust out the consideration of divine truths, which are commonly against the hair. And we cannot have variety of two things in our minds at the same time in strength. Whence it comes to pass that the better is ever more subject to be thrust out, and therefore had need to be hammered in with often repetition and insisting upon again and again.

Reason 5. A fifth reason may be, Because we work as well as understand, weakly or strongly. When we work well, we must have things present strongly in the understanding; as when we tell men of God's justice, omnipresence, of the day of judgment, of death, and the like. The lively and present remembrance of these things keeps the mind of man so in frame as it cannot will any evil, no more than a lewd person will offend in the presence

of the judge. And this lively remembrance of things is wrought chiefly by repetition and often enforcing the same things, and it makes the mind to be wholly taken up therewith. And therefore it is a good way, when we would do any good action well, to be taken up with reading or hearing of good, by way of preparation thereunto. And the want of the presence of good things in our mind lays us open and makes us fit for all companies and occasions of sin.

Reason 6. In the next and last place, our memories are very weak to remember and to retain anything that is good. Since the fall they are broken, and good things sink through them as water through a sieve, and therefore hath great need of remembrancers. And after this manner hath God dealt with man, as in the promise of the blessed seed. How often is it reiterated and typified; and?to Abraham it is renewed seven times. So God to David often renewed his promise concerning the kingdom, as also the promise concerning the deliverance of the people of Israel from captivity in Isaiah is often repeated. This also did Christ, the great doctor of his church, in his parables. In one chapter [he] argueth one principal matter with four parables one after another, although with some variety, teaching ministers thereby to do the like to avoid tediousness. Repetition in Scripture serves to divers ends; sometimes for the stronger averring of the certainty thereof. Wherefore it was that Pharaoh's dream was doubled. Sometime for emphasis sake, as Christ did often, 'Amen, amen,' and 'in dying thou shalt die,' and the like phrases. But the main end is, to stir up us and our affections, and to keep them in life and action when they are stirred up. Therefore, 2 Peter i. 12, because they knew they could not be over sure of salvation, nor grow too much in grace, he says, 'So long as he lives he will put them in mind of such things.'

Use 1. Let it not therefore be grievous to ministers to do which is for the safety of God's children. They must do it till they see practice come to perfection, and they must cast and cast again. Peter he cast often and got nothing, yet at Christ's word he cast again. So must ministers. God that blesseth not every cast, may bless the last cast to the catching of many; and therefore a minister had need of a fatherlike affection to his hearers, as St Paul had, 1 Thes. ii. 11.

Use. 2. A second use may be for ourselves: if we hear the same things repeated, hear them as an impression which may carry force, and work upon our hearts more strongly than before. And know that God may work on us

by one means at one time which he did not at another; as a dart pierces deeper being cast by one than by another. And therefore let us not be weary of attendance on God's ordinances, for our corruptions daily increase as our age doth. Our minding of things is but slight, and our memory very brittle. And we must know that the word teaches doing and practising, as well as knowing. And therefore to conceive a necessity of a continual ministry to perfect a church as well as to begin it. The sacraments are necessary; receive them often. The primitive church had them every Lord's day. Till we come to the holy land of that heavenly Canaan, let us submit ourselves to this manna. It is angels' food, and they desire to look into these mysteries, 1 Peter i. 12. And therefore take heed of fulness or loathing; for when we come to that pass that we must have norum or nihil, God takes away this manna thus loathed. Thus did he with the Greek churches, Rev. i. and ii. They gave themselves not to the plain, sincere truth, but man's inventions, whereby God gave them over to strange opinions. And indeed it is a rule: one absents himself from God's word, but he is given over, and that justly, to believe toys; to attribute all praise and delight to this or that idle author, which it may be is heathenish or popish. The Greek churches, affecting novelties, were justly given over to Mahomet. But to a true Christian heart there cannot be more delight than in the experimental knowledge of Christ's death and office, of perseverance in grace. There are standing dishes in this Christian banquet. It is a sign God means to plague that person or nation that is delighted in such ill sauces. He will make them come out of our nostrils. We shall have our fill of them, and never hunger after the sincere milk of the word.

Verse 2

Beware of dogs.

Doct. 1. In this general exhortation, consider first the persons to whom it is directed, to all the Philippians; not only to the pastor, but even to the common Christians. 'They must beware of false teachers.' Is it so? Then surety they ought to take notice of them, and to know them; and therefore they ought to have rules to discern them by. Christ's sheep they discern between a wolf and a shepherd, John x. 4, 5. His sheep discern an heretic or false teacher from those that are true shepherds in the main points of Christian religion. And therefore, 1 John iv. 1, he bids all in general 'to try the spirits;' and the apostle, 1 Thes. v. 21, bids them 'prove all things, and hold fast the good.' If they were then all of them bound to try and prove, they were no doubt bound to know the rules by which they were to try, which rules are only laid down in the word of God.

Quest. But some popish heart may ask, How common people should know the word to be the word of God?

Ans. For answer, I would ask such an one, how they know the pope's canons, or any book of his constitutions, to be the pope's? They will say, their teachers brings them in the pope's name, and they believe their teachers. So say we: we believe our teachers and ministers, who tell us this is the word of God.

Obj. But they object and say, that we make every one a judge.

Ans. I answer, there is a threefold manner of judging. First, a judging whereby we discern of anything; and this every Christian must have, so as it cannot be any plea to him at the day of judgment, to say, my teacher did mislead me. No. Both the leader and he that is led, if they be blind, shall fall into the ditch, Mat. xv. 14. Then there is a second kind of judging, which is by way of direction. This is required principally in the pastor, to direct his flock. And there is a third kind: that is, of jurisdiction. This belongs to the church and the magistrate; yet every one must have a judgment to discern the good from the bad. For he that knows not his master's will shall be beaten.

In the second place, not only the young ordinary Christians, but even the best settled Christians had need to beware also. The Philippians were a church established in the truth. Eve was seduced, being in her innocent estate. But I need not stand on this at this time. I proceed to the duty, which is to 'beware.' Which word signifies: first, to discern of, then to avoid. And because those that are aware of evil, by nature will avoid it; therefore 'beware' here, intends both discerning and avoiding of evil. For the church of God in this world is ever subject to danger. And God suffers it to be so: first, to try who be true, and who false; and secondly, to try them that are good, and to be as an evidence to them of their own estates, so as where such trial and danger is, it is true, ingeniosum est esse Christianum.

But concerning the words 'dogs, concision, evil workers,' they all signify the same thing; and he repeats the word 'beware' thrice, to shew the necessity thereof. Take heed of them that urge works of the law with doctrines of faith, especially of pastors. Nay, take heed of these, for so the word in the original is, 'these dogs'. By 'concision,' he means those that urged circumcision, when it was out of date, and when it was dangerous to be admitted of. But observe the term the Holy Ghost calls these 'dogs,' a strange term, and such an one as I should not have dared to have given them,

had not the Holy Spirit led the way thereunto. And therefore since it is so, let us not be more modest than he is; but boldly affirm that wicked men are dogs. Now, wicked men are either without the church or within. Without the church, all are dogs: Mat. xv. 20, 'It is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it to dogs.' Of this number are all Turks and Jews, who were filii, children, but are canes, dogs. We were canes, but now through God's mercy are come to be filii. All, therefore, that are without the church are dogs. But there are also dogs within the church; and therefore the Philippians were bidden beware of them, which St Paul needed not to have done if they had not been troubled with them. And those dogs he describes, in that they join works of the law and Christ together, in matter of salvation. These are in St Paul's esteem dogs. And the reason hereof may be grounded on God's esteem, on their behaviour towards other men, and in regard of themselves. For God's esteem, we may see it in Isa. lxvi. 3; he detests them as dogs. For their behaviour towards men, whom they go about to seduce, they fawn on them, and use all manner of enticing, flattering, and false alluring words, Rom. xvi. 18. Sec the picture of a Jesuited papist, a pleasing, humane, fawning nature. They creep into houses; and when these dogs cannot prevail by flattery, then they snarl and bark against them, by false calumnies, and slanders, and railings, and bitter scoffs, and the like; and this they do when they cannot bite. But having gotten power in their hand, they persecute with fire and sword, and the most exquisite torments that they can devise. In regard of themselves also they are dogs, rotten in nature, corrupt in life, filthy in their own courts, devouring their own vomit; and God justly punishing them, by suffering of them to heap up wrath in store, 2 Peter, ii. 22, and to return with the sow that was washed to wallow in the mire of corrupt courses. Hence we may observe and see, what a man is now brought to by sin. He that would be like to God is justly compared to the beasts that perish. Not all by nature are no better than dogs, who are all for their bellies, for present contentments, an envious and currish disposition against any that shall endeavour to cross them in their unlawful lusts; and that rule of reason which should overrule him and amend him, he so abuses it, as thereby he is made more like a devil than a dog. Would we be then changed? Let us attend on that word, that is able of lions to make lambs. It can cleanse us throughout, John xv. 3. It sanctifies and alters us. Moral precepts may restrain and alter outward practices. The word that alters the condition and nature of men, it is the word of him that works all with his Spirit. And therefore take heed of them, and deal not more with them than thou must needs. They will fawn; they will not be dogged at the first: but till religion altereth him, assuredly he hath a currish nature. But to proceed. He saith not

only, 'beware of dogs' in general, but beware of these dogs of the concision. And these also ought we to beware of, for there is a perpetual litter of them. Though those that the apostle spake of are gone, yet the same spirit is now-a-days in many. Fawners they are and flatterers, yet do they bark at Protestants; and of this sort are our Jesuited papists and seminaries. Our fathers were troubled with them. Let these take heed; for were these men dogs that press circumcision with Christ? and shall not such be also, that press merits with Christ, saints with Christ, and equal traditions with the word of God? The dogs in St Paul's time had some excuse. Circumcision they urged, but it was first founded by God. But these men out of their own brain endeavour to establish fancies; and where they cannot prevail by conference, they by scattering of books seek to accomplish their intents. Magistrates therefore in their place ought to look to them; and every private person look to their own salvation. We ought also to take heed of neuters, such as are or would be mediators, and will be of every religion, or rather of none; who jumble religions, mixing truth and falsehood, light and darkness together. But he that made distinction between the 'seed of the woman' and the 'seed of the serpent,' made also eternal distinction between religion and irreligion. Though Judas thought he might keep fair quarter with the Pharisees and his Master, yet his fawning kiss could not keep him, but desperation overtook him. So these neuters; let them fawn never so much, let them halt between two opinions never so long, they shall at length know that they have betrayed their religion; and desperation shall at length assuredly overtake them, as it overtook Spira. Take heed of them. There hath been a continual brood of them. In the emperors' time the Jews had some liberty granted to them, because their ceremonies carried a show' of a reverend antiquity. The Christians they were ludibrium humani generis; there were even then, as St Paul found, such Christians as, finding they were scorned, because they would be scorned of neither, took part with neither.

Quest. But some will say, What a great matter do you make of this! Is it not policy and wisdom for us thus to avoid reproach, and to get the good will of all?

Ans. Remember what Christ says, 'He that denies me before men, I will deny him before my Father,' Mat. x. 83. True, say they, 'I yet may inwardly be sound in my heart; I may honour Christ, though outwardly I may please others.' What place is left for profession? 'With the mouth man confesses to salvation,' Rom. x. 10; and such as are ashamed to confess Christ before men, Christ may justly deny to acknowledge them in that fearful day of

judgment. For shall we try all things to be sure of our temporal estate, and shall not we much more seek to assure our spiritual and eternal estate unto us? God forbid.

In the next place, let us not be discouraged or hindered in a good course. Though these dogs bark never so much, yet they are but like the dogs who bark against the moon. Though we meet with many changes, let us keep our course still constantly, without turning aside. For thou must look to be barked at beforehand. Thou art or shouldst be a stranger to this world, and then assuredly the dogs will take notice of thee. And comfort thyself, thou shalt be admitted into thine own country, when these dogs shall be kept out, as it is in the last of the Revelations, Rev. xxii. 15. And though we cannot have too harsh a conceit of them in regard of their estate, yet are we to respect the image of God they carry about with them, and to esteem of them as of such as may become lambs. And thus did St Paul respect and reverence Agrippa. Yet see how sharp he is, not to those that are heathen, but to those that, making a profession of Christianity, did add circumcision to Christ, wherein we may observe his zeal for Christ's honour.

Beware of evil workers.

Beware of such as in general were bad; and in this particular especially they were 'evil workers,' thereby seducing men from Christ. Seducers therefore are evil workers, and magistrates ought to look to them. They are the keepers of the two tables, and are to look to the souls of men as well as to their bodies. Let also private members look to themselves, lest they be seduced by them. Neither is it likely that these were only seducers by false doctrine, but were also ill men and wicked livers; for God justly gives such up to wickedness in life that are seduced in judgment. And thus dealt he with the scribes and Pharisees: 'Do not after their works,' saith Christ, Mat. xxiii. 3. Some think if they so live as none can lay any gross sin to their charge, they are good enough. It is no matter what the heart is, how ignorant, how dark; God will hear with them. Alas! poor ignorant men, is not the understanding God's, as well as the outward parts? 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy mind,' Mat. xxii. 37. The understanding is spousa reritatis. And know God looks to purity of judgment. He cannot endure his children should he ignorant; for it is a dishonour to God for his children to conceit of things, in religion especially, otherwise than is fitting, yea, otherwise than they are.

Beware of the concision.

That is, as I formerly said, circumcision, called here by the name of concision, because it tended to cut and make a division and sect in the church, with a natural and proper elegance, not affected, describing and naming it by the effect. It is God's use to call things from the event and effect of them. 'Why will you perish?' Jer. xxvii. 13. That is, Why will you do those things that will lead you to destruction? The end of them is death; and those that neglect wisdom hate themselves. As it was also said to the Jews that neglected the gospel, 'They judged themselves unworthy of salvation,' Acts xiii. 46; because in effect they hated themselves and deprived themselves of salvation. Circumcision formerly had been an honourable ceremony, serving for a partition between Jew and Gentile, and for a seal of the covenant of grace. But the ceremony was to cease, it not having a continual promise. It was to last till Christ came, and when he died, it and all other died also. St Paul, and Christ, and Timothy, were circumcised. But after the time came that Christ had broken down the partition wall by his suffering, they did not only die, but were also deadly to all such as would maintain the observancy of them. The use of them was prejudicial to Christ's honour, and therefore Paul bids us 'beware of them.' And now-a-days this instruction by proportion is of good use. For are there not those that teach concision, and that urge merits, as the papists do? Take heed of them. They say we are the concision; we have cut ourselves from the true mother church of Borne.

I answer, We have suffered a concision; we have made none. And again, we acknowledge we have separated from these Romans, not from those that were in Paul's time. It is they that have made a concision, and cut themselves from the mother church. But to pass from these: we have a concision among us, and that in a contrary extreme, that think every ceremony and thing that suits not with their opinion to be antichristian and concision; not considering that there be many things urged as fitting for order, being no parts of God's worship. Yet even for these things they make a concision, cutting themselves off from our church, and unchurching us. It is dangerous for such; for when the member is cut from the body, it must necessarily die; and how can we receive grace from Christ as our head, but by union of ourselves to the body, whereof Christ is the head.

It must be our duty to beware of all manner of seducers; and to this end let us,

Remedy 1. First, Get fundamental truths into our heart; affect and love truth: for want hereof the eastern churches were given up to Mahomet; and antichrist ruled over many in these western churches, because they loved not the truth, 2 Thes. ii. 10. For none are seduced that are not cold in love.

Remedy 2. Secondly, Let us labour to practise that we know, and God will give its a fuller measure of knowledge, whereby we shall learn to find and know seducers. John vii. 17, 'If any man will do his will, he shall know.'

Remedy 3. Thirdly, Pray to God for wisdom to discern of schisms, and heresies, and ill-disposed persons. God hath promised us anything that is necessary for our strengthening, and bringing us to heaven. God will not deny us so necessary an aid as this is.

Remedy 4. Fourthly, Let us look that we keep in us an holy fear and reverence of God: Ps. xxv. 12, 'What man is he that feareth the Lord? him shall he teach in the way he shall choose.' And those things are we duly to observe, the rather because we shall ever find seducers. It will ever be a hard matter for men to find the way to heaven. And though the doctrine and profession of religion be not ever in all places opposed, yet shall we ever find the practisers thereof maligned; as it is in these days, where none are accounted of to be protestants that are not loose libertines. And thus instead of concision from religion, they join that with it which is quite contrary to the power thereof. Beware also of such, for their courses of life are as pernicious as fundamental errors; for none shall be saved for his knowledge.

Verse 3

For we are the circumcision.

In these words, and those that follow, our apostle describes who are truly circumcised. 'We are the true Israel, the circumcised sons of Abraham, who are members of Christ.' The Philippians they were not circumcised outwardly, yet were they truly circumcised, they had the truth of it; even as they that were under the cloud and in the sea were said 'to be truly baptized in the cloud and in the sea,' 1 Cor. x. 2. The sacraments therefore, before and after Christ, were in substance all one. As the church was one and the same, they may be said to be baptized as we, and we circumcised as they. The difference was only in the outward ceremony and show, which the church being then young had need of. It is the same religion clothed diversely. Bellarmine saith that their government was carnal, and the promises to them

were carnal, but it is carnally spoken of him, Heb. xi. 2. The fathers before Christ had respect to the recompense of reward; and in ver. 35 they 'accepted not deliverance that they might obtain a better resurrection.' Are these carnal promises? The anabaptists they press rebaptizing, not considering that the same covenant was before Christ and after, in substance; so as every true Christian is spiritually circumcised, being once regenerate. Before, indeed, he is uncircumcised, and a spiritual leprosy overspreads all his frame of body and mind, which must be washed, pared, and cut off. We must part with uncircumcised hearts, ears, and lips; that is, such ears as do delight themselves to hear corrupt lewd discourse; such a tongue and lips as delight to utter and let out words savouring of a rotten and uncircumcised heart; such eyes as do delight themselves in the beholding of lustful and sinful objects, whereby the heart is kindled into vain desires. I say, a Christian must circumcise himself, his heart, and those parts that are uncircumcised, before he can over think to go to heaven, whither nothing that is corrupt or unclean entereth. Religion therefore is no easy thing, circumcision is painful and bloody. Mortification is very hard. Corruption it must be cut off though the blood follow, else it will kill thee at length. Wherefore we are also to labour for circumcised hearts to understand God's truth, his will, and commandments. Cut off all extravagant desires, which by little and little take away comfort and communion with God. It is no mercy therefore to spare them. Circumcise thy eyes; pray with David, 'Turn away mine eyes from regarding vanity,' Ps. cxix. 87. Stop thy ears at the charming of such objects as may infect thy soul. We can never enjoy that beatifical vision hereafter, if we wean not ourselves from the liking of these things. And though we cannot, while we are in this house of clay, come to that perfection we should, yet endeavour to it earnestly, and God will accept our very endeavours, and will further them; yea, we shall get the victory at length. If sin begins to fall it shall surely fall; the house of David in us shall grow stronger, and the house of Saul shall daily be weakened. The means to this duty are,

1. First, Know thy sin, and thy particular sin, by thy checks of conscience and by the checks we receive from our enemies, who shall spy what they can in us thereby to scandalize us. As also observe what thy thoughts work most upon, what is the main thing that generally takes up your cogitations.

2. When thou hast found out thy sin, make it as odious as thou canst. For circumcision implies a thing that is odious and superfluous. Now all sins that be cherished in us may well be odious to us, for that it hinders us from

all good and clothes us with all evil, and makes all outward things evil to us; which otherwise are no further ill than as they strengthen our corruptions. It hinders us from all good duties. Pride of heart and corruption do dog us. This made Paul cry, not of temporal bonds, but of the bonds of sin and of death. 'Who shall deliver me, wretched man that I am?' saith he, Rom. vii. 23, 24.

3. Thirdly, Having found out thy sins, and the abominableness of them, complain of them to God, as Hezekiah did of the blasphemous letter that Sennacherib wrote, and challenge the fruit of God's promise. For he that bids us circumcise, Deut. x. 10, promised that he himself will do it, Deut. xxx. O. Faith in the promises is an effectual means to attain to them. Men come with doubtings. They see a great deal of corruption. They think their labour is vain. They cannot be relieved against them. They are deceived. Touch but thou the hem of Christ's garment. Fly to God in his name, and thou shalt find this 'issue' of sin, though not wholly dried up, yet much abated. And here is the excellency of faith that assures us of all the promises concerning sanctification here, as concerning glory hereafter.

Which worship God.

The apostle places circumcision before worship; for unless there be a cutting off', we cannot bring our corruption to perform duties of God's worship aright.

The words contain a description of a Christian by his proper act, worship; and by the proper object thereof, God; and by his most proper part, in spirit. And the word 'worship' is taken for the inward worship of God, commanded in the first commandment; also comprehending our fear, love of God, and joy in him, issuing from the knowledge of the true God. All our obedience issuing here from is worship of God, including our duties to man, in obedience and relation to God's commandment. The ground of this obedience and worship is the relation between God and the reasonable creature, being the image of God. Now this image being lost in the fall of our first parents, we must worship him not only as our creator and maker, but as 'reconciled to us in Christ,' as he hath made us anew.

Secondly, We are to worship him as the well-spring of all grace, goodness, excellency, and greatness.

Thirdly, As he doth communicate all unto us. He is ours. Christ is ours. All is ours. This should carry our souls to love him, be his as he is ours; especially to be his in spirit, by which is meant the reasonable soul, understanding, will, and affections. And, secondly, with sanctified understanding, sanctified will, and sanctified affections. Thirdly, With all our strength, spirit, life, and cheerful readiness. Wherefore God is the proper object of spiritual worship. Trust on him, love him, joy in him, invoke and pray to him and to him only; not to the Virgin Mary, saints, or images, as the papists do: Mat. iv. 10, 'Him only shalt thou serve,' as Christ saith, because our commandment is only from him and extends only to him. The promises are only from him. He only is present in all places; he only supplies our wants; and he only knows what our wants are and how to help. Saints are not present in all places. They cannot hear many at once; nay, they cannot hear our prayers unless they be present. They are finite creatures, they have no infinite properties. Christ he bids us, invites us, to come to him, he hath promised to hear us and to ease us.

And further, God knows the secret wants, which the saints cannot know. We ourselves know them not. And therefore are we to go only to God in all our necessities, because it is most gainful for us to go to him that can help us; nay, we owe him this honour by going to him, to acknowledge his omnipresence, his willingness and ability to do good.

In spirit.

The apostle in these words shows the manner of true worship, by the most proper and fit part of a Christian; to wit, his spirit; that is, a soul truly sanctified, lively, and cheerfully, with a willing and ready mind, fitly disposed, contrary to outward, false, and hypocritical worship.

1. And the reason is, 'Because God is a Spirit, and therefore must be worshipped in spirit,' John iv. 24.

2. Secondly, It is the best part of a man; and God who challenges all, and that justly, looks especially that he hath the best part.

3. Thirdly, The spirit hath a being of itself, and praiseth, loveth and rejoiceth in God when it is out of the body; and the body is stirred up to this duty only by the spirit, being of itself senseless as a block; and outward worship without inward is but the carcase of worship. The prayer of a wicked man is abominable, because he regards iniquity in his heart, Ps. lxvi. 18. And

this spirit of ours, without the Spirit of God, cannot worship him; and therefore every one that is not changed makes God an idol.

Use. This may deprive all such of comfort as care not for this spiritual worship, thinking they have done enough if they have mumbled a few idle words over. God accepts it no more than if they had sacrificed a dog's head, as he saith, Isa. lxvi. 3. And verily, what other is popery, but a body without a soul, when they worship in blind sacrifices, in a strange language? Is this a spiritual worship, when they neither know what they do nor say? Let us shew that we are not of their number. Come we with love, and with the intension of all our affections; and this will sway the whole man, body and soul; and so shall we worship him in truth, and not in hypocrisy, as many do, that bring their idols with them. Their minds are on their pleasures and riches, though their body be present before God. And it hath ever been an error in the world, this limiting and tying God's worship to outward worship of the body, with a kind of ceremonious gesture; and it is very much liked for such like reasons as these are.

First, The outward gesture: as holding up hands, bending the knee, casting up the eyes, they are things that may easily be done.

Secondly, They make a glorious show in the eyes of the world. It is a commendable and good quality to be religious, especially if they be observed so to be.

Thirdly, It is beneficial to men, whereas hereby they are known to be no atheists, and therefore not that way incapable of preferment or the like.

Fourthly, Outward worship satisfies conscience a little. Men know they must worship God, and go to church, that these are means to save men, and they think that in doing so they stop the cries of their consciences. Alas! alas! these sleepy, blinded consciences of theirs will at length awake, and will accuse them, for the outward ceremonious hypocritical worship of him that requires the Spirit to worship him with.

Obj. But some men say, How shall we know whether we serve God in spirit or no?

Ans. I answer, Observe these properties.

First, Whether thou lam cutest thy defects in the lest actions thou dost, and are not puffed up with conceit of the sufficiency of thy performances. Paul found this in him; for although he lived, being a Pharisee, as concerning the law unrebukable, yet when he was converted he saw much corruption which before he knew not, and laments and bewails it, Rom. vii. 23, 2-1.

Secondly, Examine thyself, whether thou makest conscience of private closet duties. Of prayer in thy study when none sees thee. Of thy very thoughts. Dost thou serve God with thy affections and thy very soul? Dost thou weep in secret for sins, yea, for thy secret sins? Dost not thou do good duties to be seen of men, as the Pharisees did? Contrariwise, wilt thou omit no place nor time, but always and in all places thou wilt worship God? This must be done; for God is always and for ever God; and he is in all places, in private as well as public; and therefore a Christian's heart must be the sanctum sanctorum, where God must remain present continually. And therefore he makes conscience of, and is humbled for, the least sins, yea, those that the world esteems not of, and counts them as niceties; and that in as great a measure as ordinarily men are for the greatest sins they commit.

Thirdly, Const thou endure the search of thyself and thy infirmities by all means? By thyself, by others, by the word, by private friends? Nay, canst thou desire this search, that thou mayest know thy sin more and more, for this end, that thou mayest truly hate it with a more perfect hatred? Canst thou truly appeal to God, as Peter did to Christ, 'Thou knowest that I love and prefer thee above all'? John xxi. 15. It is a sure sign of thy sincerity which the world cannot have; and therefore when they see their sins laid open, they spurn at the ordinances, and spite the minister and their true friends, that put them in mind of their faults, accounting them as their only enemies. Surely they shall never be able to endure the search of God hereafter; and the last day when he shall lay them open, they shall be overcome with shame.

A fourth sign is, That at the hour of thy death this spiritual worshipping of God will give thee content, when nothing else can. Thou mayest say with comfort, as Hezekiah did, 'Lord, remember how I have walked before thee in sincerity,' Isa. xxxviii. 2, 8. When downright affliction comes, outward verbal profession vanisheth, with all the comforts thereof; then perisheth the hope of the hypocrite. Two things upheld Job in comfort, in his great extremity. He was first assured that his Redeemer lived; and secondly, he knew his innocency in those things that his friends charged him with. And such times

will fall on us all, either at the time of death or before, when nothing but innocency and sincerity shall be able to uphold us.

Labour therefore for sincerity and spiritual worship. 'Worship God in spirit,' but let it be done outwardly also. Rut first, bring thy heart and intention to what thou dost, and that will stir up the outward man to its duty. And for the performance hereof follow' these directions.

First, Learn to know God aright. For worship is answerable to knowledge; for how can we reverence God aright, when we know neither his goodness nor his greatness? How can we trust on God when we see not his truth in the performance of his promises, in the Scriptures, and in our own experience? Those that do not these know not God. For as the heart affects according to knowledge, so also it is true in divinity; as we know his justice we shall fear, as we know his mercy we shall love him, as we know his truth we shall trust on him. Ps. ix. 10, 'They that know thy name shall trust in thee;' and in other places of the said psalm, the Lord is known in the judgment he executeth, ver. 10.

Secondly, Know God to be the first mover and cause of all. Men ordinarily fear the creature, attributing that to it which belongs to the Creator. But God he is the giver of all, and Christians look on the secondary means as to the first author and ground of all the rest. They behold the magistrate as in,God, fear them no otherwise but in the Lord. Atheists they will not stick at any sin whatsoever, to get the love of those that may bring them any worldly commodity. A Christian, he pleases and seeks the love of him that can make enemies friends when he lists, and when it is for our good. He knows 'in him we live, move, and have our being.'

Thirdly, Make much of spiritual means. God he works by means, by his word; attend to it. It works love, fear, joy, and reverence in us; and therefore no marvel if those that neglect those means are not acquainted with these graces of God's Spirit.

Fourthly, Lift up thy heart to Christ, the quickening Spirit, 1 Cor. xv. 36, seq. Our hearts naturally are dead; Christ is our life. When thou art most especially called to love, to fear, to humility, pray to him to move thee, and yield thyself to him, and then shalt thou pray in spirit; as it is said in Jude 20, 'Hear in spirit, do all in spirit;' do outward works of thy calling in spirit; for a true worshipper will out of spiritual grounds do all outward works of his particular calling, as well as the works of his general Christian vocation. Let

us therefore do all things from our hearts to God and to our neighbour, else will not God accept of our works. It is the Jew inwardly who shall have praise of God. The want of this sincerity hath extinguished the light of many a glorious professor, and thereby hath brought a great scandal upon the true worshippers of God in spirit.

And rejoice in Christ.

The word 'rejoice' implies a boasting or glorying of the heart, manifesting itself in outward countenance and gesture, as also in speech. It also implies a resting on and contenting in the thing we glory in, proceeding from an assurance that we glory in a thing worthy of glory, for they are fools that delight in baubles. Observe hence, therefore,

Doct. 1 That those that will worship Christ aright must glory in him. For the worship of Christ is a thing that requires encouragement, and nothing can work this encouragement like the glorying in Christ. And therefore Paul, in the first part of his epistle to the Romans, having showed that God had elected them freely, and had begun the work of sanctification in their hearts, he comes in the 12th chapter, ver. 1, 'I beseech you,' saith he, 'present yourselves as a holy, living, and acceptable sacrifice to God.' And in Titus ii. If, 'The grace of God teacheth,' by encouraging us 'to deny ungodliness, and to walk unblameably, soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.' And therefore, whensoever we grow dull or dead, think of the great benefits that we have by Christ, and it will quicken us and all our performances.

Doct. 2. In the next place observe, That Christ is the matter and subject of true glory and rejoicing, and only Christ, for they well go together, a full and large affection with a full and large object. Boasting is a full affection, the object is every why as full.

Reason 1. First, As he is God and man. He is God full of all things; he is man full of all grace and void of all sin. He is Christ anointed to perform all his offices; he is a prophet all-sufficient in all wisdom. In him are the treasures of wisdom. He teaches us not only how to do, but he teaches the very deed. He is our high priest. He is the sacrifice, the altar, and the priest, and he is our eternal priest in heaven and on earth: on earth as suffering for us, in heaven as mediating for our peace. 'Who shall condemn us? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us,' Horn. viii. 34. He is also our King. He is King of all, King of kings, and Lord of lords; a king for ever and at all

times, subduing all rebellions within us, and all enemies without us; and he is all these so as none is like him, and therefore is worthy of our glory.

Reason 2. Secondly, Christ is communicative in all these. He is prophet, priest, king, for us; he is God-man; he is Christ for us. He sought not his own. It was his communicative goodness that drew him from heaven to take our nature.

Reason 3. Thirdly, he is present and ready to do all good for us; he is present with us to the end of the world; nay,

Reason 4. Fourthly, We are his members. He is in us. We are his wife; nay, we are him. 'Saul, why persecutest thou me?'Acts ix. 4. 1 Cor. xii. 12, seq., 'We are all one body with Christ.'

Reason 5. Fifthly, We are even whiles we are here glorified with Christ. He is our husband. If he be honoured, we his spouse also are advanced. If he be our king, we are his queen. If the head be crowned, the body is honoured; and,

Reason 6. Sixthly, All this is from God, and freely comes from him. Christ is anointed by the Spirit and sent from the Father. 1 Cor. i. 30, 'He is made of God wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption to us.' And John vi. 44, 'No man can come to me, except the Father who hath sent me draw him;' and it is further said that God 'sealed him,' John vi. 27. So that we may rejoice in Christ, because that thereby we come to joy in God, for he reconciles us to God who called him to this office, which was witnessed at his baptism, whereas the whole Trinity bare witness thereof.

Quest. But it may be questioned, What! may we not joy in any other thing else but in Christ?

Ans. I answer, There, maybe two causes of our joy. One principal, the other less principal. We must only rejoice in Christ as the main and principal cause of our happiness. But we may rejoice in creatures so far forth as they are testimonies of Christ's love, and in peace of conscience as coming from Christ, and in the word of God as it is the gospel of the revelation of Christ to us.

Use 1. For use. We may observe this doctrine as a, ground of the necessity of particular faith. For none can boast, but the boasting must arise

from a particular faith, which only is the true ground of every man's particular assurance.

Use 2. Secondly, Let it serve as a direction to every Christian that will rejoice; let him go out of himself and rejoice in Christ, his king, his priest, and his prophet. Let him observe what he hath done for him, and what he will do for him, and thereby see himself perfectly happy; and,

Use 3. In the third place, Let us first boast that we have Christ, and then in his benefits and blessings that follow him. First, rejoice that we have the field, then rejoice in the pearl. And therefore the apostle says not rejoice in faith or in obedience, but 'in Christ,' who being once mine, how shall I not have all things with him?

Use 4. Those that are burdened with sorrow for their sin, let them consider. Why do they grieve? Do their sins trouble them? Christ he came to die for sin, he is their high priest, he came to save sinners. Doth the devil accuse them? Let them know Christ chose them, he pleads for them. Who can lay anything to their charge? Christ he is dead, risen; nay, he is ascended into heaven. Are they troubled with crosses? That is the best time to rejoice in Christ. 'We joy in tribulation,' Horn. v. 3. When nothing comforts us, then hath Christ sweetest communion with our hearts. St Stephen, when the stones flew about him, and Paul in the dungeon, had the most sweet consolation and comfortable presence of God's Spirit that upheld them. Nay, in death we may glory most of all. It lets us into that state, into that sweet society with our Saviour and the saints, the very hope whereof doth now sustain us and cause us to glory here, as in Rom. v. 2. And death now is but a drone, the sting is gone, all enemies are conquered.

Use 5. In the fifth place, See wherein the glory of a man, of a nation, of a kingdom consists. It is in Christ, and that which exhibits Christ. What made the Jews rejoice? Mark the prerogatives they had, Rom. ix. 3, 4: adoption, covenant, promises, and Christ. What made the house of Judah so famous? and Mary so bless herself? 'All generations shall call me blessed,' Luke i. 48: Christ, that vouchsafed to proceed out of her loins and from that stock. 'Abraham rejoiced to see Christ's day,' John viii. 56, though he saw it afar off by the eye of faith. And what should we glory in above the Jews, above other nations, but in this? The veil is taken away: Christ shines, and we have the gospel in its purity. This the apostle looks for in the Corinthians, 2 Cor. ii. 3, 'Having confidence that my joy is the joy of you all.' Now, what was Paul's joy? 'God forbid,' saith he, 'that I should rejoice, but in the cross of Christ,'

Gal. vi. 14. Let us not, therefore, rejoice in peace or plenty, fortified places, or the like. No. If we had not Christ to rejoice in, we were no better than Turks. 'Happy is the people whose God is the Lord,' Ps. cxlvi. 5; for in him shall we have fulness of joy and comfort. Make use of this in time of temptation. When the devil would rob us of our joy, fly to Christ: oppose him against all; oppose the 'second Adam' against the first: he came to do whatever the other did undo. Learn to see the subtlety of the devil and thine own heart; and fill thy heart with the Scriptures and with meditations of the promises, and they will cause our love to be so fervent, as all our service of God will seem to be easy to us; its the time that Jacob served seemed nothing, for the love he bare to Rachel, Gen. xxix. 20.

But how shall we know whether we rejoice in Christ or not?

Ans. I answer, By these signs:

1. First, When we glory, see the ground whence it arises, whether from God reconciled to us or not. If otherwise, remember that of Jer. ix. 23: 'Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, nor the strong man in his strength;' all such rejoicing is evil; 'but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord.'

2. Secondly, If we glory in the Lord, it will stir us up to thanks. What we joy in we will praise. If we joy in Christ, we shall, like the spouse in Canticles, ever be setting forth the praises of our beloved. Thus did Paul, Eph. i. 3, and Peter, 1 Pet. i. 3; and therefore, where deadness and dullness is, it shows no true Christian joy.

3. Thirdly, Our glorying will he seen, in duty. Delight ever implies the intention to do any good work, and diligence.

4. Fourthly, If we glory in Christ aright, we shall not endure any addition to Christ; and therefore, we shall abhor that popish tenet which puts so many additions to Christ in the meritorious work of our salvation. A true rejoicer in Christ sees such all-sufficiency in Christ's merits and work, that he abhors purgatory and such trash; and so much the more, by how much his glorying in Christ is the more fervent and sincere. Christ is our husband, we are his spouse; if we cleave to any other than to Christ, we are adulterers. No; let him kiss us with the kisses of his mouth, and none but he, Cant. i. 2.

5. Fifthly, This joy, where it is, it to ill breed content in all estates. Paul could want and abound, and so can a true rejoicer: in Christ he hath all. He cares not for earthly wants, so he wants no heavenly comfort. If he be poor, he is rich in heaven; nay, what he most complains of, are good for him: life or death, all is one with him. Christ is his, and in him all things.

Quest. But it may be said, There are many Christians are not in this happy condition.

Ans. I answer, It is their own fault, to yield to the devil's policy; and their own weakness, that will not labour to break through these clouds, and challenge the promises.

And have no confidence in the flesh.

These words are in truth included in the former, for he that glories in Christ 'will have no confidence in the flesh.' But the apostle notes this as a plain demonstration and evidence of the glorying in Christ. For by the copulative enjoining of them, it is all one as if he had said, What a man trusts to be glories in, and what he glories in he trusts to, and is confident of. If in wit his glorying he, he trusts to it, though it be to his ruin, as it fell out with Ahithophel, 2 Sam. xvii. 28. If in eloquence of speech, he trusts to it, and it brings shame, as it did to Herod, Acts xii. 23. If in honour, he trusts to it, and brings himself to dishonour, as Hainan did, Esther vii. 10.

By 'flesh' is meant outward things, as prerogatives, privileges, actions of a man's own doing, and particularly, he aims at circumcision, which he calls 'outward, and that of the flesh,' Rom. ii. 28. So as the observation that we'may gather is, that confidence in Christ takes away confidence in outward things. The reason is, if Christ be fully all-sufficient, what need is there of any outward thing to put confidence in? For these are two opposite things, and one overthrows the other.

Doct. The second instruction is, that naturally men have confidence in outward things; for having not hearts, filled with grace, they relish not Christ, but fly to ceremonious outward actions as their refuge. Nay, in the church, till we be converted, we naturally fly to outward fleshly confidence. We have the word taught to us; we come to hear it twice on the Lord's day. Alas! what is this, if thou be not transformed, and inwardly and outwardly conformed in obedience! Hast thou the sacraments? dost thou uncover thy head, or bow the knee? These are good, and they seem fair; but where is the heart? how is

that prepared? hast thou an earnest desire to leave off thy course of sinning, and dost thou resolve hereafter to amend thy life? Oh, here is the hard spiritual work! So, in outward fasting and abstinence, it is an easy matter. The Pharisees did it often. But this is the fast that God hath commanded, to loose the bands of wickedness, to fast from sin, Isa. lviii. 6. The suffering of the flesh, if it be separated from spiritual use, and alms, they profit nothing, 1 Cor. xiii. 3. All Paul's prerogatives, which were many, 2 Cor. 11th and 12th chapters, yet they were in his account but 'dross and dung,' in comparison of Christ. Most men are like Ephraim, Hosea x. 11, as heifers, who serve to tread out corn and to plough. Ephraim loved to tread corn, where he might eat his bellyful; for by the law of Moses, the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn was not to be muzzled. Men they are delighted in the performance of slight duties; but to put their neck under the yoke, to plough, it is a hard work; who can bear it?

Obj. But some will say, Oh, what! do you condemn outward duties and use of them?

A us. I answer, We may consider religions duties two ways. First, as they are outward means to salvation, for so they are. Secondly, as they are expressions of inward truth; and so out of a sincere, entire affection we bear to them, and out of a desire to be wrought upon by' them, we do them. Thus they are commended that use them. But let them want but an inch of this, all is abominable, all is 'flesh.' The Jews they boasted in the name of 'holy people,' in their law, 'in the temple,' in the 'Holy Land;' yet for all these, saith God, you shall go into captivity. Against such Christ preached: 'Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees! yon tithe mint, but let pass justice and judgment,' Mat. xxiii. 23. And Paul, 'Be not high-minded, but fear,' Rom. xi. 20. And the reasons why men are taken up with this fleshly confidence are,

Reason 1. First, Outward things are easy, and men cannot bend themselves to perform the hard matters of the law.

Reason 2. Secondly, They are glorious, and men desire to be observed.

Reason 3. Thirdly, Men have a foolish conceit that God is delighted with the outward act, when the inward sincerity is wanting.

Reason 4. Fourthly, Men leant knowledge of themselves, want the inward change, want sense of their own unworthiness and Christ's worthiness.

Reason 5. Fifthly, God followeth such with prosperity in this world. Thereby they think God is well pleased with them, till the hour of death come, and then they find all but froth.

Quest. How shall we know whether our confidence is fleshly or not?

Ans. 'answer, Where this fleshly confidence is, there is bitterness of spirit against sincerity. The Pharisees, the doctors of the law, sat in Moses' chair, yet who more opposed Christ than they? Mat. xxiii. 2. Nay, they wholly and only in their whole course sought to persecute him, and made it their trade.

2. Secondly, Where this fleshly confidence is, there is also a secret blessing of ourselves in our performance of good duties, without humiliation for our defects. Hypocrites think that God is beholden to them, and therefore do bless themselves in the deed done.

In the fourth verse he comes to an argument, taken from himself, against those of the concision.

Verse 4

Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more.

As if he had said, If any other man may glory in the flesh, then may I much more. But I do not think that I have cause sufficient to glory in the flesh; therefore have not they, or may not they, glory in the flesh. And the reason or ground of this proposition is taken from his many prerogatives he had, which he comes to in the 5th and 6th verses following.

First. Circumcision was the first prerogative before conversion; and it was not before the eighth day, to the end that the child might gather some strength to bear and endure the ceremony, for it was of itself grievous, and a bloody ceremony; wherefore it was that Moses his wife called him a bloody husband, Exod. iv. 25. And this ceremony was not to be respited above eight days, that the parents might not be delayed in their comfort. Whence we may gather, that dying before baptism is no necessary impediment to the salvation of the child, for the same covenant is annexed to circumcision that is to baptism; and the papists, that hold that the death of children before baptism hindereth the salvation of the infant, may as well hold that all the children

that died before the eighth day, being the day of circumcision, were damned. Secondly, Observe this, that children, though infants, may, nay, must, be baptized, if it may be with conveniency; for children were circumcised, nay, they were enjoined circumcision, on the eighth day. Now, seeing the covenant is the same, and given to children, now as then, why may not the seal thereof be now given in their infancy as then?

Verse 5

Of the stock of Israel.

Jacob had his name changed of his wrestling with the angel, and prevailed. St Paul says he was of that stock of Israel that prevailed with God.

Of the tribe of Benjamin.

There were two tribes of especial credit, Judah and Benjamin. They were kingly tribes. Benjamin was honoured with the first king, Saul the son of Kish, who though he were a castaway, yet it is a matter of great joy in the flesh to have great men, personages and learned men, of their lineage.

An Hebrew of the Hebrews.

More ancient than an Israelite, for Abraham was an Hebrew before Jacob was an Israelite. And he was an Hebrew born, no proselyte or converted Jew.

As touching the law, a Pharisee.

Before Christ's time there were divers sects among the Jews, as Pharisees, Scribes, Herodiaus, and Essaei. But the Pharisees were the greatest sect of all; and as the word signifies, so they did separate themselves as better than other Jews whatsoever. And St Paul lays down this as one especial carnal thing, wherein he might glory. He was no common Jew, but a zealous Jew. So as thence we may observe, that there is a fire and zeal that is not kindled by heaven; but, as St James saith of the tongue, 'is set on fire of hell,' iii. 6, out of ignorance. Blind zeal therefore is a ground of destruction. We are therefore to take heed; for unless our zeal have an eye, nothing is more tempestuous and troublesome than that man is whom it possesses.

Verse 6

Concerning zeal, persecuting the church.

Where zeal is, if it be meant in the largest sense, it is very hot against all opposites. It hath the name from fire, separating heterogenies, and gathering things homogeneal. Our apostle was none of those drowsy professors that would be content to mingle religions, so as where there is no opposition there is no zeal. And therefore those that would reconcile religions, false and true, they have not a spark of zeal, but are key-cold. Again, Paul well joins persecution and a Pharisee together, for there was never hypocrite but he was a persecutor. For he, making and grounding his profession on pride and a desire to be counted holy, when a downright person esteems him not, but by his integrity, puts the other's outward profession out of countenance, presently he falleth a persecuting, especially if his hypocrisy brings any profit or gain, as it was with Demetrius in the Acts, xix. 24, 38; and as it is now with the Romish Church, whose chief end is profit, as appears by their purgatory, indulgences, pardons, dispensations, and the like. You shall have as much mass as you will, and as little preaching. We may observe further, that carnal zeal is persecuting zeal, and the persecuting church is the false church. Christ's flock never persecutes wolves. It will not indeed endure to be near them, but it is not cruel against them. The papists indeed they speak much of their mildness and meekness, but what is the reason? Their hands are bound. Solve leonem et senties leonem, loose the lion and then you shall find he is a lion.

Touching the righteousness which is in the law, Homeless.

This was a great prerogative.

Obj. But how can he he said to be blameless as concerning the law, when he was without the law? Rom. vii. 9.

I answer, It is true he was without the law in respect of the inward man, in respect of sanctified knowledge, love, and fear; but in regard of his outward course of life, no man could blame him. Let this he observed by carnal civil men; they may he blameless as concerning outward conversation, and yet without the law.

Quest. But if he was blameless as concerning the law, how could he blame himself so as he did? Rom. vii. 15.

Ans. I answer, St Paul then had a new esteem and judgment; he had a new light which showed him much corruption, where before he saw none. This meets with weak Christians, that think themselves unconverted and castaways, because they see a great deal of sin in them. Paul was without blame; now 'miserable man, who shall deliver me?' Rom. vii. 24. Christians therefore are to be comforted; and to know that they are not the worse because they see themselves sinful daily more and more, but that they are better, as to whom God does daily bestow the light of his Holy Spirit, to make them see more clearly into their estates. We know that we see only the motes where the sun shineth; yet cannot we deny but all the air is as full as that part which the sun enlighteneth.

; Let not such therefore be discouraged, but let them know where there is any opposition, there is spirit as well as flesh; and that at length the spirit will have the victory.

Verse 7

But what things were gain to me, those I count loss for Christ.

1. Those things and privileges that formerly he counted gain, now he counts them loss.

2. It is good therefore to teach by example; as St Paul does here enforce rules by his own experience and example.

It is also expedient sometimes to speak of prerogatives and privileges that a man hath in himself; and it is not universal that we must not speak of anything that might concern our own praise. For we may do it as St Paul does here, to beat down the pride of others that are vain-glorious; or we may, as Paul does, lift up ourselves to abase and beat down ourselves the lower.

3. In the third place, when God vouchsafes his children any outward, privileges, he doth it for the good, and help of others, though we see it not at the first. Paul had these privileges, that he might beat down the pride of the Jews more powerfully. And Solomon had all abundance of wisdom, riches, and the like. Why? But only that he might without control judge of all, as of 'vanity and vexation of spirit;' and make it to be believed more firmly. For had an ordinary man said it, men would have thought it easy for him to say so; but if he had tried them, he would have been otherwise minded. In these later times, our best teachers were at the first papists, and of the more

zealous sort; as Bucer and Luther, being also learned men; as also Peter Martyr and Zanchius, was brought up in Italy, and all this, that they seeing once their blindness, might be the more able to confound them, as being not a whit inferior to them in any outward respect whatsoever, when they were of their belief.

4. In the fourth place, God (having to deal with men of a desperate condition) suffers great and famous men to be in ignorance, nag, to be persecutors, that after their conversion they might comfort weak Christians; and therefore let them comfort themselves. Do they find that their sins are many and great? Paul was a Pharisee, a persecuting Pharisee, and continued so a long while. Nay, after his conversion, he complains of a body of sin, and yet found mercy; and therefore do not despair.

But to proceed. We see what St Paul was, and what now he is, how his judgment is quite contrary to that it was; for where grace is, it makes men opposite to themselves; and therefore this re-creation is called a new creature: Paul quite contrary to Saul, and yet hath one person. Out of which we may gather,

First, That a man before conversion hath ever that which is his gain; for we are prone to think too highly of natural things, and our esteem shall be grounded upon probabilities, rather than we will lose our esteem of them. For we know this outward gain is easily gotten, the duties are easily performed, fair outwardly; and will procure praise from men, which is all we naturally look for.

Secondly, Observe hence that that which we before conversion thought gain, is indeed loss and unprofitable, nay, it is dangerous; for things may in use he good, but in abuse dangerous. Riches are good in use, but in abuse 'mammon' and 'thorns,' as Christ terms them. Circumcision and sacrifices and baptism in themselves were good, and many things are still good; yet when we trust in them, and neglect inward graces, sacrifice is no more acceptable than a dog's head, Isa. lxvi. 8. Good works are in their proper nature good; yet if we rely on them, they stop the way to Christ. So as it is our wicked and abusing affections that hath brought an ill report on the good creatures of God, so as to us they are dross and dung, nay, loss. These terms doth the Holy Spirit give to alienate our affections from these earthly things; an outward, civil, and conformable life [those things which] are, by our high esteem of them, stops, staying many from heaven; for while they tell themselves they live honestly and justly, doing no wrong, they suppose

themselves to he very saints, and look no further. But every true Christian knows his infirmity, and the more he is enlightened, the more he sees his darkness; he knows these things cannot he gain to him.

For, first, he knows they are meaner than the soul. These are earthly, the soul is from heaven; these are outward, the soul is spiritual, and therefore is only satisfied with spiritual and heavenly comforts.

Secondly, A Christian sees these things are fading, arising of nothing, and tending to nothing; contrarily, he knows his soul is eternal, and requires comforts that may last with it for ever. For those that joy in these outward things, when they leave him or he leave them, as of necessity he must, it is true they vanish to nothing; but he cannot, but must continue comfortless for ever, and undergo the just wrath of God. Furthermore, a Christian doth not only know these things to be no gain, but he also knows them to be loss. For that is loss which a man finds by experience to be loss, when his understanding is awakened. But all things outward, whatever they be, whether that a man is a Christian by profession, or that he is a preacher, who hath good utterance and is embraced of the people and approved of, or what privilege else soever, when the conscience is awakened they breed more horror, at the hour of death, when we are to give an account of them, and they set us further off from Christ. A profane person is nearer conversion than a proud Pharisee; as Christ saith, 'The publican and harlots go before you into the kingdom of God,' Mat xxi. 31. The reason is, because they that are thus outwardly affected sing peace to their souls; whereas the profane man hath no starting-holes of excuse, his vileness being more manifest.

Secondly, God detests such boasters more than those that are outwardly profane, and therefore Christ inveighs against such ever, 'Woe to you pharisees, hypocrites,' Mat. xxiii. 13, and often threatens such with the punishment that is provided for hypocrites, as if those were the men which his soul abhorred, and for which only hell was prepared.

But how shall we be qualified, that outward things may not be hinderers of us?

First, Look to the foundation of all conversion; consider the nature of God and his law. By them we shall see a further degree of holiness than the best of us can attain to. The excellency of God's nature is such as God's children have been ashamed to be in his presence. As Job when God spake 'abhorred himself,' Job xlii. 6. Peter when he saw the power of Christ said,

'Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man,' Luke v. 8. We are, therefore, to think often of the presence of God, before whom ere long we must all appear.

Secondly, Briny thyself to the spiritual meaning of the lay:, as Paul did, Rom. vii. See into thy thoughts, and behold the uncleanness of thy heart.

Thirdly, Converse with those that are better than thyself and compare thyself with them. Not as the Pharisees, who compared themselves with the publicans; and herein are many deceived, and by undervaluing others they overvalue themselves. For things compared with less they seem somewhat, but with bigger seem nothing. It ought not to be so with us. Let us compare ourselves to that rule that we live by, and to such examples as we are to follow. Compare we ourselves with Christ, our righteousness with his, and then shall we see our wants.

Fourthly, Practise that which Christ so much beats on; that is, self-denial. Hate father, mother, world, nay, thyself, or never think to come to Christ. They will be loss to thee unless thou account them loss. The young rich man's wealth made him a loser. The love of the praise of men kept the Pharisees that they could not believe. Whosoever nourisheth any lust, it will rule him and his affections, that he shall make it his gain, be it never so vile in itself. But St Paul, being guided by another spirit, casts away all; and so must we. If we will not lose Christ and suffer shipwreck, cast away these commodities that load us and hinder us in our course. Neither is it meant hero of an actual casting away of our goods, thereby to establish the foolish vow of poverty. But herein is meant a judicious discerning of the true worth of these things in comparison of Christ, and from thence a preparation, and a resolved mind to part with all that may hinder us from the enjoyment of peace of conscience and the love of Christ. For a man may have a weaned soul in the midst of abundance; and he may live in the world, though not to the world, which is a duty easily spoken of, yet not easily performed; neither was it easily wrought in our apostle, who, being a persecutor of the church, was powerfully altered and changed from heaven. And thus doth God deal with his children, whom he doth first cast down and afflict, that they may find by experience that these outward things can stand us in no stead. It may be he suffers them to fall into some grievous scandalous sin, that they might see the 'body of sin' that lies in them, and seeing no good nor help in themselves, their desires are stirred up to the embracing of some better thing wherein they may find comfort. Then doth God reveal Christ to us, to whom

he will have us to fly, and say, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' So as this power of changing ourselves is not in ourselves, but it is an almighty power.

If we think, therefore, that we are self-lovers, go to God, present thyself in the means, and then our eyes shall be opened to see and discern good and evil. For God hath promised to annex his Spirit to the use of the means, if that we in obedience submit ourselves to them.

Verse 8

Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss.

The words contain a kind of correction, as if in few words he had said, All things whatsoever I formerly boasted in, nay, my very privileges, I count them not only 'dung,' but I do count them to be 'loss' to me; nay, I have suffered the loss of them all in comparison and for Christ my Lord. Yea, I desire to express the earnest intension of my affections by my desire to win him, to know him, to be found in him, and to be conformable to his death.

In general observe,

1. The apostle's resolution and zeal, his assured certainty, his large heart being not able to express his affection, but by many words, viz., his love of Christ and hate of all outward things whatsoever. Therefore we also in main fundamental points must he resolute, carrying a full sail. As in the truth of the thing there is a certainty, so in us there must be an assured persuasion thereof. For even from these uncertain irresolute hearts comes apostasy. Men being not grounded are carried about with every 'wind of doctrine,' and hence also comes different measures of grace in Christians. Some say with Paul, 'doubtless others are of doubting,hearts. But the end of the word is 'to settle us,' Eph. iv. 13. And though it be never so true, yet if we [do] not believe it: though the foundation be sure, yet if we [do] not build on it, the truth and force of it is not good unto us.

2. In the second place, from the apostle's example, we are to learn in fundamental truths to be zealous. The apostle speaking of anything that seeks competition with Christ for value, how doth he vilify it, that he hath not words sufficient to press his fervent hatred thereof? For zeal is such an affection as causes a constant hatred against anything that opposes that which we entirely love, even such a hatred as will cause us not to endure to

hear of it. And God therefore promiseth Ephraim he shall so abhor idols, as he shall not have to do with them, Hosea xiv. 8. And indeed a jealous God and a zealous heart do well agree. When we have to do with any one that opposes God in his truth, we are not to be cold, but to be zealously affected.

3. In the third place, we are to learn to be large hearted in expressing our affection we hear to the truth; and therefore we are to be ashamed of our shortness of breath in speaking or meditating of God's honour and glory and his truth. But particularly from our apostle's esteem we may learn that God's children have sanctified and regenerate thoughts and esteems. For with new souls, they have new eyes, new senses, new affections and judgments; what they saw before to be gain, they see now to be loss. Beasts we know conceive not of men's matters, neither do weak simple men of State matters. That which weak silly men admire, the apostle scorns and condemns. Moses accounted of the afflictions with the children of God more than of the pleasure of Egypt. We may observe this as a mark to know our estates by, What is high in thy esteem? Is honour, riches, pleasure, or the like? Thou are not yet thoroughly sanctified; for if thou wert, thou wouldst have a sanctified judgment.

But some may say, did Paul esteem all things to be loss, yea, his good works?

1. I answer, Good works in their own nature are good: but, weighing them with Christ, as Paul did, they are also dross and dung.

2. Secondly, It teaches us, that we are not righteous, or justified, by any works ceremonial or moral, either before or after our conversion. The papists allege works as meritorious; we contrarily do disclaim them. As to that purpose: ay, say they, you mean ceremonial works; we say no, we mean also moral. For Paul was unblameable as concerning the works of the law, and yet counts them dung. Oh, say they, St Paul moaned those works before his conversion, and not those after his conversion. I answer, Yes; all things in respect of Christ. I do now account them dross and loss. To prove them the fuller: If nothing after conversion be perfect, then cannot they entitle vs to heaven, but all our best works in state of regeneration are imperfect. To prove this, see the examples of David, a man after God's own heart, Ps. cxliii. 2: 'None righteous in thy sight, and who can say his heart is clean?' and Isa. lxiv. 6: 'We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness as filthy rags.'

Oh, but Bellarmine says, the prophet speaks this in the person of the wicked. I hope he will not put the prophet into that number; for he saith, 'we,' and 'our;' and 'our righteousness,' not our ill deeds; and 'all our righteousness.' Nay, of himself in particular, Isaiah saith as much in Isa. vi. 5. And besides, the wicked do not use to pray, as the whole chapter is to that end. And Daniel also includes himself in his confession, Dan. ix. 20. And to prove this by reason: we know that weak and corrupt principles must needs produce imperfect effects. Now the principles of all our motions are evilly affected; our understandings, memories, affections, all are corrupt and weak. Corruptions make combats in all parts of the soul and body: in whatsoever therefore we do, there is flesh and spirit; and their own authors agree hereunto: as Ferus, and Catharen, a cardinal of their own, says there is donata justitia, and inharens (I). When the question is what we must lean to, it must be only on Christ and his righteousness, wherewith from him we are endowed. And a pope of theirs, Adrian the Fourth, saith that all our righteousness is as the reed of Egypt, which will not only fail us if we rest on it, but will pierce our sides. St Cyprian saith also, that he is either superbus or stultus, that says or thinks he is perfect. And good reason, for that which shines in the eyes of man, in God's esteem is base. 'In thy sight shall no flesh be justified,' Rom. iii. 20. Now there are divers degrees of judgments. In God's judgment none shall be justified; nor in judgment of law, for in many things we offend all: and for the judgment of the world, what is it if it clear us? Can that acquit us, if God and the law condemns us? and for the judgment of our own consciences, if they be cleared they will condemn us. Yea, the papists are not satisfied in their own consciences for this point. For if there may be a perfect fulfilling of the law in this life, by a man's own inherent righteousness, why do they teach the doctrine of doubting as necessary to salvation? But however they may argue in schools to maintain this their assertion, yet when death comes, they must fly those shifts, and lay hold only on God's love.

Some will say, What are the graces of God's Spirit? Are the sacrifices, the sweet odours, and ornaments of the spouse, are these dung?

I answer, Things admit of one esteem simply considered, and of another comparatively. Stars in the day are not seen, yet in the night are great lights. So works in regard of Christ's works are not visible, are nothing, but in themselves are good.

Secondly, I say there are two courts: one of justification, another of sanctification. In the court of justification merits are nothing worth, insufficient; but in the court of sanctification, as they are ensigns of a sanctified course, so they are jewels and ornaments.

Obj. But the ignorant papist objects against us, saying that we discourage men from good works, because we do so basely esteem of them.

Ans. I answer, A sick man cannot eat meat, but it breeds humours that strengthens the disease. Shall he therefore forbear all manner of meats? No. For meat strengthens nature, and makes it able to overcome the power of the disease. So by reason of our corruption we have within us, we halt in every good work we put our hand to. Shall we not therefore work at all? Yes. For notwithstanding our weakness, though we merit not any good, yet God, he overlooks the illness of our works, and accepts and rewards the good that is in them, giving us comfort and assurance of our justification, by the sanctified fruits, which, though imperfect, yet are true. To conclude: seeing we cannot have Christ, putting any confidence in outward things, let us labour to get an esteem of the weakness and imperfections that are in them, as also in our persons and actions, that we may hunger after Christ. To this end, daily renew we our repentance and examination of our hearts; and when we do any good, examine what weakness, want of zeal, want of affection or attention hath possessed us in our performances (of praying, hearing, reading the word, and the like), and want of watchfulness in our courses; and then shall we be of St Paul's mind, all will be naught. And take heed of spiritual pride and conceit of any good in us; for it hinders spiritual comfort from us. Let us meditate of the greatness of God's love to us, and the infinite reward; and it will make us ashamed of our weak requittance of God's love to us. Consider the multitude of our sins before the time we were called; and consider of our proneness to spiritual pride; let us by all means abase ourselves. For those that God loves, he will have them vile in their own esteem: for it is his method, first, to beat down, then to raise up. And therefore John, he comes thundering, 'Hypocrites, generation of vipers!' Mat. iii. 7. Then comes Christ, 'Blessed are the poor, those that hunger and thirst after righteousness,' Mat. v. 6; as if only they were blessed that feel their wants. We must disdain any other titles to any good, but only in God's mercy, and accordingly give the glory of all to him. Thus did the church militant, 'Not unto us, not unto us, Lord, but to thy name,' Ps. cxv. 1; and thus do the church triumphant, Rev. vii. 12, 'Honour, glory, and power be to the Lamb.' Those that do not thus are no members of the church.

Last of all, Let us take heed of extenuating sin. The papists tell us of divers sins that are venial. Such are surreptitious thoughts, taking of pins, stealing of points,! and the like; these they call venial. But we must know (to admit that sin, as a sin, to be venial, is a contradiction, though God do pardon it; for that is out of his free mercy), these surreptitious stealing motions, that unawares do creep into us, though the Papists do make them of small account, God may punish with his fierce indignation. Moses his anger kept him out of Canaan. Adam his apple cast him out of paradise. Every sin is a breach of the law. The least sin soils us. We must give account of idle words. And the wages of any sin, though never so small, is death, Horn. vi. 23.

For the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus.

That is, either all things are loss to me, that hinder me from the knowledge of Christ Jesus; or, all things are loss in comparison of Christ Jesus. Wherefore, before we can know Christ as we ought, we must know all other things to be loss; for when we learn to know Christ aright, we then cast those things out of our affections, which would else keep Christ out of our heart. Wherefore it is no wonder that great scholars should be erroneous in many points of religion; for look to their lives, and we shall see them envious and ambitious; they maintain idols in their hearts, they account not those things loss which must be loss, or else they must account Christ loss. Secondly, This knowledge of Christ is an excellent knowledge, better than the Jews, who had all their knowledge shadowed out in ceremonies; but this is unveiled, and therefore Christ said, 'Blessed are the eyes that see those things that you see,' Luke x. 23. And as the estate of the church grows more excellent now than before Christ's coming, and shall be most excellent hereafter in heaven, even so our knowledge doth, and shall grow in its excellent perfection. It is better also than human arts and sciences; not in regard of the author, for all knowledge is from God; but,

First, In regard of the manner of revealing thereof; for whereas we come to the other by the light of nature and reason, this is inspired into us by the Spirit.

Secondly, In regard of the matter of this knowledge, which is far beyond the other, for this teaches the natures and person of Christ, God and man in one person, which may swallow up the thoughts of man. 'Great is the mystery of godliness,' 1 Tim. iii. 16. In the next place, it teaches us his offices, that he is a king to rule over us and deliver us; a priest to' make us

acceptable to God; a prophet to teach and instruct us. And thirdly, it teaches us the benefit of his offices; exercising them in his state of humiliation and exaltation. Fourthly, it teaches us to know our duties, to entertain him, rest on him, glory in him only, and that all other things are loss in comparison of him.

Thirdly, This knowledge is better than other knowledge, in the effects it hath, it being a transforming knowledge, 2 Cor iii. 18. It makes glorious, happy, full of comfort, carrying the Spirit with it, which changes us into his similitude, and therefore it is called the 'word of the Spirit.'

Fourthly, In the fourth place, it is better than other knowledge, in regard of the depth of the knowledge; and therefore called 'The manifold wisdom of God,' Eph. iii. 10. That a virgin is a mother; God is become man: this is far above natural reach; and therefore Christ may well be called 'Wonderful,' Isa. ix. 6, who being God should be also man, die, rise, and ascend far above all power.

Fifthly, This knowledge is a sweet knowledge, and therefore excellent. It tells us who were miserable and lost; it tells us also of redemption, of a kingdom, of a Saviour. 'How' sweet are thy testimonies to my mouth,

Ps. cxix. 103. And if the promises here be so sweet to us, what shall then the accomplishment of them be to us hereafter!

Sixthly, This knowledge, furthermore, is excellent in regard of the continuance thereof. The knowledge of other things dies with the things; the world must perish, and what use is there then of our skill in the nature thereof? Only this knowledge abideth for ever, working grace, love, heavenly mindedness, and brings us to glory.

In the seventh place, This knowledge of Christ teacheth us to know God aright; his justice in punishing sin, his wisdom and mercy in reconciling us to him, and in willing that Christ should become man and die for us. Neither could we know these things, but by knowing Christ, who is the engraved image of his father.

Eighth, Furthermore, it teaches us to know ourselves, our filthiness, our ignorance, in esteeming triflingly of sins, counting them venial. But great surely must the sore be, that necessarily requires such a salve and such a physician as Christ, and his blood to be shed for the curing thereof.

Ninth, In the next place, this knowledge is altogether sufficient in itself without all other knowledge; and none without this to make a man wise to salvation, both of soul and body; and all men without this are but fools.

Use 1. For use hereof. This improves the shallow conceit men have of divinity; that the knowledge is but shallow; that every man may know it, and that any man may soon have enough thereof. But, alas! St Paul had a large heart, and had more insight into the deep mysteries of this knowledge than such, however they boast; and yet he desires more, and could not pierce the depth thereof; for none ever could do it but Christ Jesus only. Nay, the very angels they desire to pry and look into, and to know more of these deep mysteries, 1 Peter i. 12. It is therefore no shallow knowledge.

Use 2. In the second place, This ought to put us in mind to put apart times, to meditate of the excellency of this knowledge; and to this end we are to empty ourselves of whatsoever fills us. Especially we are to empty us of sin, and of care for the world and the vanities thereof, and the knowledge of them; because both it and they shall all perish; make no excuses of venturing displeasure, or suffering discommodity; true love pretends no delays, nor will endure them. 'Behold, Lord, half of my goods I do give to the poor, and I do restore to every man his own,' said Zaccheus, Luke xix. 8.

Use 3. In the next place, We must call upon God to open our eyes, that we may see and know his nature, his offices, his benefits, and our duties; to know more distinctly, effectually, and settledly; to see the wonders of his law; that we may be even ravished, when we behold his fulness.

Use 4. We, in the fourth place, are to frequent places where we shall have a fuller knowledge of Christ; such places where the commerce is between Christ and the church. In Cant. v. 1, Christ had more love to his church, and wooed her by his gracious promises. She, in the second to the eighth verse, being drowsy, pretends excuses. Hereupon Christ goes away, but leaves a gracious scent of his quickening Spirit, enough to stir her up to seek after her well-beloved that was gone, who, asking after her well-beloved, those whom she inquired of, inquired of her who he was? and upon her description of him, are enamoured with him, and stirred up to seek him also (where by the way mark the benefit of conference), Cant. vi. 1, and are told that he is gone into his garden to the beds of spices; that is, into the congregation and assembly of his saints. If we will know Christ therefore, we must go into these gardens, where he is ever present, and there will he teach us.

Use 5. And then shall we he stirred up to magnify God's goodness and mercy, that hath reserved us to these times of knowledge, and this marvellous light, wherein we are more blessed than John, who was the greatest of those born of women. We see more than he saw, Christ our Saviour, already ascended to be our eternal high priest.

My Lord.

This is the end of all our knowledge, to know Christ to be our Lord, for else the devils knew Christ. 'Paul I know, and Christ I know,' said he to those conjurors, but he could not know Christ to be his Lord. 'My Lord.' Not only for his title that he hath in me, but 'my Lord,' for the title I have in him. 'My beloved is mine, and I am his,' Cant. ii. 16. Mine he is, for he made himself mine, by redeeming me and paying the price for me. My head, from whom I receive force and vigour; my husband, my head of eminency. Briefly, 'my Lord,' making me his and stirring up in me a love and desire to make him mine, and to rest upon him by faith. In the covenant of grace therefore, there is a mutual consent between God and us. He is ours; we are his by faith to trust on him, and by love to embrace him, which stirs up the whole man to obedience. We may not think that this proceeded from a spiritual pride in the apostle, as though he thought himself the only darling of Christ. No. They are the words of a particular faith and love in the apostle; not excluding others from the like; for every Christian must labour for this faith, that we may know Christ to be our Jesus, our Saviour, which we shall be assured of; for if he makes us his, he will make us to love him, and to say from our hearts, 'my Lord,' and my head. His love of us is the cause of our love to him. We love him because he loved us first. His knowledge is the cause of ours; he chose us, and therefore we choose him; and if he loved me when I hated him, surely now I love him, he must needs love me. Again, we shall know that we are Christ's; for then there will be a likeness of Christ wrought in our hearts. For that Spirit that stirs us up to own Christ, doth ever work the image of Christ in our souls; as a seal it imprints on our soul the image of Christ, in all graces, of love, meekness, heavenly-mindedness, and goodness. If we be the spouse of Christ, we shall represent and shew forth his glory, 'for the woman is the glory of the man,' 1 Cor. xi. 7. Else whate'er we boast, we are therein but hypocrites. We must forsake all in regard of Christ.

For whom I have suffered the loss of all things.

Here St Paul confirms his resolution and judgment of the value of Christ above all other things; first, he said he accounted him gain, and all other

things loss. Lest men should think these were but brags, he infers he had suffered the loss of all for him, and therefore did so highly esteem of him; and then it was he was for Christ's sake stripped of all. He was in want, hungry, naked, went in danger of his death often, nay, he willingly suffered the loss of his privileges. He was an apostle, yet not worthy of the name, as he says; and for his care in his office, though he were very diligent, yet by it did he not look to merit. He suffered the loss of all willingly. He wrought this on his heart, to lose all for Christ; which is the duty that a Christian must learn, not to be only patient, but willingly to lose, to part with all. And therefore we are bidden to examine ourselves, to judge and condemn ourselves. And though the Lord hath not called us to the loss of all, yet win thus much of thy mind, as to be prepared for to lose all when we shall he called thereunto, and that in regard thereof, we may say we have parted with all; for in that we part with them in our affections, God beholds it and takes notice thereof, and likes it, and looks for it; and therefore he bids us leave all and follow him; and if we forsake not all, honour, credit, yea, our lives, we cannot be his disciples.

And do count them but dung.

Showing his loathing of them, and that he could not endure the thought of them, but did abhor it as dogs' vomit, or dogs' meat, accounting it tit meat for none but such dogs as he spake before of. If therefore we love Christ, there will be a detestation of those things that cross the power of Christ's merits, in the same degree that we love Christ, and we will express our degree of love of him, by expressing the degree of hatred we bear to other things in comparison of him.

Quest. But why doth the apostle so often inculcate these words?

Am. To shew the expression of the largeness of his own heart; and thereby to work an impression thereof in the hearts of the Philippians.

2. Secondly, To shew the power of the Spirit, that where it once leads, it leads further and further to a higher degree of love of Christ; that the longer he is loved, the greater will love grow and more fervent, so as the spirit constrains the person where it rules, that he cannot but speak, Acts iv. 20.

3. Thirdly, To shew the excellency of the subject. He dwells upon it, that we should think highly of it. Also,

4. Fourthly, To shew the necessity thereof; without which we cannot look for salvation.

5. Fifthly, To shew the difficulty of coming to this esteem of Christ; and to subdue our proud imaginations of our own selves, which, however, it will prove a hard and difficult matter.

6. Lastly, In regard of the Philippians, he knew it would he a difficult matter for them, and therefore he sought out fit words to express the nature of the subject and the truth of his esteem. Thus did the wise man, Eccles. xii. 10, 11, who knew that the words of the wise man are as goads. It is our duty to take notice hereof therefore, and to learn in what respect these outward things are good, and to rank them in their right places.

That I may win Christ.

To win Christ, in this place, is to get a more near communion with Christ; a fuller assurance of him, and a larger portion in him. For St Paul had Christ already; and that made him desire a fuller enjoyment of him. Though his heart was not large enough to entertain all Christ, yet he desired to be satisfied with his fulness.

1. First, then, it is here to be granted that Christ is gain, else why should the apostle desire to win him? He is gain, I say, both in himself considered, and having respect to us. In himself considered; for no jewel is comparable to God-man, to a Mediator. He was enriched with all graces that the manhood was capable of. But much more in regard of us; for, first, he is our 'ransom' from the wrath of God. Now we know a ransom must be a gainful thing, and of no small price that must satisfy God's wrath.

2. Secondly, He is not only our ransom, but our purchase; purchasing God's favour and heaven to us.

3. Thirdly, He is our treasure; for all things for this present life, as also for a better; in him are the treasures of heavenly wisdom; and of his fulness we all receive grace for grace. He is our comfort in trouble, and direction in all our perplexities.

4. Fourthly, He is of that precious virtue, as he turns all to gold; all things are sanctified to us, death, grave, crosses, all which, though we be not freed from, yet he turns them all to work our good.

5. Fifthly, By him toe are made heirs, and have title to all things. He is our Lord; and he that hath given Christ to us, how shall he not with him give us all things, Rom. viii. 32, so as in all our wants we may boldly come to the throne of grace.

6. Sixthly, We by Christ gain such offices as he himself had. We are kings; we are priests; we are over the greatest of our enemies. No more thralls to lust, or to the world. We may freely offer sacrifice for ourselves and others, in the name of this our high priest.

7. Seventhly, We have communion with all that are good—the angels, the saints, the ministers. They are all ours to defend and pray for us. Had the young rich man this spirit of St Paul, he would have thought it the best bargain that ever he made, though he had parted with all, if he had gotten Christ.

Obj. But it may be said, True, Christ is gain; but what hope is there for us to attain hereunto? It may be as paradise in itself, yet kept from us by a flaming sword.

Ans. 1. I answer, No. This gain may be gotten; which is the thing I propound to speak of. Christ is a treasure in a field. If any one will seek, he may find. We had a Saviour before we were born. He was elected thereunto, and we to gain heaven through him; and he was manifested in the flesh in the fulness of time to encourage us. And Christ our gain calls us to buy 'without money,' and invites us that are laden with sin to come to him, Isa. lv. 1; 2 Cor. v. 20. To this end he appoints men to lay open his riches to allure us.

2. Secondly, We have the Spirit, by which we lay hold on this gain. If we depend on God by prayer for his Spirit, and when we have gotten but a little portion of this gain, it makes our gains increase. To this end he gives us the word and sacraments; and this condemns those that live in the field where this pearl is, and have the ministry to shew them it; and yet they do neglect this so great a jewel. And this ought to stir us up to magnify God's goodness to us, who hath recovered us, that were the lost sons of a lost father, and keeps us from returning back into our former natural estate.

3. Thirdly, This gain is not to be gotten but at a price. It must be gotten by parting with all outward things, so far as to make them gain to us.

Quest. Ah, but is God thus hard to us, that he will not allow us the enjoyment of the comforts of this life, but we must for them lose Christ?

Ans. I answer, God denies us not our worldly comforts; for Paul had them. But when they come in competition with Christ, for excellency and superiority in esteem, as also when thou art called forth for the confession of the truth, then be at a point to count all, yea, thy life, dross and dung. We must therefore resolve and forecast the worst; and leave not till thou workest this mind within thee, to endure the worst rather than lose peace of conscience.

And therefore we may well conclude from hence, that confidence in Christ and in outward things cannot stand together. We cannot love God and mammon; and therefore, if we part not with the world, look to part with Christ, which we may note against the politicians of our times, that think themselves the only wise men. In their esteem Paul was but a weak man, and knew not how to esteem things. They can trust in God, they hope, and yet provide against the worst. The time will come when they will find they have been made fools indeed; when God will say he knows them not, and their riches shall take their wings and leave them without hope of comfort.

And therefore let us acquaint ourselves with Christ's value, with the vanity of outward things, and meditate hereon; and at length thou shalt find the same mind in thee that was in St Paul.

In the last place, we may hence observe who they he that have not gained Christ; for are there not many that will not part with a sin, no, though it be a sin that brings no profit or pleasure at all with it, as swearing and blaspheming God's name? Nay, are there not those that, Judas-like, sell Christ for thirty pieces of money, nay, it may be for less? A goodly price to set heaven, happiness, and their own souls at! Let any man tell them hereof, they will swear you do them open wrong, and be ready to cut your throat for saying so. How far are these from true grace!

4. The fourth and last general observation is, that when we have parted with all, we are to know that we are gainers. For Christ in Mark x. 30 saith—whoso promises are yea and amen—that he shall have a hundredfold in this life; that is, so much content as shall be worth an hundredfold. For when a man's conscience can tell him, These and these things I parted with, only to obtain peace of conscience, that peace of conscience shall give him more content than the whole world can bring to him. And what can a man desire

above content and comfort? It is all we seek for here, which if we have not, all is nothing.

5. Fifthly, He that hath Christ can be no loser; for in him all things are eminently and fundamentally; for he is Lord of all, and what I lose for his sake, if it be good for me, he hath said I shall have it.

Hence we may see therefore the wisest man and the noblest spirit. Who is the wisest man? He that makes the best choice. It is judgment makes a man; not he that hath confused notions swimming in his brain. Now a Christian considers things, lays them together, judges of them duly; he therefore is the wise man. The wicked man he is a fool. He parts with an invaluable pearl for his present delight in a few idle, vain, childish baubles and toys. Who is also the most truly noble-minded? An advised true Christian. He is able to set at nought that for which the world forget God, heaven, soul, and all for. He can despise the pleasures of a court and of a country. His eye is on his soul, on heaven, on the innumerable company of angels, on that presence where is fulness of joy. A wicked man routs in the dirt of this world. 'See what manner of stones and building are here,' Mark xiii. 1. That is their delight, to admire the stage of this world. But had they known this gift of God, this peace of conscience, and the comfort thereof, they would look after another city and foundation, whose builder only is God.

Quest. But how shall we know whether we have made this choice or not?

Ans. I answer, By these signs:

First, If a man accounts of anything, his eye and mind will he on it. If we account Christ as our gain, our hearts will be set on him continually; if he be our treasure, our hearts will be on him.

Secondly, If we have made choice of him, our hearts will joy in him above all things; as he that found the jewel went away rejoicing. 'Shew me the light of thy countenance; for therein do I delight,' saith David. Where true belief is, there is joy. Zaccheus, the jailor, and the eunuch, after they were converted, they rejoiced. This makes a covetous man not regard at all what men say of him, for he hath that which they would be glad of. So ought it to be with us; let us he taunted, mocked, flouted at, if we have chosen Christ, all is one. We have other things to comfort us, and our eyes will be upon them.

The third note is, If we can part with anything for Christ, and endure any hard measure, for the sense and assurance we have in Christ Jesus. Many are so far here from as they will not part with the least earthly pleasure for Christ. Such as these, though they say they have peace of conscience, they lie; for they can have no more peace of conscience than they have love to Christ; nor more love than they have an esteem of him above all things.

Fourthly, He that hath made this choice must part with all things whatever he loves, yea, his dearest affections and lusts; for a bird catched, though but by a wing, yet is she as surely the fowler's as if her whole body were bound; so if we favour or like and embrace but one sin, though we think not thereof, there is a flood of sin comes in at that gate. He that is' guilty of one sin is guilty of all.

Quest. But the weak Christian will object, Are we not, yea, the best of us, troubled with our personal secret infirmities? What shall then become of us?

Ans. I answer, 'Fear not.' For it is true, though the best child of God be thus troubled, yet he pleads against it, he hates it, he undermines it, and strives against it; and thus opposing it, it is not accounted to him by God. But if he forsakes all sin in heart but one, the devil will suffer it and endure it well enough, for he knows he is sure enough.

The fifth note is, That such an one can he content to be at some cost, yea, loss and pains, for the word, for the field wherein this pearl is hid. He that is not of this mind cares not for the word. It is not that men can speak well and commend it; for many will do so, yet afterward make a mock of it, especially being in some company. But he that esteems it once will ever esteem it, and in all company will extol it. Herod, a very we probate, may seem well affected where there is no temptation, or while the word is preached. Can this be a plea to God at the last day, who searcheth and knows thy heart? Many dream they have this when indeed they have nought but the shell. How few can say in truth, I have denied this or that commodity, and refused my profit for Christ's sake! Those that have done this, let them know they have a most rich gain, and the best gain of all others. They have a universal gain, that will comfort at all times. Riches and honours cannot cure the troubled mind; neither can they deliver in the day of wrath.

Then, in the next place, let them know they have an everlasting gain, that will comfort us for ever and ever. In the last place, such as have won

Christ, they have such a gain as makes them that have him truly rich, and noble, and good. Other riches without grace do corrupt us. The image of God is the true and intrinsecal worth. Let this encourage us to labour to got Christ, to attend the means that lay his riches open; and thereby shall our love he so stirred up, and our judgment so sanctified, as we shall be of St Paul's mind, to account all other things loss in regard of him; and therefore it is no wonder that those that have not the benefit of the means want this esteem.

Verse 9

And be found in him.

Some read the words actively, that I may find Christ; but the phrase in the original varying from the former, therefore it is better translated as we have it, passively. But when is it that St Paul desireth to be found in Christ? Ever, no doubt, but especially at the hour of death and day of judgment.

The phrase implies, first, that there is an estate in Christ; secondly, an abiding in it; and thirdly, to be found abiding in him. For the handling whereof, we wall first explain the phrase; secondly, we will shew what doctrines it doth clear; then we will come to some instructions arising therefrom. The phrase, 'to be in Christ,' is taken from plants which are grafted into stocks, or from the branches, which are said to be in the tree. Thus are we in the vine. It is Christ's own comparison. And of this union with Christ there are three degrees.

First, We are in Christ and in God, first loving us; and so we were in him before we were. He chose us from all eternity.

Secondly, When Christ died, then we were in him as a public person.

Thirdly, We are said most properly to be in him now when we believe in him; and thus principally is the sense understood in this place. And thus we are in Christ, not as the manhood is in Christ, but mystically; not as friends in one another by love, but by faith we are engrafted; as truly as the branches are in the vine, so are we one.

Obj. But Christ is in heaven, we are on earth; how can we be united to him that is so far distant from us?

Ans. I answer, If a tree did reach to heaven, and have its root in the earth, doth this hinder that the branches and the root are not united? In no wise. So Christ he is in heaven, and we on earth, yet are we united to him by his Spirit, and receiving influence from him of all grace and goodness.

Now let us see what doctrines are cleared hereby: first, it clears the point of justification by Christ. For if the question be, How we are saved by Christ's righteousness? I answer, Christ and we are both one. Doth not the eye see for the body? Are not the riches of the husband and wife all one? Yes. And even also whatsoever Christ hath is ours; he is our husband; he is our head. In the second place, it clears the matter of the sacrament. The papists would have the bread transubstantiated into the body of Christ, that it may be united to us. I answer, how is the foot in the head? Is it not by spiritual vigour passing to and fro through the body, but chiefly in the head. It is not therefore necessary that there should be any corporal union. Nay, Christ comforted his disciples more by his Spirit when he departed from them than he did by his corporal presence. We say also, that the mystical body of Christ is invisible, because the Spirit whereby we are made one is invisible.

This should comfort us at all times and in all estates. Before we were in Christ we were in an estate of horror, in an estate of damnation. Now to be reduced to Christ (what comfort is it to be one of a politic body? It is but for life. Or to be in any man's favour? It is but at will); this is a most excellent, glorious, and eternal being; that man's nature should be so highly advanced as to be united to the Godhead. Yea, our persons are mystically united to Christ. Secondly, in ail crosses or losses. What though we lose other states, here is a state cannot be shaken. Thirdly, in the hour of death tee are in Christ; and blessed are they that die in the Lord. Death, that separates the soul from the body, cannot separate either from Christ. Fourthly, after death. Can it go hard with me that am in Christ, that am his spouse? I am in him in whom is fulness of comfort. Fifthly, in all wants here I have him to supply all. He will give what is necessary. If we should have fulness of grace here we should not desire to be in heaven hereafter. Sixthly, in persecution all my hurt redounds to him: 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' Acts ix. 4. That which thou dost to my members thou dost to me?

In the fourth place, Let us consider how this being in Christ is a ground of doing of all duty. I say therefore it will direct us in duties to God, towards men, and to ourselves.

First, In duties towards God, how thankful ought we to be to him, for taking us to himself, for being Immanuel, God with us, so that we are become bone of his bone. What need we now saints or angels to intercede for us? Who should Christ hear above his own flesh? For duties towards men, this ought to stir us to duties of peace and unity. Shall we be so unnatural as to fall out with the members of our own body? Non est concors cum Christo ubi est discors cum Christiano.

Secondly, It ought to stir us up to duties of respect to each other, considering they are members of Christ as we are, and shall so be found in him ere long.

Thirdly, This should stir us up to charity to the poor members of Christ. They being his members are fellow-members; and in loving them and doing them good, we shew our love to Christ himself.

And in the last place, Towards ourselves, we are to carry ourselves, with more respect, and not to prostitute ourselves to every base pleasure. Consider in whom am I, and to what I am redeemed, and with what price? Shall I make my body the member of an harlot, who am the member of Christ? This pride and high esteem of ourselves above base pleasures and lusts, this is commendable; and therefore the apostle had good reason thus to account of these earthly things to be 'dross and dung.' In the second place, this will teach us to see our residence in Christ, and growth in him; for if we be in Christ, we will have an especial eye to our conversation, that we be not feet of iron and clay under a golden head, as many base licentious drunkards and filthy persons esteem of themselves. Will Christ own such members as these, think we? No. Those that are in Christ, Christ will be in them, discovering himself by ruling in them. His house is holy. If we be of his house, we will not desire, grieve, nor affect, but by the sway of his Spirit.

In the last place, How shall we come to be found in Christ?

Ans. I answer, we must first come where he is. We shall find him in the temple, teaching and strengthening our faith and love; and so in our judgments and affections we shall be in him. Secondly, we must separate ourselves from the contrary to Christ, as a loyal wife will from all doubtful acquaintance. We must depart from antichrist, our own corruptions and lusts, and daily we must labour to get ground of them.

And from the words this we may learn: first, that a Christian is continually under Christ's wing till he be in heaven, else how could the apostle desire to be found in him at the day of judgment?

Secondly, We learn that there is such a time when God will, as it were with a candle, search men out, and lay them open as they are. This is not thought upon. Men now shuffle it off, I shall be saved as well as any other, and this and that good company I am acquainted withal. Trust not, I say, to good acquaintance. There is a time of separation, when thou shalt be found out as thou art in thine own colours.

Thirdly, Hence we learn that the foundation of future happiness must be laid now. Before we can be with Christ in the kingdom of glory we must be his members in the kingdom of grace. Dost thou live therefore a corrupt and carnal life here? Never think to be found in him hereafter. And therefore let the uncertainty of this life be a spur to thee, to watch over thy ways, so as thou be such at this and all other times as you would be willing to be found at that day. Many boast hereof, but their lives savour nothing hereof, but are knit altogether to their lusts or to antichrist. Woo to such. They shall go on the left hand. But such as Christ finds in him it must needs go well with them. Christ will not judge them for whom he died, but shall set them on his right hand for evermore.

Not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law.

In these words, and those following, the apostle lays down summarily his desire, first, negatively in these words, he desired 'not to be found in Christ trusting to his own righteousness;' implying a difference and distinction between his righteousness by the law and that by Christ. The righteousness 'by the law' he disclaims as any way meritorious, and that as well habitual, wrought by God in him, or actual righteousness, consisting in the outward works that he did. And that with good reason; for, first, man's righteousness is but finite, and therefore unfit to work or deserve infinitely, and impossible to deserve heaven and the joys thereof. Secondly, This righteousness is imperfect, and stained as a 'menstruous cloth,' and unable to quiet or satisfy our own consciences, much less God who is greater than our own consciences. And therefore the saints prayed, 'Enter not into judgment with thy servants, Lord, for in thy sight shall no flesh be justified.' But the papists answer, the work of God is perfect; but our righteousness is the work of God, and therefore perfect. We say that the works of God are with us or without us. The works of God without us are perfect, but those that are

within us are imperfect, still savouring of our pollution and corruption, by reason that the old man in us perverteth all that is good in us, and therefore partus sequitur vent rent. Secondly, It is true that the works of God within us are so far perfect as tend to the end he works them for in us, but our righteousness was never ordained of God to that end as to save us by them, and therefore they cannot accomplish that end; but God works this righteousness in us to convince us of our own weakness, and to be a testimony of the presence of his Spirit in us. Paul therefore says not, I will not have mine own righteousness; but, 'I desire not to be found in my righteousness,' so as to merit salvation thereby.

But that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by Faith: that I may know him and the power of his resurrection.

That is, that righteousness which is in Christ, but laid hold on of me and apprehended by faith; and all that righteousness that he had, both active and passive obedience as Mediator, but especially his passive. For he was born, lived, and died for us; and this is that which St Paul desired to be 'found in,' and this is that which we must trust to.

But how can this righteousness, performed wholly by him, be mine?

I answer, By faith it is made ours; for if Christ be ours, all his righteousness must consequently be made ours.

But how can this righteousness performed by Christ be sufficient for us?

I answer, First, Because God ordained it to that purpose: 1 Cor. i. 30, 'Christ by God is made to us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption and to this end God the Father sealed him,' John vi. 27.

Secondly, I say, Christ is a 'second Adam,' and a public person, and became ours, we then being in his loins; so the righteousness of Christ is made ours, we being born in Christ by faith and found in him. He being our head, we have a spiritual life descending upon us; he being our husband, all his goods are ours also. This point is the soul of the church, and the golden key which opens heaven for us. If we join any other thing to it, it opens hell to us, as God will reveal at that great day. It is true the papists do acknowledge now that their good works are not of themselves but from God; but thus did the Pharisee, 'he thanked God that he was not as other men, nor as the publican,' Luke xviii. 11. But the poor publican, disclaiming

all such goodness, went away justified rather than the other. Let it be our wisdom therefore to rely only on Christ, whose obedience and righteousness is so all-sufficient as nothing may be added thereto, and say with the apostle, 'Not I, but the grace of God in me,' 1 Cor. xv. 10.

Verse 10

And the fellowship of his sufferings.

The apostle having showed his desire of Christ's righteousness, now comes to shew his desire also of having communion with Christ in his sufferings; showing that whosoever brags of justification, he must shew it in his sanctification. He must shew that he hath his part in the fellowship of his sufferings, if he meaneth to shew he hath his part in the power of his resurrection. Water is not alone, but water and blood must go together. Now Christ's sufferings are either for us as Mediator, or with us as being our head, and we his members. As Mediator he suffered death, which was only for our good. We can have no trust in our death as to deserve anything thereby as he did; for by his death he appeased God's wrath, and got his favour to us which we lost, and by it he sanctifies our sufferings and pulls out the sting of all our afflictions; as it is with the unicorn, who having put his horn into the water, discharges all poison thereout, so as the beasts may freely chink without hurt (2). So it is with us: we may suffer and endure afflictions without hurt, seeing Christ hath purged them of all poisonous nature that was in them.

But there are other sufferings that we and Christ suffer jointly, he as our head suffering with us his members; for as if the foot be grieved the head is grieved, so the Christian's sufferings are called Christ's sufferings, and a Christian must look to suffer if he be a lively member of the body of Christ. Yet is not every suffering of affliction Christ's suffering, for a man may suffer justly for his deserts. Notwithstanding even then, when a man suffers for his faults, after repentance Christ may be said to suffer with him; and therefore the fathers called the death of the repentant thief a martyrdom. For in all our sufferings Christ is in us, teaching and helping us to bear them with patience, and as a sanctifier of all of them to a blessed end, and as one that frames us to bear all of them, even as he himself did.

Use 1. This ought to teach us to conceive aright of the estate of a Christian, that he is not alone when he seems to be alone. Christ leaves them not in misery. No. For in misery he is most near and present. It is therefore a

good estate, though misery in itself be not desirable, for Christ desired to die and not to die, and so we in several respects may do. For if we regard death as a destroyer of nature, so is it not to be desired; but considering it as the will of God my Father, so are we to desire it and yield ourselves to it. And accordingly we desire not afflictions for their proper natural good, yet in regard they are a means to prepare and fit us for heaven, we say with David, 'It is good for us to be afflicted,' Ps. cxix. 67.

Use 2. In the second place, this will teach us that we are not to fear anything that we shall suffer, because there are more with us than against us. Joseph in the dungeon, Israel in Egypt, Daniel among the lions, the three children in the fire, Paul in prison, feared not danger; for what cared they so long as they knew God was with them; and therefore they rejoiced. If we have Christ we have all, if we want Christ we want all.

Use 3. Thirdly, This may serve to daunt Christ's enemies. They cannot hurt the least of his little ones but they hurt him. 'Saul, why persecutest thou me?'

Use 4. Fourthly, This should teach us to take part with God's children. What though they suffer affliction. Moses chose the better part, that did choose to be with the afflicted people of God before the court of Pharaoh. Wicked men may bite and kick, but they can do no hurt, lingua malorum est lima bonorum.

Being made conformable to his death.

This conformity here meant is not in regard of the end, that as Christ died for sin so should we, but in the manner of suffering. As he did suffer and die, so must we suffer and desire death. Secondly, As he died patiently and meekly, so must we suffer patiently and meekly. Thirdly, As he had, so must we have, sweet comforts to sustain and support us; and fourthly, As he had, so must we endeavour to obtain the same issue of our affliction; that is, eternal glory. Briefly, We are to be conformable to Christ in grace, in suffering, and in glory. All these are inevitably linked together, and our head having led us an example, we are to follow. Every Christian must therefore die to sin, as Christ died for sin.

But how shall we know whether we die to sin or not?

A dead man does no harm, hath no power; contrarily, are we strong to commit sin, and do we earnestly intend it? Surely we are not mortified. Secondly, Dead men's senses are not delighted with fair and sinful objects. If we be dead with Christ, let the sinful objects be never so delightful, they will not move us or affect us one whit; nay, they will be distasteful to us. Most are of a contrary mind. Offer them good discourse and occasions, they cannot away with them; offer any fleshly pleasure: like tinder, they are soon set on fire. Such as these, as they have no heart to suffer for righteousness, so if for vain glory they would, neither would God honour them so much as to suffer them. For grounds of this doctrine.

First, It is honourable to be like Christ our captain, our head, our husband.

Secondly, It is not proportionable for the head to be crowned with thorns, and the members to be clad delicately; that the natural son, in whom there is no blemish, should suffer, and the adopted sons, who are the causes of all offence, should go free. It is equity, that we having taken Christ for our husband, he should be accompanied by us in sickness and in health, in dishonour as in honour.

Thirdly, It is long ago decreed of God, and predestinated, and therefore cannot be avoided. Rom. viii. 7, 9, 'Whom he did foreknow, them he predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son.'

Fourthly, It is equal, that if he were conformed to us, we should be conformable to him. Now he was conformed to us, in that he suffered that which we should have suffered, and did that for us which we were to do and could not. He having drunk deep of the cup prepared for us, let us therefore, at the least, taste of it. Yea, let us suffer anything with an undaunted courage when we are called thereto for Christ. He will come with comforts, he is not empty, he will make us like him, he will prepare us hereby for glory. Fear not, therefore. God will turn all thy troubles to thy good. And thus we do fill up the measures of the afflictions of Christ in our flesh, Col. i. 24. And are made partakers of Christ's sufferings, 1 Peter, iv. 18. We have the like exhortations hereunto, 1 Peter ii. 21; 1 Peter iii. 14-18. Thus did Paul, 2 Cor. iv. 10, he carried the dying of Christ about with him. Let no Christian therefore promise to himself immunity from crosses. He that will be a Christian must be conformable to Christ, and he that will be like to him in glory, he must be like to him in drinking the cup he drank of while he was here in the flesh.

Verse 11

If by any means I might attain to the resurrection of the dead.

By 'resurrection of the dead,' he means the glorious estate after this life, whereas the resurrection is but the beginning; and the words sound as much in effect as if the apostle had said, I know I shall be happy at length, but between this time and that, I know I shall meet with troubles, with many crosses; yet let the way be never so difficult, I pass not by any means to come to such an excellent end as the resurrection of the dead is; in which words we will,

First, Consider that there is a happy estate reserved hereafter, which begins with the resurrection of the body, whereby we are far more happy than the angels that fell, and also more happy than we were in our first estate in Adam, which we lost; and therefore our hearts should be enlarged with thanks to God, that respects us above the angels, whom he hath left without hope of recovery.

2. In the next place, consider that the beginning of our blessed estate hereafter is at the resurrection, which is called the day of restoring of all things, and a time of refreshing, Acts iii. 19. It is a day when all good shall be perfected, and all evil shall cease; all grief of mind, all trouble of body, and death itself, shall be swallowed up into victory.

Quest. But why are we not happy before our resurrection?

Ans. I answer, because our bodies and souls are partakers of misery and sin here, and therefore cannot partake of fulness of happiness before they be united together again. God will have us to stay while all his family of blessed saints shall meet together, as well us that are now alive as our seed and posterity after us.

3. In the third place observe, that the apostle makes resurrection of the dead the last thing; establishing thereby an order, that there must be means to the resurrection, and then the resurrection itself. 'Ought not Christ to suffer these things, and so to enter into his glory?' Luke xxiv. 26. And if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him, 2 Tim. ii. 12. The second resurrection must begin with the first. We are sons and saints hereafter, but so we must also be here; only a difference there will be in degree of holiness. This resurrection doth not follow every manner of life, although men

ordinarily expect a crown without crosses, and never look for justification and sanctification, but think they shall be in heaven at an instant without them. But we must suffer with Christ in mount Calvary, before we come with him to the mount Olivet.

4. In the fourth place, we may likewise note, that it is hard to come to heaven, because of this order established by God: not in comparison of the end—for that surmounteth in excellency the hardness of the means,—but in respect of the means; some by fair death, with many crosses in their life; some not by many outward crosses, yet have store of inward troubles of the mind, by reason of their inward corruption that doth trouble them; others by violent deaths and by martyrdom. The ways are so many, and the means so diverse, as there is no certainty which way we shall pass. As St Paul knew not the means, so he cared not what the means were; for he was content to go thither by any means. Let the cup of affliction be never so bitter, the glory ensuing will sweeten all.

1. Away, therefore, with all idle and secure thoughts of sparing ourselves.

'Pity thyself,' said Peter to Christ; but was answered sharply, 'Get thee behind me, Satan,' Mat. xvi. 23. No; the way is very hard. We must come to health by physic. The end is so amiable, as it will sweeten all sour means; and therefore it is good for us to be afflicted. Crosses bring at length the sweetest comforts. Deny we ourselves, therefore, in Christ's cause; know nobody; look upon God and Christ's promises, and promise we ourselves no more than God promises. It is beyond our knowledge what God will do with us. He promises no immunity from crosses.

Nay, the saints and the apostles chose crosses and afflictions, rather than the pleasures of sin, who were wise, and had trial of both kinds; and yet accounts these momentary afflictions not worthy of comparison with the glory that shall be revealed. They were but light, 2 Cor. iv. 17; Rom. viii. 18. And if we would truly believe this, it would be easy for us to be resolved, as St Paul was, to come to heaven by all assurances, and to come to all manner of assurances,[by any means; for no worldly thing can bring content like these heavenly assurances of the presence of the light of God's love, which the children of God will by no means lose.

2. Secondly, In all crosses let us not look into the state we are in, so much as that we are going into. We are going to a palace: let us not be

dejected in the consideration of the narrowness of the way that leadeth thereto. God will not suffer this fiery trial to consume anything but dross; and therefore, let us with Christ suffer the cross, and despise the shame, Heb. xii. 2.

3. Thirdly, Labour for a right esteem of the things of this world. They are but momentary and fading; yea, our lives they are given to us by God.

What if we part with them? If it be for his cause, he will bring us to a better life which shall not be taken away from us, and this life we must part with ere long. And thus we ought to work on ourselves, by often meditating of them, as the saints have done.

4. In the fourth place, We are to labour to strengthen three graces in us especially: faith, to assure us that we are the children of God, and that we have heaven, and all things belonging thereto, laid up for us; and we are to labour to see more and more into the value of them. And then we are to strengthen our hope, which makes us cheerfully to undergo and do anything for God's cause, through our expectation of that which faith believes. Lastly, let us cherish our love of Christ. This made St Paul desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which was best of all, Philip, i. 23. And this love comes from faith and hope; and these together will breed a largeness of heart that cares for no worldly thing, and will be daunted with no affliction or crosses whatever.

But how far are we here from? Did St Paul part with life? It pertains not to us. No; not to leave a new-fangled fashion, nor an oath whereby we tear God's name daily. Alas, where is faith? What corruption is hero overcome? Which of us will ever be of Paul or David's mind, to become vile or base for God's cause? Where is he that will endure a scoff or scorn for religion? Let us beg of God this large spirit and large affections. The children of heaven have a free spirit, basely esteeming all worldly things. Zaccheus, when he is called, cares not for his goods, nor Paul for his privileges. The Stoics commend this resolution in men, to be walling and ready to die. Alas! crosses and afflictions Paul esteemed not, so as he might attain to the resurrection of the dead. Those are the things that the Stoics feared most; and it was the fear of these made them so willing and ready to die, together with a base servitude to pride. But a Christian heart is more noble. It not only fears not these, but it contemns them. Yea, cares not for life without afflictions, but with joy can undergo all manner of torments.

Let us therefore take heed how we quiet ourselves in our earthly dwellings here, supposing our estate to be happy. Surely it is the main ground of apostasy. We shall never come to see the price of religion, nor the excellency of a peaceable conscience, nor the vanity of these things, so long as we bless ourselves in them. And contrarily, let us exercise our graces in the daily trials we meet with here. Doth favour of great men, doth pleasure, profit, or honour, cross and oppose thy conscience? Let the peace thereof be preferred above all evermore, else shalt thou never come to Paul's holy resolution. And dream not of a vain, empty faith. Thou hast no more than thou dost practise. It is not 'Lord, Lord,' that will prevail at the day of judgment; but Christ will be ashamed of them at the day of judgment, that made no more account of him while they lived, than to prefer every vain, idle, wanton delight and pleasure before his honour.

Verse 12

Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect.

It is a correction of the apostle. He formerly spake of his desire, choice, and esteem of Christ's death and resurrection, and the force thereof he found in him. Now, lest secret, insinuating, proud conceits might arise, either in himself or in them, concerning his holiness, he crosses them with a 'not as,' showing that the best estate of God's children in this world is imperfect. There is ever something to do or suffer; some lust to conquer, or some grace to strengthen.

There is no absolute perfection but only in God himself; yet in Christians there is a kind of derivative spiritual perfection, which consisteth chiefly in the parts. A Christian hath this perfection. He hath all grace in some measure. We have no other perfection; no, not so much as perfection via, though the papists say they have it. Indeed, we are so far from it, that never could Christian keep the rules of nature, much less can we attain to the perfection of obedience to the law, for by it we are all cursed. Nay, in Christ none attains to evangelical perfection of grace, so as thereby we can be justified, as by a work of our own; for our righteousness is but in part; and this perfection via, which they boast of so much, differs not from their perfectio finis, no more than love to a man raised by good report of him differeth from love caused by the good I find in him, by personal communicating with him; and this is only in degrees in nature. They are the same love.

But why or how is it that there is no perfection of grace in this life?

Because there is and ever shall he in us, daring this life, a perpetual combat between the flesh and spirit, so as one weakens and hinders the other. Paul at the best found a law in his members warring against the law of his mind, Rom. vii. 28; the flesh continually lusting against the spirit, Gal. v. 24, hindering us from doing good, or in doing good, or in doing thereof, from doing it in a right manner.

Obj. 1. But the papists object, Love is the fulfilling of the law. We may love; ergo, we may fulfil the law, and consequently be perfect.

I answer, Love in the abstract being perfect, is the fulfilling of the law, but in this or that subject it is not perfect. Paul's love, nor Peter's love, was not the fulfilling of the law.

Obj. 2. They urge further, All God's works are perfect; ergo, the grace that is in us.

It is true God's works are perfect, but in their times when they are finished; grace at length shall be perfect in us.

Secondly, All God's works without us are perfect, as justification and glorification they are perfect. For we are perfectly justified even now; but his works within us, such as are his sanctifying graces, are not perfected till our time of glorification. For he suffers the old Adam to be within us, for divers reasons, so long as we live in this earthly tabernacle.

For use hereof, observe this as a ground for justification by faith. Paul, Rom. v. 9, proves that even now he was justified, and in this place he denies and disclaims absolute perfection, and therefore could not be justified by it; and therefore must needs be justified by faith. If it were his case it is much more ours, who come not to that measure of the fulness of grace that he attained to.

Secondly, This may serve to comfort Christians that find themselves burdened with divers wants, with dulness and forwardness of spirit, and with manifold corruptions, and are induced thereby to call in question their Christian estate. Let them look upon a better pattern than themselves. They may be grown Christians, and yet complain with Paul of corruptions. Nay, the most strong Christians see most deeply and clearly into their corruptions,

and find most opposition. There is in all men by nature a spring of popery. They would fain deserve heaven by a perfect and holy life, without blot; and God, to humble them, suffers corruptions to check them and to keep them under, who else would be lifted up through good conceit and esteem of themselves.

Thirdly, It may serve as a caution to many who, being reproved justly for their faults, What! say they, we are not angels; you have your own imperfections as well as I. And stir them up to any good duty, they are presently so good, as those that are better than they are too precise and too nice. St Paul contrarily rests in no degree of goodness, but strives on to perfection; and it is the devil's sophistry to turn that to a plea for negligence, which should stir us up to be more diligent, watchful, and careful.

But follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which I also am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

The word that is translated 'I follow after,' signifies properly to labour with earnest intention of the heart and affections; and the lesson that we may hence learn is, that the life of a Christian is a laborious and painful life. For in what proportion the things we labour for are more excellent than these worldly things, so much greater our desire and labour should be in the obtaining of them than in the obtaining this world's goods. And to this end the Scripture ever enforceth this duty with words suitable to work: 'Labour for the meat that perisheth not,' John vi. 27; 'Strive to enter in at the strait gate,' Luke xiii. 24; 'Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure,' 2 Pet. i. 10.

Those that will take no pains, it is a sure sign they find no sweetness in the thing; and therefore in such there can be no true goodness. And hence we may observe a difference between the desires of men. Some are effectual, some ineffectual. Those that are ineffectual commonly desire and delight in the thing they desire, but will none of the means: 'Let me die the death of the righteous,' says the wicked man, Num. xxiii. 10. Glory and happiness is excellent, but the gate is narrow, the way is tedious and full of troubles: he will none of that. We will laugh at one that shall wish his work and journey were done, whereas he will sit down and never go about it. Why should we not much more laugh at such sluggards, that wish daily, Oh that they might be saved! whereas they do not only not further, but hinder their salvation. But where true desire of grace is, there will be joined thereto an endeavour, with jealousy over our corruptions, with grief and shame for them, and for

our backwardness and want of goodness; for else hell itself is full of good wishes and desires. If we mean to be better, we must use all means, undertake all pains, and travail with venomency; even as those that pursue gains with delight, they follow through thick and thin, especially if the gain be in the eye; and those that go for company, they are soon tired. And thus did Paul. He went through fire and water, through all manner of dangers, good and ill report. His gain is still in his eye. He looks not after the way, if by any means he may attain his desired mark.

But how shall we come to this grace?

I answer, Get first faith; for by it the weak are made strong, Heb. xi. 35, seq. Get assurance that heaven is thine; and God hath promised thee grace sufficient, and this is Paul's argument: 'Be ye constant and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing your labour shall not be in vain.' Where hope of reward is in the use of the means, it will stir us up to a constant use of the means, 1 Cor. xv. 58. Secondly, Get a fervent love: for it is a strong affection. If lust so prevail with us, as we will omit no means to accomplish it, then a love in itself is much more powerful, nothing being too hard for it. It hath an enlarging, knitting, and communicating power. It makes a man bestow all, and rejoice more in doing good by much than in receiving. It is a grace comprehends a number under it; and therefore Christ comprehended all the law under the love of God and our neighbour. Thirdly, Cut off all superfluities. Men think they are happy when they have much to do, when indeed they were happy if they had less to do than they have. Satan he does as Cyrus did with the waters of Babylon; he diverts and separates our affections that he might pass over. As nurses, they hurt themselves and the children too when they keep over many; so do men hurt themselves with over much business. The Lord hath not made us all for the world, but hath reserved one day in seven for his service. For shame let us shew we have some respect of religion and goodness; seeing God requires but one in seven, let us not be so unjust as to deny him his service on that day.

Use. Well, let those that profess themselves of another world, by all means pursue it. In nature every thing tends to his centre and place; heavy things go downward, light things ascend upward. In handicrafts and arts every one looks after excellency. Shall it be thus with them? Shall mediocrity in other arts merit dispraise, and is it only praiseworthy in religion? The wicked they labour for hell, venturing loss of credit, strength, and estate; and is there not better gain in goodness? Have we such rich promises, and do we

esteem of them no more? Are not the afflictions we shall meet with many and great, and do we think to undergo them with ordinary grace, gotten without labour and watchfulness? But let us go on to the next words:

'That I may apprehend.' Whence we may observe, that the main scope of a Christian is to apprehend Christ: here by revelation, that we may apprehend him hereafter by vision. Many there are that may follow good things and use good means, yet wanting these apprehending graces of faith and love (which makes us have communion with Christ), they perish notwithstanding. Human knowledge is commendable, yet is it no other than as a scaffold in this building. It helps, but the building once done, it is for little use. Apprehend we, therefore, him by knowledge of his truth, rely on him by faith, and embrace him by love; and then if we he chased by him, we may, as Joab, lay hold on the horns of the altar Christ Jesus, and there live and die, 1 Kings i. 50. And as we have daily breaches, even so get more and more hold on him, and this will make us desire with Simeon, 'Lord, let me now depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation,' Luke ii. 29. Let us, therefore, daily learn to see our own foulness, and go to him the rock of our refuge.

Obj. Oh, but some will say, Christ is in heaven, and we on earth, we cannot go to him when we please.

Ans. I answer, Yes; for the arms of faith are large. It takes hold of things past and to come. No height is out of the reach thereof. And, besides, Christ he is present with us. He is in his word, in the sacraments, in the communion of saints. 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, I will be in the midst of them,' Mat. xviii. 20. It is his own promise.

'For which I am apprehended of Christ.' Christ he apprehends us, and that in several degrees.

First, As he is God. In his eternal love we had a being before we had any being here. God conceived us in his eternal affection, and embraced us. Secondly, Christ apprehends us in his effectual calling of us. Paul he was posting another way when Christ called him, 'Saul, Saul.' Others he calls from their mother's womb; some by afflictions and powerful crosses, as he did the jailor; others by more gentle means, as Lydia. Thirdly, There is an apprehending in all our actions, courses, and estates, directing us continually in them, never leaving us. None can pluck us out of his hands. He is stronger than our corruptions. He will not let us go till he hath drawn us up to

heaven, and placed us with himself. For the use of this doctrine more shall be said in the next doctrine, which is taken from the order.

Doct. Christ he first apprehends us when we apprehend him. He apprehends us that we may apprehend him, and because he hath apprehended us, therefore is it that we apprehend him. For 'in him it is that we live, and move, and have our being,' Acts xvii. 28; and therefore much more our best being. He it is that gives us the will and the deed; to us it is given by him to believe and suffer with him.

Use 1. For use hereof it would teach us in all our actions to leg ability and strength of him, and get a persuasion that his Spirit doth apprehend us in love; and that he will direct us and remove all impediments, and stand by us in all our crosses, that we are able to do nothing but by reflection from him; that though we are naturally dead and dull, yet he will quicken us by shining on our hearts with the sunshine of his grace.

Use 2. Secondly, Give him the praise of all the good thou doest, for the deed is his. Those that do not, do apprehend and are apprehended of themselves; and therefore it may serve as a mark to discern of our estate, whither do we run? and what do we apprehend in our trouble? Is it Christ who is our present help in time of trouble? Then there is a blessed change in us. But do we seek to our own devices, to our own policies and inventions? Surely we have not apprehended Christ as we ought to do; and therefore we are to stir up the graces in us, and beg increase of grace from him that is the fountain of all grace.

Use 3. In the next place, it should comfort us, by the consideration of the certainty of our estate, without falling away, if we hold fast unto the end. If it were ourselves that did apprehend us we could not long continue, but it being Christ that holdeth us, our comfort is he will not forsake us. It is the mother that holds the child. The child cannot lay hold on the mother, but is subject to falling every hour. Christ he holding us, hath promised to love us to the end, and to put his fear in our hearts, that we shall not fall or depart from him. This being daily considered will greatly comfort a weak Christian. Christ may seem to let him fall, by suffering him to fall into some great sin, but it is only to humble him, and to teach him not to trust to his own strength, which will soon fail him, but upon his mercy and grace. And therefore,

Use 4. In the next place, it teacheth us to hold fast unto him, and rely on him, and to pray to him that he would hold us fast, and then we fall not from God, but to God. He hath delivered us, and will deliver us and keep us to his heavenly kingdom. If we fall into sin, let us repent and go to God. There is mercy in Israel concerning this, and with him is plenteous redemption. His right hand is under us ever to hold us up, that we cannot fall so deeply but he will lift us up again.

Use 5. In the next place, this may be a comfort to us in all our troubles and afflictions of this life. Are troubles near? God is not far off, Ps. xxii. 11, seq., and Ps. cxviii. 5, seq., but full of comforts for such. We have an invisible wall about us, the wall of angels; and God fights for us. There is more with us than against us. God will not suffer us to be tried above that we are able to bear. Let us 'therefore pray, Forsake me not, Lord, lest I forsake thee. If we pray to him he will be found of us. Paul prayed for this. Christ also, that knew he was apprehended, yet prayed all night; and this are we to do; he hath promised to hear us. And therefore let us go in faith and assurance to him, in all our troubles.

Verse 13

Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended.

The holy apostle dwells upon the point, that he might press it the more; and it is good to press matter of weight. The apostle showing that conceit of perfection to be dangerous, again tells the Philippians, that he had not that which they boasted of. This pride of ourselves, and conceit, is a sin that climbs up to heaven, and enters on God's prerogative, and a sin that God doth directly set himself against. Of this compellation, 'brethren,' I have formerly spoken.

I might also touch that doctrine, that the kingdom of heaven is not perfected in us here, but that it grows by degrees. It is at the first as a grain of mustard seed. There are babes in Christianity, and old men grown Christians. And the ground hereof may be partly in the subject, partly in the object.

In regard of the subject, for that graces are imperfect in us, the more the soul hath, the more it desires.

In regard of the object, for that Christ is so full, that we are not able to receive all his fulness, so as there is imperfection in us, and superabundant

perfection in him. Paul had a large affection, yet came far short. This possibility of the soul to receive more will be in us, till we be in heaven, where we shall be full; and therefore while we are here, we pray still, 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,' and 'Thy kingdom come,' more and more. It is a strange conceit, therefore, for any to think he may be too good; yet do these daily, or should do, pray for more and more perfection here on earth, although they say they know not what. And another reason why we apprehend Christ not so fully here as we shall do hereafter, is, because the manner of making Christ known to us is by revelation, 1 Cor. xiii. 12, seq. We behold him here but as it were in a glass; in the glass of his word and sacraments, which cannot represent him to our understanding so clearly, as hereafter we shall behold him in the beatifical vision.

Take heed therefore of a self-conceit of perfection. When we begin to be unwilling to grow better, we begin to wax worse. There is no stay in Christianity. It is the sight of our imperfection that makes us strive to perfection, and the more we see into our misery, the more earnestly we strive on to be freed from it.

But this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth to those things that are before.

See what is the apostle's unum necessarium, to grow more and more to the fulness of the knowledge of Christ. All other things he counts as 'dung and loss.' So as we may hence observe, that the Spirit of God in a Christian heart, subjects all things to one Christ.

'One thing have I desired of the Lord,' said David, Ps. xxvii. 4; make this therefore a rule to difference our estates by. What is the thing we intend chiefly? Is it riches, or pleasures, or honours? This one thing will be the utter overthrow of all religion in us. Christ will be supreme, or he will not be. 'He that loves father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me,' saith Christ of himself, Mat. x. 37. There is none so wicked but would be religious, till religion comes to cross that one thing, their darling sin. And thus have they base limitations, which must needs prejudice their growth in religion; for where religion is, it will cross their base affections and lusts.

Therefore, whosoever we are that intend to be true Christians indeed, resolve first to prefer the peace of conscience and the fruit of religion above all; and resolve to abhor all things that will cross this one thing of St Paul.

Verse 14

I press towards the mark.

Behold an excellent description of a Christian course, borrowed from the exercise of running a race, being a manlike and commendable exercise, fitting men and enabling them for war. The very heathen herein condemns us, whose ordinary chief exercises, what are they but good company, as we call them, continual lying at taverns, to the impoverishing of our estates and weakening our bodies? The kind I condemn not, but the excess is such, as the heathen would be ashamed of; for which they shall even rise up in judgment against us, and condemn us.

But from the simile, we may gather thus much, that Christianity is a race. The beginning of this race is at the beginning of our conversion. It should begin at our baptism. The first thing we should know ought to be God. The race is the performance of good duties, concerning our general calling, and concerning our particular. For the length of our races, some are longer, some shorter, but the end of every man's race is the end of his life. Some men's ways are plainer, some rougher. The prize is fulness of joy. The lookers on are heaven, earth, and hell. God is the instituter of this race, and the rewarder. The helpers are Christ, good angels, and the church, which helps by prayer. The hinderers are the devil and his instruments, who hinder us by slanders, persecutions, and the like. For ground of this race in us, we are to know that man is created with understanding, directing him to do things to a good end and scope. Other creatures are carried to their end, as the shaft out of a bow, only man foreseeing his end, apprehends means thereto. His end is to receive reconciliation and union with God, to which he aims by doing some things, suffering others, and resisting others.

And this race is also ordered by laws; for every runner is not crowned. There is a running ill that shall never procure the prize. The laws hereof concern either preparation, or the action itself. For preparation.

1st Direct. First we are to know, that there is a dieting requisite. As those that ran in a race had a care hereof, to use such diet as did strengthen, not cloy, and such apparel as might cover them, not clog them; so ought it to be in our spiritual race, we must cast aside all heavy loads, every weight and sin which doth so easily beset us, as it is Heb. xii. 1. If God cast on us any place or riches, let us use them for a good end, but not make them our end; and therefore with them take up daily examination of ourselves, how we

behave ourselves towards these worldly things. It were a madness in a runner, in his race, to take up a burden, and not to think it will be a sore trouble to him; and why do we not think thus in our spiritual race? Cast we off therefore original corruption, and the corruption of our place, time, and calling, which in time will grow unsupportable to us. Let us desire no more than God gives; and what afflictions God sends us, let us take, assuring ourselves they are for our good.

2d Direct. A second law is, to consider the ways that we are to run in, what dangers we are like to meet with. Forecast and resolve against the worst, and withal promise we ourselves God's assured protection in our worst estate. The want of this is the seminary and ground of all apostasy; when men promise to themselves in Christianity such things as God never promised. Christ therefore promiseth and showeth the worst first. But the devil, to deceive us, keeps the worst out of our eyes, and shows a sort of vain delights and pleasures. But the sting of them, through his subtlety and craft, he suffers us to feel before we see it.

3d Direct. A third law is, that we enter the race betimes. It is the devil's trick to put off the care of this, telling us we need not yet enter; we are but young, and have many years to live, as they did that hindered the building of the temple. But consider we the uncertainty of life, that we may die suddenly, and that it is just with God to take us away after that manner, if we neglect ourselves and him. And we must know also we shall lose no pleasure nor delight, but we shall find such sweet delights in those ways as we shall with St Augustine be grieved that we enjoyed them no sooner. And besides, those that begin betimes get a great advantage of others, and through continual custom come at length to a habit of religion.

In the next place, we are to take heed of hindrances of us in our preparation; as,

1st Hindrance. First of all, hope of long life, whereby we are besotted, thinking life and death is in our command, that we shall have time enough, and need not so soon enter upon good duties.

2d Hindrance. Secondly, A conceit that when we have once given up our names to Christ, that presently we lid adieu to all delight, mirth, and pleasure; when, alas! we are far deceived. God denies not pleasure to us, but will give us whatsoever is good for us. We shall delight and rejoice, but with a joy

spiritual; and we shall see nothing in this world that may any way deserve our delight therein.

3d Hindrance. A third hindrance is a despair of ever going through this race. This settles upon some, strangely making them cast away all care, and desperately trust to Christ's mercy. This made Cyprian to complain of his corruptions, saying they were bred and brought up with him; and therefore feared they would hardly give place to grace, being but a stranger. While men consider how great and powerful their corruption is, they with the Israelites despair of ever entering into the land of Canaan—these sons of Anak do so terrify them.

But consider we withal that God is above all our corruptions; that he can make of a lion a lamb; and that if we will trust upon him, in his time he will help us, and we shall overcome these giant-like corruptions. Christ he hath conquered them already; and though while we live we cannot wholly overcome them, yet David's house shall grow stronger and stronger, and Saul's house weaker, 2 Sam. iii. 1. We shall have grace sufficient for us. God will sweeten religion to us, that we shall delight therein; and Christ will not lead us into temptation till he hath fitted us to it by his grace, and then we shall rejoice, as the apostles did, Acts v. 41, that we are accounted worthy to suffer.

Contrary to this humour, some think it so easy a matter to run this race, as they think they cannot be out of it or tired therein, whereas indeed they never yet set foot therein. Let such look to themselves if they be in this race, they shall find it no easy matter.

But thus much concerning rules or laws for preparation to this race. Now there are laws to be observed of those that are in the race; as,

Direct. 1. First, They must resolve to hold on, without discontinuance of their course of good duties; for some, by omitting good duties now and then upon slight occasions, do come, through God's just sufferance, to leave them off and never take them up again; and thereby, while they are not getting ground by continuing their course, they do lose thereby. Even as watermen rowing against the stream, if they do not row, but rest never so little, the stream carries them back again, and they cannot recover themselves but with great difficulty; so it is in this Christian race. A little interruption of duty

causes thrice so much pains to recover our former estate. Therefore we are to take up a holy resolution not to be interrupted in good duties.

2. The next law is, that we must look to gain ground still, to grow from grace to grace. It is the apostle's aim still to grow better than himself. Contrary to this many forsake their first love. They think themselves wise, but are fools, such as the Lord will spew out of his mouth, as he threatens the Church of Laodicea, Rev. iii. 16. And indeed the most men at the best are but civil; and do but provide for their own ease, and can endure any mixture of religion or company; and the ground of this coldness is a self-conceit, whereby men think well of themselves and their estate. Paul, he was of another spirit, ever pressing forward.

3. A third law is, that we do things with all our might; that we run this race with all our earnest endeavour. There is no bodily exercise that profiteth, but it must be with putting forth of our strength. So our Christian actions should shew even outwardly, that we do things as if we intended thereby to honour God indeed; and to this end we are to depend on God by prayer, that he would give us strength and minds to put forth our strength for gaining most honour to his Majesty, and this will bring great assurance and comfort to us in time of need.

4. A fourth rule is, that we are to run this race with a cheerful and speedy course. A dead performance of duties is no part of our race. Yea, as many go to hell by ill performance of good duties, as by committing sins that are scandalously evil; for this resting in the work done is the cause of hardness of heart, and thereby of despair; and at the best never brings any sound comfort at all to us. And therefore we are enjoined to do good duties, and to do them in a good manner. 'Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of this bread, and drink of this cup,' 1 Cor. xi. 28; and 'so run that you may obtain,' 1 Cor. ix. 24. It is no lingering. We know not how long we shall live, how soon we shall die; and therefore let us make haste to do our work before God takes away time from us, by taking us out of the world. And those especially are to look to this, that have lived long in their own courses, and are but lately reclaimed. They are much behind, and had need make haste. The journey is long, their time but short. And to this end look we not what we have done, and how far we have gone, but look what remains to be done, and know we have done nothing till we have done all.

Quest. But it will be asked, What! may we not think of duties that are past?

Ans. I answer, We may think of them by way of defence, and to give God the glory, and also to encourage us on, but not to rest or solace ourselves on them till we have done all.

Quest. But men may say, What, is there no pause? is there no Sabbath?

Ans. I answer, Yes, when we are dead. 'Blessed are the dead in the Lord,' Rev. xiv. 13. It is they that rest from their labours. Heaven is a sufficient reward for all the pains we can any way take here. Besides, the comforts that we have here are many, which none knows but them that enjoy them. And God hath promised the continual assistance of his blessed Spirit, that shall encourage us and lead us into all truth. Alas! what comfort have we of all that we have done, if we continue not, but sit down and take up our rests here? What good got they that came out of Egypt and died in the wilderness, it may be even in the border of the land of promise, yet never saw it? It will assuredly fall out with us as it did with them, if we harbour any infidelity in our hearts. We shall be cast out, that we shall never see this good land, the spiritual Canaan.

In the next place, take we heed of such hindrances as may make us either slack or intermit this race of ours.

1. As first, We must take heed of idle scruples and temptations. These are no other than as dust cast in the eyes of the runners, and as stones that gall their feet. Interpret them to be the subtleties of the devil, and therefore shake them off, and intend thy duty thou art about, and pray for wisdom to discern aright of things. Regard not the golden apples of the profits and pleasures of this life, that lie in thy way to divert thy steps,! and sweep off evermore the dirt of these worldly cares, which we gather in our race, and by little and little grow to clog us.

2. In the second place, Beware of sins against conscience. They take away joy, and make our hearts dead. There are many that seeing divers of their sins before them, concerning which they find no peace in themselves, are soon out of breath, and quite out of heart, and so by little and little run into despair, and without hope ever to attain the prize.

3. Thirdly, Take we heed of ill and dull company, that are cold in religion, that cannot away with good religious duties. For as it is in our ordinary travels, good company makes time and way pass away speedily and with comfort; so it is in this race, good and gracious company by exhortation

and example do wonderfully encourage us; and ill company contrarily do dishearten us, dissuade us and clog us, and draw us back from every good duty we take in hand. But many men's conceits are, they need not all this ado; they are well enough, though they be not thus holy; all cannot come to the high pitch of mortification. Surety there is hardly any beginning of grace in such who allow themselves in a dead course; for where the love of God is, it will constrain men to shew their thankful and loving hearts to him, in walking before the Lord with all their might.

4. In the fourth place, Take heed how we suffer our minds to wander in this race. Let us not look at the lookers on. The world and the devil and wicked men, pass not for their censures. We may assure ourselves before we enter this race we shall have no applause from them. Let a slow dull] jade come by, like dogs, they let him pass, none regards; but if another comes by apace, every man runs barking and slandering and backbiting after him; and if they can they will bite too. Shall a man care for such as these? No. We must resolve beforehand to have the world, the devil, and all the enemies he can make to be against us. Let us, therefore, set our eyes only on him that has our reward in his hand, that observes us and is ready to crown us; and let us beg courage and strength from him, and spiritual wisdom how we should perform every action; with what intention or remission of heart and affection; how to sanctify his name in the performance of the duties of our callings; how to make every action, yea, our recreations, a furtherance in this our Christian race.

Secondly, Let us daily search and try our hearts and ways. See how we profit or go hack, how we grow like or unlike Christ; particularly, examine we how the pomp of the world seems to us, whether base or contemptible? If so, then the further we are run in this Christian race. For as in objects of sight, the further we are from them the less they seem to us, and the nearer we are to them they appear the greater, so it is in the object of our minds. Doth heaven appear full and beautiful to us? It is a sign we are near to it, and we are come a good way in our race. But contrarily, if it be mean and of no esteem or account, it is far from us; we are at the most but coming towards it.

Secondly, Examine what doth take up daily the powers of our souls and affections. Do we delight in the best things, and with Mary choose 'the better part,' which shall not he taken away from us? Luke x. 42. Or contrarily, are our delights here below, and our rest set up here? Then we have our reward

here, and the prize is not prepared for us, but God will spew us out for our coldness. And, therefore, if we find coldness creeping on us, let us take heed of it. It is a dangerous estate. God cannot endure it. For while we allow of good things, but shew not intension of spirit in the performance of them, we do even judge them, and tell the world they be things not worthy of our pains and endeavours. Let us, therefore, not allow of this coldness, though it be in us, but strive against it. Meditate of such things as may inflame us, and pray against it.

For the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

'1 press forth.' It is a word of vehemency, signifying to set forth his utmost bent and endeavour, both of the inward man and of the outward; and all is to heaven. So as a Christian's aim is always to Jerusalem, his looks is that way; his tongue speaks the language thereof; his carriage will tell he seeks another city, Heb. xi. 14. But for these words, observe there is first a 'prize.' Secondly, 'it is a prize of a calling.' Thirdly, this calling is 'high.' Fourthly, this calling we have here in part.

Concerning this word 'prize,' it is a metaphor taken from the reward of victory gotten in some exercise. God hereby brings heaven down to us. Because we cannot go to it, he insinuates into our affections by pleasing things, and teaches faith by sense.

Use 1. And therefore, we must not rest in these borrowed words, but ever know that the thing that is described goes beyond the description by any earthly similitude.

Doct. From the thing observe that God hath reserved a happy estate for such Christians as are elected to run in this race, that are fitted to it, and that are preserved to it.

Use 2. And this should teach us to magnify God's goodness; that whereas by nature death with his pale horse and hell should follow us, now the course is altered. A holy life in God's commandments is given to us here, and then glory shall be heaped upon us. God hath begotten us to a lively hope, but hath passed by the angels, and left them without hope of recovery.

Doct. Secondly, observe this happy prize is to be given after running. God keeps this order to exercise his graces in us, that we might be a means to gain others, and that we might value happiness the more. If we did not

suffer hero, we could not taste heaven so sweetly; after labour sleep and rest is sweet. And it is fitting that we should be followers of Christ, to fill up the measure of his sufferings. He did first run, and then was crowned. And this order we must keep if we mean ever to be with him.

Use. And let us he comforted herein, though the race he long and painful, yet there is an end. It will not continue for ever, and with the end there comes a prize. The world runs in a mass here and there; they have their reward, and their happiness will end soon; but a Christian's happiness will never end.

Doct. In the next place observe, that it is expedient and useful to have an eye to this prize. It made Paul, and it will make us run cheerfully; and God tells us of it, to the end we may fix the eyes of our minds upon it, Col. iii. 23. Whatsoever we do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, knowing of the Lord we shall receive the reward of the inheritance.

Quest. But some may say, If it be an inheritance to us, how is it then propounded as a prize to us?

Ans. I answer, It is both a reward and an inheritance. It is an inheritance because it is given to adopted sons. It is a reward after labour, not for labour; so as running is the way to a crown, not the cause of it.

Quest. But the papists say, we have it by faith. Why then is it a prize or reward? Why or how can it be a prize or reward, and yet ours by belief?

Ans. I answer, Encouragement and this prize are not given to works, as works, but as works by faith; for by it we run and overcome all trials and troubles. Reward is due to perseverance, but perseverance cannot be without faith.

But for the matter 'in hand, I say it is expedient to look to the prize, that we be not carried away with temptations on the right hand or on the left; and therefore let us not look on them. Moses's eye was so fixed on this prize, as he set light by all the pleasures of his life, Heb. xi. 25, 26. The eye of faith in a Christian is stronger than that of sense, yet let us take these cautions: First, that we know ourselves sons, and that we come to this prize by inheritance. And secondly, that we love not God so much for his goodness to us, as for that goodness which is in him. For a Christian aims first at God's glory, then at his own good. And so he loves God for being goodness itself, then for

being good to him. And yet a Christian in order comes first to see God's goodness to him, and therefore loves him; and then he arises higher to the love of God, even for that he is goodness, and henceforth admires and adores his fulness, for else to love God because God loves us is mercenary.

Use 1. We are therefore to think of this happy estate; and as children, though at first we know not what belongs to inheritances and rewards, yet the elder we grow in Christianity, the more let us search into these things, and see what is laid up for us. It is an invaluable prize that will free us from all evil, of company, of enemies, of Satan's annoyances, of hindrances, of sin, from all occasions without us and inclinations within us, from sickness of body and troubles of mind. It is a Sabbath after six days' work. It is beyond all earthly crowns, The runners here envy not one another, nay, they help and further one another, and are glad of one another's forwardness. All are heirs, all happy, all shall be crowned, and with an incorruptible crown, an inheritance that fadeth not, but is undefiled; and such an one as is kept for us, 1 Pet. i. 4. It is not like the crowns of leaves that soon fade. No. We shall ever be in the presence of the Son of righteousness, where we shall have a continual spring.

Use 2. But to proceed in the next place: This is a prize of calling. We must be called to it. Who can take a calling on him, unless God calls him? And who can be enabled but those that he enables? This calling of his is the beginning of his golden chain of salvation. He calls us from a cursed estate to a happy communion; from death and bondage under the devil, to be kings and princes. And this is done by outward means, and inward work of the Spirit. This calling is a powerful calling, enabling them to come that are called.

And hereby we may try whether we have any title to heaven or not.

Sign 1. For, first, if we be effectually called, it supposeth we are chosen, called, and singled out from others of the world; and therefore all swearers, and those that are given to drunkenness and profaneness, they are not called nor singled; they remain as they were. For this singling out is the first part of the execution of God's decree of election. And whom God calls, he qualifies. Princes they may call men to places, but they cannot qualify them. But God, when he calls Saul to be a king, he gives him a king's heart; so if we he called to this heavenly kingdom, we shall have holy and kingly hearts and minds given us.

Sign 2. Secondly, Men's tongues will shew what calling they are of in their discourse. A Christian will remember he is a Christian, and will walk worthy of his calling; and with Nehemiah he will reason, 'Shall such a man as I do thus?' Nell. vi. 11; speak thus? think such vile sinful thoughts? And those that are not of this carriage shew no great religion in them. And just it is with God to give such over to a great measure in sin.

Sign 3. Thirdly, This calling is to glory; and therefore he that is called, he will think of heaven, and magnify and admire God's goodness to him. What thing is man, Lord, that thou shouldst he mindful of him? and therefore those that admire the pomp and glory of this world, it is a sign their calling is worldly, and that they are called by the world.

Sign 4. Fourthly, If a man be called by God, he shall find a spiritual answering within himself to God's call. If God say, 'Thou art my son,' the heart answereth, 'Thou art my God.' 'Behold I come quickly,' saith Christ; 'Even so come, Lord .Jesus,' saith the Christian heart. And therefore a rebellious disposition shows that God's Spirit is not there.

Thirdly, This calling of ours is a high calling. It is from heaven to heaven. It is from a heavenly spirit, by spiritual means, to Christ in heaven, to saints, to spiritual employments and privileges.

' Use 1. Hence, therefore, we may learn who are the greatest men. Sensual men think those in outward place the greatest men of all other. Alas! they are nothing to a prince of heaven. He is a spouse to Christ; shall judge all the world, and triumph over Satan. All other callings end in the dust with our bodies. Kings shall rise as peasants, and it may be in a worse estate than many of the meanest. There is no difference in death. All other callings are by men, from men to men, to earthly purposes. Let us make, therefore, a difference, and know whence our calling is, that we may be thankful; and whither it is, that we may be joyful.

Use 2. We may also, in the next place, hence gather, who are of the highest spirits. It is a Christian, and only he. He overlooks all these base things. His way, his mind, is ever upwards; and with Paul, he thinks all 'dross and dung' that is here. It is the disposition of the world to mind high matters. Here in religion are the true aspiring thoughts; as if men will be covetous of honour, here is the right honour, and these are the honourable persons. 'Who honour me, I will honour,' saith God. Only a Christian is partaker of his desire; other men desire high matters. God knows to what end, but they

leave them in the dust. But when a Christian dies, he is then partaker of his desires in fulness.

Quest. But it will be questioned, Hoes a Christian ever know he is called?

Ans. I answer, Sometimes a Christian staggers a little, either being not an experienced Christian, or through sight of corruptions and temptations. But setting these aside, a Christian knows his calling, and will live by his rules. For it is not only a calling, but it works a disposition. And, therefore, if we find it not, attend we on the means of the gospel, which is called the kingdom of heaven, and it will bring us into a good estate, and shew us our estate also, which being once made known to us, we may assure ourselves it will remain with us for ever; which also may be gathered from this, that it is a high calling. For nothing can break any one link of that chain made by God, and demonstrated in the 8th of the Romans.

But to proceed. This is the calling of God; for by nature we are dead, and it can be none but God that revives the dead. God, together with the voice of his ministers, sends his quickening Spirit; giving ears to hear, and understandings to understand.

Again, We are not only dead, but in thraldom under the dent. It must needs be one that is stronger than this strong man, that must dispossess us of him. This calling is God's calling in Christ, and that is first as our head. God looks on us as we are in him; and he elects us as in Christ. For from eternity he appointed so many to be members of Christ, as he meant to save. We are called and justified in Christ. He must be ours before his obedience be ours. We are sanctified in Christ. We must be in him as branches in the vine, partaking in the quickening;sap and juice of his grace; and when we are glorified, we must be glorified as being of his members. Then we are called by Christ, who is the author of this holy calling; and, lastly, we are called through Christ as our mediator. And thus chiefly is it meant here, not through works, as the papists will have it. No. Christ is the author and finisher of our faith, Heb. xii. 2. In him are we crowned, as the body is said to be crowned when the head is. Let us therefore cherish this communion with Christ by all means, for thereby we shall communicate with him of his fulness.

Verse 15

Let us therefore, as many as he perfect, he thus minded.

St Paul he proceeds to others. If any of you be perfect as I am, be you also thus minded as I am. Perfection in this place is not meant of that perfection we shall have hereafter, or should have now, or legal perfection; but he is said to be perfect, that is, in his growing estate, increasing more in grace, righteousness, and sincerity; or it may be meant of perfection in regard of degrees, comparatively, whereby one out-goes another that is but a novice in religion. Such are those that can rule their affections, and can live in a settled course of holiness, called in Heb. v. 14 men of 'full age.' For there are children in religion, new entered into Christ's school. Then those that are come to 'full age' surely are exercised to discern good and evil. And then those that are come to their full pitch in heaven, between whom and the former there is no more comparison than is between the sun and a star for light. So as in regard of the saints in heaven, the best here are imperfect; yet in regard of the beginners, they may he said to be perfect. However, we may safely gather this,

Doct. That in Christianity there are degrees of holiness; divers grounds, some bring thirtyfold, some sixty.

Let this comfort those that discomfort themselves in regard of their imperfections. Grace must be at the first as a grain of mustard seed, and therefore let such with patience attend the means, and trust God for the issue.

Doct. Secondly, We may observe, that there is a kind of perfection attainable in this life, which we ought to strive to. The reason is, that in all things God hath ordained a set pitch, beyond which they cannot come, and to which they all tend; and as it is in nature, so in grace. Though he hath appointed to every one his several portion and measure of grace here, yet a pitch he also hath set to all, which we are to aim at, to grow better still, though in this life we cannot attain to it; and the reason is, because we know not how God will exorcise us. He doth exercise all his children, but some with greater trials than others. Besides, we have a perfect God and a perfect word, that is able to make the man of God perfect to every good work. And these are not given to us for nought; and therefore it is a shame for a Christian to sit down at any degree upon pretence of imperfection. We see plants in nature desire growth, that they may be able to stand in and

withstand storms. And where this spiritual nature is, and this new creature, there will be endeavour to increase in strength, to undergo and overcome all temptations and hindrances whatsoever.

And to know whether we have this perfection or not.

1st Sign. There will ever be a base esteem of these outward earthly privileges and honours; nay, of the good endowments of our minds, counting them loss in comparison of Christ; and this will work a sure settled hope in Christ evermore.

2d Sign. Again, There will be a perfection of holiness; a neglect of things past, and an earnest endeavour to things before, 'to press to the prize.'

3d Sign. Thirdly, A perfect Christian desires the coming of Christ; but the weak one ever cries, 'Let me, O Lord, recover myself before I go from hence.' He has not that assurance of his good estate that a well-grown Christian hath.

4th Sign. Fourthly, A perfect Christian hath sweet communion with Christ, and can go to God with boldness. without fear of judgment or terror of his presence. Whereas the weakest are driven to God by fear, others by hope, this man comes to God, being moved by a sweet disposition of love.

5th Sign. Fifthly, A strong Christian is not moved with any change either of prosperity or adversity. Weak brains are soon overturned with strong waters, so weak Christians are soon drunken with prosperity. But a strong Christian, in any prosperity, is pliable and fit for anything. David in the midst of all his royalty saw a greater blessedness than honour and riches: 'Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not sin, and in whoso lips is no guile,' Ps. xxxii. 2. In adversity also a sound Christian will not shrink, knowing God cannot be changed, though his estate may alter; and therefore he 'can want as well as abound,' growing stronger in patience as in other Christian graces. But it is contrary with the weak Christian, for every cross strikes at his heart, and at the foundation of his faith, making him presently doubt of God's love and favour to him.

6th Sign. Sixthly, A grown Christian he is experienced to find out Satan's devices and plots, and can put a difference between the motions of the flesh and the spirit, and therefore knows what corruption to weaken and what grace to strengthen; whereas a new beginner, for want of practice and

experience, sees not these things; and therefore, ere he is aware, runs into many offences, and looks for no remedy.

7th Sign. Seventhly, A well-grounded Christian can withstand the hitter blasts and oppositions of this world; nothing could move Paul, nor separate him from the love of God; but a weak Christian either is blown away, or at least shaken, with every blast; as it is in young trees newly planted.

8th Sign. Eighthly, A grounded Christian hears with the infirmities he sees in others. He pities them, and helps them if he can; but judges not of them as those that are weak, who for the most part are captious. 'You that are spiritual must restore,' saith the apostle, 'those that are weak, with the spirit of meekness,' Gal. vi. 1. So as it is the weak ones that are scandalized, and as they are soon offended, so do they soon give occasion of offence to others by their ill example. But the grown Christian endeavours to live free from offence; in the least things he is watchful against Satan's wiles.

9th Sign. Ninthly, A perfect man doth most of all others see into his particular wants, and looks hence after a further degree of grace; and therefore the apostle bids such as are perfect to forget things past, not to look on those that are before, but to see what is yet before to be attained unto, and to press forward thereunto.

10th Sign. Tenthly, A strong Christian is of ability and endeavour still to beget other Christians. It is the property of a grown creature to beget its like. A weak Christian hath enough to do to look to himself.

There may be many more signs named, but these will suffice. Let us come to the means whereby we may grow to this strength and perfection.

1. And first of all, we must know there must, be an order. We are to grow in fundamental graces in the first place; for we water not the leaves, but the root, of our plants; and the graces that are the foundation of all works being gotten and diligently cherished, the works, which are but as leaves, will soon put forth. The main fundamental grace of all is faith, which we are principally to look after.

First, In getting assurance of our salvation. To this end walk holily. For many live in sins against conscience, and so can have no assurance of the pardon of their sins; and how dead and blockish are they! David, though a man after God's own heart, yet losing the comfortable assurance (by his

sinning against conscience) of the pardon of sin, thought God's Holy Spirit had quite forsaken him; therefore he prays, 'Take not thy Holy Spirit from me,' Ps. li. 11. Therefore labour for assurance of pardon of sin; for where the soul is wounded with the guilt of sin, it cannot enlarge itself in love, but is possessed with a fearful expectation of judgment. But when the soul is assured of the pardon of its sins, it breeds love to Christ; and there it is said of Mary, 'She loved much, for many sins were forgiven her,' Luke vii. 47.

In the next place, we are to labour for faith in the promises of the forgiveness of sin, and God's goodness to us; that 'he will give grace and glory, and that we shall want nothing,' Ps. lxxxiv. 11. This will put courage into us.

And as we are to labour for faith, so also for love; which is cherished by meditation of God's mercies and his love to us; and this will set us on fire in all good works. And so much of this grace as we have in us, with so much strength and intension of spirit shall we endeavour to please God in all things; and this argument the apostle used to stir up the Corinthians, 1 Cor. vii. 1, 'Having these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.'

2. In the next place, whatsoever we do, let us labour to do it with the best advantage, labouring to practise and exercise as much grace, and as many as we can; as in giving, give in zeal to God's honour, in love, in mercy towards our brother that is in need, and in regard of justice we owe it to him. God hath commanded us to give him, and he will reward it; for we lend to the Lord when we give' to the poor, Prov. xix. 17. If we are to abstain from any evil, we are to abstain from it with a perfect hatred thereof, and consider how it will offend. It will break peace of conscience and dishonour religion, scandalize those that are weak, dishonour God, and bring shame to ourselves; yea, we must remember that the talents that God gives us do increase in the use of them. The more we strive to do things exactly, the more perfection we shall attain to, in the use of performances.

3. Thirdly, Let us not neglect little things either in good or ill. Omit no occasion of doing good, and take heed of the least beginnings of ill; abstain from all occasions and appearance of evil, for though in comparison they seem small, they are of great consequence.

4. Fourthly, We must keep our affections to holy exercises and means; for God works by means. Neglect none, for so much perfection thou losest

thereby, and consider what means will fit our disposition when we are indisposed. Are we dull in prayer? Then read. If that will not be endured, then use the communion of saints; and still remember that we be not wearied with prayer, for God sends not his away empty. And that these things may be the more effectual, observe some motives to stir us up.

And to this end, consider,

1. The privilege of a perfect Christian. 'He is as mount Sion, which cannot be moved,' Ps. xlvi. 5. If we tell him of death, it is his heart's desire. Tell him of afflictions: he is resolute; he looks for them; he knows he lives God's child, and so he shall die; when a weak professor fears afflictions, fears ill tidings, fears death, and when it comes, seeks for comfort and hardly finds it.

2. Secondly, A perfect Christian is a beautiful example, and makes others in love with religion. He is thoroughly exercised and practised. The weakling is scandalous, makes men offended at religion: soon takes offence, soon stumbles, and gets many knocks so as his life is bitter.

3. Thirdly, The perfect man honours God, and gets him much glory by hearing, reading, praying, and such duties. Now as parents love those children best that are most like unto them, so those whom the Lord finds like unto him, he will make them more near to him in likeness.

4. Fourthly, The perfecter a man is, the more near communion he hath with Christ; and hath the greater fruit of Christ's love, and findeth peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Spirit; to such as these, Christ hath promised to come and sup, and feast and refresh with his graces. For even to this end Christ came, to make us holy and pure, that he might present us to himself a glorious church, Eph. v. 26, 27; and therefore that Christ may attain to his end in us, let us endeavour unto perfection.

5. Fifthly, Our estate hereafter should move us hereunto. We look for 'a new heaven and a new earth,' 2 Peter iii. 18, and we desire to be ever with the Lord in that heaven wherein dwelleth righteousness; and therefore we ought to be diligent that we may be found in him in peace, without spot and blameless. It is the apostle Peter's argument, 2 Peter iii. 13,14; and therefore 'as many of us as be perfect, let us be thus minded,' that we cannot go far enough; we must strive still on to perfection.

And if in anything ye he otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

St Paul aims at the comfort of those that are weak, implying that every Christian stood not in this pitch of disposition with the apostle; and yet they were not to be discouraged. God will reveal the same mind to them also in his time.

1. In which words we may observe, first, that some Christians see not so far as others, neither at some times so well as at other times; but are like the man in the gospel; they see at the first men walk like trees, and after see things more plainly. 'The way of the righteous shineth more and more unto the perfect day, as the light doth,' saith the wise man. Prov. iv. 18. And as the church grew to knowledge by degrees, so do we; for we first know things in general. At the first, Peter knew not that the Gentiles should be called, Acts x. And the disciples were at the first weak and subject to many infirmities, and therefore we must take heed of judging and censuring others, and also that we discourage not ourselves, by reason of our weakness. God will in his time strengthen us, and it may be call them. Secondly, Observe it is God reveals this unto such. It is God that must take away the veil first, the veil of the thing, opening our understandings by reading and hearing; and thus the thing itself is made fit to be known. There he opens the veil of the heart and affections, to embrace and love the things. It is God that opened the heart of Lydia, Acts xvi. 14., Lot us therefore bear with the ignorant. Though God's time is not yet come, it may hereafter.

2. Secondly, Ministers, when they come to preach, must pray that God would take away the veil from the people's cars and hearts; and people when they come, let them pray that God would open their hearts, and not come in the strength of their own wit, knowing that God openeth and shutteth: none can open or shut till he doth it.

3. In the third place, we may observe that God in mercy will do this for us. He will open our hearts. He will reveal, though not every particular truth, yet all necessary truths, according to our estates. Some stand in need of more than others: as ministers ought to have more than people; and governors are to have a larger spirit than other inferiors: yet all shall have sufficient.

Therefore for our necessities let us go to God. He hath promised to lead us; and with David pray, 'Lord, open thou mine eyes, that I may see the

wonders of thy law,' Ps. cxix. 18. He hath promised to anoint our eyes with eye-salve; and it is his office to guide us; he is our prophet to instruct us.

4. In the next place, observe that if any man belong to God, he must at one time or other be thus minded as Paul was: to hate all things as vain; to strive on to perfection; to make conscience of the least offences; yea, of idle thoughts and words; of loose, wanton behaviour; to know he is not perfect enough, vigilant enough; to look how far he is short of that pitch of perfection he ought to attain unto; not to content himself that he hath outgone others. These things they shall know either here, in time of trial and temptation, or at the hour of death, when no man ever repented of his goodness or forwardness in religion, nor of his care or constancy in good courses.

And therefore let us be stirred up to be of the same mind now; and if any man shall think with himself, because God will reveal this, therefore he will neglect means, and stay till God inspires this mind into him, let such take heed: if they love goodness, they will set about it presently; but if they quench the good motions of God's Spirit, God will take his Spirit from 'such. Beg that God would now change thee, for thou art not master of thy thoughts. If we now put off God till we die, it is just with God to suffer us to forget ourselves. Let us be well affected for the present; and though we see not so clearly as we should do, let us attend the means; and though we cannot grow in religion, yet let us not think it a shame, but allow and uphold such courses, else is our estate desperate.

Observe further this speech, as it is a discovery of a moderate spirit in the apostle. There are some graces that seem in show to cross one another, as zeal and moderation, but they do not. For zeal, when it meets with a fit subject for moderation, can be moderate. Paul condemns not, but hopes; and it is an example for our imitation. Love bears all and hopes all. While God suffers, why should not we suffer? Christ's Spirit will not break the bruised reed, in whomsoever it is. God hath a time for such as we condemn, even as he had a time for us, and therefore we must use all means, waiting if at any time God will give us repentance, 2 Tim. ii. 25. Ministers must not be harsh with weak Christians. It is God's work to bow affections, and not man's. And secondly, when we have used all the means we can, we must depend on God's providence; and therefore we are to fetch grounds of toleration and patience towards others from God's love and wisdom, who reveals the seed sometimes long after.

The papists they check us for want of means to reduce men into unity, and to compound controversies. They brag of the pope's power this way; but it is but a brag. For why do they not conclude their own?

They are far more happy than the church was in Christ's time: he says, 'Offences must come,' Mat. xviii. 7. Paul sees there 'must be errors,' 1 Cor. xi. 19. He could not compose all. God must reveal it in his time.

But how do they compose differences? By excommunication, imprisonment, and death; and this by the censure of an ignorant man perhaps, which is brutish and unfit for the church of God. For our part we want no means; but the effect or success we must leave to God. We are not to force men tyrannically to our opinions in lesser matters, but leave them to God's time of revelation.

And lastly, As this hope of revelation is promised, so are we to expect it and wait for it; 'for to him that hath, more shall be given,' Mark iv. 24. And therefore let them that have beginnings of grace be comforted to walk on; and for those that are not entered, let them not be discouraged. God will reveal. But upon what condition it follows.

Verse 16

Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule.

The word 'nevertheless,' some read it 'only' ([‘), as if it were a condition. But it implies both a precept and a condition, showing that those that look for revelation of further knowledge and goodness they must walk according to that measure of knowledge they have. The word 'rule' implies in general the Scripture, more particularly a company of sound-truths concerning faith, love, and hope. There is a great Bible, which is the whole word of God. The little Bible is the grounds of religion; and these are not only to be understood in the book, but comprehended and invested in our understanding and affections; and according to these we must walk. Truth is no guide to us, being only in the book, but as it is seated in the heart.

Doct. But let us come to some observations. First, we may learn that God out of his goodness hath left to his church a rule of faith and manners. There is a rule whereby men must walk, otherwise should we be in a

labyrinth of errors continually, having no other light but this torchlight of nature to guide us in this thick darkness wherein we are by nature.

The properties of this rule are divers. First, It is a fixed and unchangeable rule; and therefore we must bring all to it, not it to all.

Secondly, This rule is a perspicuous and clear rule. 'Thy word is a lantern to my steps, and a light to my paths.'

Thirdly, This ride is homogeneal. All things therein are spiritual, all holy, all pure; and therefore, when the question is about religion, we must have recourse thereto as the only absolute complete rule. And therefore we must know this rule and then be led by it; for the word 'rule' implies that there must be a thing to be ruled, else what needs rule, or to what use should it serve? An instrument is in vain without use. It is true, many men make religion and Scripture but a mere object of discourse. But their example ought to be no rule to us. If we look to be saved, it must be by walking according to this rule; and therefore a Christian life is no licentious life. Though he be freed from the law, yet must he serve God day and night. Therefore it is that the Christian prospers not nor thrives in this world, because he will not lie, nor swear, nor have a broad conscience, as the children of this world have, that take all occasion and scope to be rich. But a Christian lives by rule. He hath little, and it is blessed to him; for he looks at riches and profits of another kind.

In the second place, we may observe that a Christian walketh by this rule. He thinks it not sufficient to take a step, but keeps a right course steadfastly onward.

But how may this be done? may some men say.

1. I answer: Let us use the means; as first, let us treasure up the word in our consciences. Let us get the rule within us; get the articles of faith and assurance of the promises, and let this be betimes while we are young. It is the ordinary cry, The Scriptures are heard, they cannot understand them. But what is the reason? They are bred up in earthly businesses, and are stuffed with them so as they find no place for the word; and it is a miracle to see men thus brought up to live by this rule.

2. Secondly, When we have once treasured up the knowledge of these things, we must learn to apply them upon several occasions; for where no

practice is, there knowledge is idle, and makes us worthy of more stripes. Many have general truths in their minds, but coming to apply them, they find a great want. David knew adultery was a sin, and Peter knew it was dangerous for a man to rely on himself, yet how farther did they fall.

3. Thirdly, Let us compare our experience with our rule. We shall find there is nothing therein but is fulfilled; that there is no suffering but for some sin or other; and that besides heaven hereafter, God rewards particular obedience here with particular rewards; and particular sin with particular corrections. We shall know that his judgments are not scarecrows. The work of the wicked is accursed, but it shall go well with the righteous; and by this moans we shall be encouraged to good and scared from bad courses.

4. Fourthly, Be inquisitive and watchful over our particular steps. Take and hear admonitions and instructions, and be inquisitive after them. Those that are otherwise minded, no marvel if they, like libertines, spurn against all instruction and advice, and accordingly feel the smart of their ways before they see it.

5. Fifthly, Get a wonderful jealousy over our hearts. We often offend in thoughts and desires, which God, the searcher of the heart, looks into; and we must therefore be jealous of idle thoughts and words, not only of others, for so a hypocrite may be.

Obj. But loose persons will say, Oh, this is an unpleasant course; we must bid all joy farewell when we come to this.

Ans. I answer, No. The ways of wisdom are ways of comfort and pleasure. God approves of them, and our consciences will tell us so, and thereby will fit us for life or death, and will so settle us, that no estate shall be unwelcome to us; and, as Ps. 1. 23, 'To such as order their conversation aright God will shew his salvation;' and, as in the text foregoing, 'God will reveal himself more and more,' so as if we be faithful and conscionable in little, we shall have greater matters revealed to us; and contrarily, if we be unfaithful and careless, God will take from us the key of knowledge and the use thereof, and will give us up to foul vices, oven sins against nature, as he punished the Gentiles, and to believe lies, as Paul says, 2 Thess. ii. 11. And will answer us as he did the idolaters, even according to their multitude of idols, Ezek. xiv. 4. So as would we have favour in our sins, and teachers that shall bolster us up in them, and not cross our vain courses? God will let us have our heart's desire, but we must know that this is an inevitable way to a

desperate estate; and therefore marvel not so much at the loose liver because of his good breeding, for as they desire the ill, so they have, and are justly punished therewith.

Let us mind the same thing.

Observe here, that we are not only to walk suitable to others, but we must mind the same thing that others of our profession do. So as this is a direction to concord, showing that a Christian is a member of Christ as his head, and of the mystical body the church. Faith tics him to Christ, love ties him to the body, so as he must walk with Christ and also with the body. He must look to himself first, and then to the body. The ground of this union is laid down here to be first an union of mind and affection, and this must be in good, or else we are brethren in evil. It is no marvel the world complains of want of love, when there is no agreement in the rule of our love, when there is no agreement in the objects of our love. It is not riotous fellowship, but fellowship in the gospel that unites us. Let us mind this same thing, and then we shall affect one another; and because our knowledge doth not extend to every particular alike, let us agree in the main points, and let not less things break us off one from another. If we did walk according to our measure of knowledge in those things wherein we agree between us and the Lutherans, [there] would not be that bitterness of spirit that there is; all censures and distempers would cease. And it is a fault in many Christians, though bred up well in knowledge, yet being of a harsh spirit and nature, while he walks not according to the same rule, and minds not the same things in the main as he should do, he grows to be bitter. As for those that would be sincere, they must endeavour to be united in one, as they have one God, one faith, one baptism; for a Christian loves not to go to heaven alone. And when he is there, he knows he shall be one with Christ and one with the holy saints, and therefore will endeavour to be in perfect unity here. Considering there is no good he hath but he enjoys it as being a member of the body of Christ, he knows it is a horrible thing that members of the same body should fall out one with another; and therefore what shall separate or divide us? Shall infirmities? Alas! we are all sick of this disease, veniam petimm damusque. Are they too hot? We are too cold. Why should we not stoop and yield? Christ he stooped from heaven to us. Shall errors? Why, the time will come God will reveal himself more fully. Shall sin? We know what the apostle saith, Gal. vi. 1: 'Those that are spiritual must restore such with the spirit of meekness.' We must not cut off members for every sore. Shall injuries? It is the honour of a man to pass by such. Do we look Christ should forgive us

when we will not forgive others? Consider it is the practice of all holy men. Paul 'became all things to all men, if by any means he might win some,' 1 Cor. ix. 20, seq. Peter received reproof of him, yet fell not out with him. Some there are of such a perverse spirit, as if they see in any one any infirmity, presently they break into these or the like words, 'I will not be of that man's profession,' thus forsaking all the good in the holy profession because of some weakness in the professors.

If they will needs be separating, let them separate from the world, from scandalous, careless, riotous persons, else Satan rules in division. He knows he is best able to deal with them that are alone, and therefore draws Eve from Adam, and one Christian from another, and so quickly overcomes them. If in company one fall, another may help him up; if he be cold, another may warm him by exhortation and example.

Consider, therefore, who are best minded, and mind the best things with them. If we find we have attained to a greater degree in grace than others, endeavour to bring them to us. The communion of saints is an article of our faith. Every one believes it, but few knows what it means; and therefore no marvel they desire it not.

Verse 17

Brethren, be followers together of me.

These words contain another exhortation, with a friendly compellation, which I pass over, having heretofore had often occasion to speak of it. The exhortation is to imitation of the apostle, 'follow me.' And because I cannot ever be with you, therefore follow those among you that walk as I do.

Whence we learn, that together with the rules of religion we must propound God's graces in us, as examples for others to imitate; and this arises not from pride, but from confidence of truth and holiness in our own hearts and conversations; and religion maketh this a virtue and duty, without which it were boasting; and so it doth many things, of themselves not seemly, very fitting. David's dance was in worldly esteem counted but folly, yet having respect to God's glory is commendable. And therefore we must not be captious when we see such things in others, that men ordinarily count indiscretion. But mark their ground, and by it esteem of them, and accordingly follow such. 'Be ye followers of me,' saith St Paul; that is, observe what my doctrine is, and what I do and acknowledge, follow and

imitate me. The apostle's doctrine consists chiefly of three heads; whereof the first, concerning our natural condition, as Rom. 1st, 2d, 3d chapters, and Eph. ii. And the second, concerning our remedy by Christ Jesus, God and man, being king, priest, and prophet, as in the Hebrews. And the third, the manner how Christ is become ours by imputation, and is laid hold on by faith, which is given to us by God, who being unchangeable and true, we persevere in this rule and course of obedience, by the mercies of God, though with many combatings and strivings, even to fulness of glory. The apostle's example see in part in this chapter, in holiness of life and death to sin, and esteem of the goods of this world as base. In the Acts see his pains in the ministry, his calling, his heavenly and holy mind in the next verse.

And therefore, let us read these often, and consider them. They are an excellent glass, that will transform us into an holy form and fashion. Many things there are in him that are extraordinary and not imitable. He wrought in another calling for his living. He was an apostle, had extraordinary gifts by revelation, and indeed not so much by study as the ministers of the gospel now, to whom God gives gifts, but in the faithful and painful use of the means; and therefore are they not bound to imitate the apostle in this thing as in other things which he did as an apostle?

But to proceed to particulars. Imitation implies four things:

First, A doing that which another doth.

Second, A doing it in the same manner.

Third, A doing thereof grounded upon the same affections, not as in a stage play, where he that acteth the person of a king is often a varlet. But it implies such an imitation as is in a child, that endeavoureth to be like the father in disposition as well of mind as of body.

Fourth, It implies a doing, studio imitandi, with an earnest desire to be like him. For he that doth that which God commands, and not as expressing his desire of imitation, he is no follower; and therefore in all our actions we ought to desire to be like God, and endeavour to express in action what we desire; and to this end we are to search for examples and patterns in the Scripture, for those that are more excellent. For the most excellent in all kinds are the best rules for others; and because in many things we offend all, let us follow the examples of men no further than they follow Christ, 1 Cor. xi. 1. And it was one end of Christ's incarnation, that he might be an example

unto us. 'As I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, so ye ought to wash one another's feet,' John xiii. 14; 'and learn of me, for I am meek,' Mat. xi. 29.

Hence we may gather the ground why we have not only rules in Scripture to live by, but also examples. For, first, they shew that the things commanded are possible to be done. Then they shew us the way and means more plainly, how to do them. Thirdly, they shew how graceful and acceptable they are when they are done. So as the Scriptures are not penned altogether in a commanding fashion, but have mingled sweet alluring examples. For there are four ways of teaching: rule, reason, similitudes, and examples. The two former enjoins, but works not on the affections. Similitudes are but slight; only examples conforms us in a most sweet alluring manner.

Use 1. And therefore we ought to be exemplary, as to follow others, and especially those that are above others. They should be burning and shining lights, as stars giving light to passengers in the darkness of this world. To this end observe some means. And,

Direct. 1. First, Reverence not only the eye of God but of weak Christians, maxima debetur puero reverentia. We are to be awful of our carriage, that we may give no ill example to them; and to this end we are to know that we should give account for those sins that we either cause or suffer others to fall into if we may hinder them. Give therefore no offence or scandal to the little ones.

Direct. 2. Labour to deny ourselves in liberties, especially when we are in the presence of such as will take scandal; and to this end labour for the grace of love, which will cause us to endure much, and put up many things which we count injuries.

Direct. 3. Thirdly, In our carriage we are so to demean ourselves that we value, esteem, and respect those with whom we converse; for else our actions being visible to others, they will seem to be done out of a self-respect, and so will not affect or work on them. Grace will teach us to honour the meanest, as those that may be dearly beloved of God, who also may excel us in many excellent qualities, and in some kind of grace may also go beyond us.

Use 2. Secondly, If we be bound to give good example, then woe to the world for offences. What shall become of those who wound and vex

continually the hearts of those with whom they converse? Many are in hell, propter alienum peccalum. In the eyes of God, who knows the heart and intentions, sin is committed before it be acted, and therefore it is all one whether thou committest it or not. But it is not thus before men; for when it is committed it turns to scandal, and opens the enemies' mouths, and grieves the Spirit of God in his children. The prophets complain hereof; and we may observe God correct his children most to keep them from scandalizing others, and that others may beware of scandal. So David's sin was pardoned, yet because he gave scandal the child died.

Use 3. Thirdly, As we must give good example, so we must endeavour to take good from others' example; and to this end,

1. First, We must eye them, and pry into their actions; for this end hath God left us a continual succession of examples.

2. Secondly, We must eye them not to observe their weaknesses, to uncover their shame; for this is a poisonous disposition, proceeding even from the devil. Neither are we to observe them, thereby to take liberty to the flesh from their ill example; but we are to eye them as we view glasses, to deck and adorn ourselves by them, and to compose ourselves in a good course.;

3. Thirdly, In imitation we are to observe the best, and the best of the best, and not to compare ourselves with those that are inferior to us. For he that thinks himself good by comparison, he is not good, as a runner will not conclude he runs swiftly, because he hath outrun a lame man. And therefore St Paul says elsewhere, 'Brethren, follow me as I follow Christ,' 1 Cor. iv. 16, propounding to himself the most excellent pattern of all,

Christ Jesus. Contrariwise he blames the Corinthians because they measured themselves by themselves, 2 Cor. x. 12.

4. Fourthly, We must learn truths before we practise, for the best have their blemishes. So that we must learn to know how to avoid them. The papists urge us with the succession and universality of their church. No, say we, it is the doctrine that must try the church, whether it be true or false, for men are mensura mensurata. It is the doctrine is mensura mensurans, the measure measuring, whereby our actions ought to be squared and framed aright. The papists urge us with an implicit faith. Alas! what example, what

imitation can there be, when they know not what to imitate? They know not what the church believes, and yet they must believe as the church believeth.

5. Fifthly, We must labour to have soft hearts, sanctified with grace and mollified, for a stony hard heart will receive no impression; and to this end are we to use the means, to embrace the word, to receive the sacraments, and to pray that God would open our eyes and soften our stony hearts.

G. Sixthly, We are to look to every one that hath any good thing worthy of imitation, as those that delight in gardens, where they hear of any choice flowers, they will have a slip for their own garden. Thus it should be with us; where we see any flower of any grace, get that and place it in our own gardens. In every Christian there is something imitable, and something that may further us; and therefore this apostle longed to see the Romans, that he might be comforted by their faith, Rom. i. 12. It is with the church as with the firmament, ever some are rising and some are setting-Let us look to the stars of our time, and walk by their light. It is not enough that we can commend the martyrs, for that is ordinary, as it was with the Jews in Mat. xxiii. 29. Though they budded the sepulchres of the prophets, if they had been alive together with them, they would have persecuted them; and therefore Christ saith, 'They killed the prophets.' And the ground of it is because it is a dishonour to God not to take notice of his goodness and glorious graces in others; and therefore if the stars do praise him, surely these stars must much more set forth his glory, that being of themselves sinful wretched men, by his power are made glorious lights for others to walk by.

7. And in the seventh place, In things whereof there is no certain ride to direct us, we ought to imitate the example and custom of the most holy and sober sort. As in apparel much question is, what sort, what fashion is most to be imitated, let the most sober and moderate of thine own rank be guide unto thee. It is singularity to differ from such, with a desire to be noted, and it savours of pride; and such shall be condemned by their examples, even as Noah condemned the old world.

Use. For use of all this, learn hence what is the best succession. That is the best and surest note of succession which is both in doctrine and example. Local succession is nothing. They are the children of Abraham that do the works of Abraham. They are Jews which are Jews inwardly in the spirit. The papists they cry out against us we have no succession, but it is they have no succession. Their doctrine everywhere crosses the doctrine of the ancient Church of Rome. Their practice is without precedent. What precedent have

they for rebellion, for their equivocation, and the like? They follow, indeed, but as corruption doth generation.

Verse 18

For many walk, of whom I have told you often.

These words contain a reason of Paul's exhortation; and from the connection we may observe, that where truth is, error is. Where wheat is there are tares. Walk as I do, for there are many with whom ye converse that walk as enemies to the cross of Christ. Our enemies tell us, because of our errors we are not the true church. They may better conclude contrarily, that because we have some few errors, therefore there is a true church amongst us. Where truth is there will be opposers, and therefore we are not to be scandalized hereat. The skill and courage of a Christian is seen most where truth is in danger, as the goodness of a pilot is seen specially in a tempest.

The papists will not have the word read in the vulgar tongue. Why? Because they say many errors will thence arise, while the common people understand it not. They may as well argue, because there is much deceit, therefore I will not buy nor sell. St Paul was of another mind. He would preach at Ephesus, 'for a great door and effectual was opened,' though he knew there were 'many adversaries,' 1 Cor. xvi. 9.

In the next place, observe he saith, 'many there were,' meaning of the better and more eminent sort, that is, of teachers. A pitiful thing, that in the golden times of the church the chief leaders of the church should be misled; and therefore we are not to wonder that we should find it thus, and therefore we must not be scandalized by the multitude. One Micaiah is better than four hundred false prophets; and therefore we must not number the followers, but weigh them aright.

To proceed. He saith there are 'many.' He nameth none in particular, yet no doubt but noted scandalous persons may and ought to be particularly named, that others may take notice and heed of them; yet this must be warily done. The apostle curses the coppersmith, but only names Demas. Those that are weak must be gently touched; those that are obstinate and scandalous must be plainly made known; and this draweth some of our writers particularly to lay open the vices and falsehoods of those that are obdurate, and therefore we must not take scandal thereat, it arising from a zealous care of God's church, not of malice.

In the next place, he saith he told them 'often.' The apostle was affectionately bent for their good, and therefore to write the same things often to them it was not grievous to him, seeing to them it was false. For the nature of man is very dull in conceiving of things that belong to salvation, and their memories are but brittle. If therefore we do often inculcate and lay open the danger of that whorish religion long since condemned, it must be well taken in these times, especially wherein men are so secure, daring to venture on anything, yea, to go to their masses, upon pretence of their strength, that they can come away without being defiled.

And now tell you weeping.

As if he should have said, if nothing else will make yon beware, yet let my tears move, my tears proceeding from grief and compassion of the miserable estate of such teachers, and of such as are led by them.

Affections therefore are lawful, yea, necessary in God's children. All actions in God's worship are esteemed according to the affections that they are done with. We are as we love, not as we know. What is the life of a Christian but the performance of things with courage, delight, and joy? And therefore the strongest Christians have strongest affections. For religion doth not harden the heart, but mollifies it; and regeneration doth not take affections away, but restores them sanctified and pure.

But to come particularly to the matter here. He is compassionate, and so compassionate as his natural constitution will admit; he expresseth this with tears, which ariseth from grief for something within ourselves, or by reason of sympathy with others for some danger that they are in, or like to fall into.

Reason 1. The reasons hereof are, because they are led by the Spirit of Christ, who was all made of compassion; for he wept for his friends, for Lazarus, and for his enemies. 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered you, and you would not.' He was tender in bearing the infirmities of his weak disciples and of weak women. His compassion was such as drew him to the lowest degree of humiliation to free us from danger.

Reason 2. Secondly, The saints have dear sanctified judgments to apprehend true causes of remorse. They know what danger is, as Paul saw here that the sheep were in danger of wolves, and saw the danger so much the greater by how much they saw not the danger they were in.

Reason 3. Thirdly, The saints have their hearts broken with sense and feeling of Christ's compassion in their hearts, and so are mollified, expressing it outwardly towards their brethren; contrarily, the wicked never felt any remorse or pity of Christ in them, and therefore know not what compassion means, so as their mercies are cruelties. Use this as a note whereby we may discern of our Christian estate; for surely where there is no compassion there can be no excellent estate.

Again, From the apostle's object of compassion and weeping observe, that spiritual evil and danger is the most proper object of Christian compassion. Paul be pities not himself because of his fetters he was in, but it was the bonds of sin made him cry, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' Rom. vii. 24. And good reason, for these spiritual evils of error in judgment, hardness of heart, security, seared conscience, and the like, they lead us the assured way to damnation, as it is said in the words following, 'whose end is damnation.' Contrarily, outward crosses being sanctified to us, they bring us to heaven, as it is 1 Cor. xi. 32, 'We are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.' For those crosses are occasions of good affections, purging the heart from deadness and fleshly trust, they draw us to God; and therefore spiritual danger is the proper object of pity. It is otherwise with us. We lament Christian bloodshed. But how many souls are carried into error daily, turned to popery, and no remorse, no pity! There is great need thereof both in the magistrate and the minister, that they should be moved to provide remedies against such mischiefs.

And let us be far from envying such as are in ill courses; let their outward pomp be never so great, rather lament their misery. Alas! poor souls, how are they hurried, nay, do willingly run to destruction, while they are blinded with those idle shows of vanity.

But much more miserable is their estate that draw on others to mischief that are brethren in evil. What other end can they look for but to be as tares bound up and cast into the depth of hell, being guilty of as many men's deaths as they are of ill examples in their past life?

But for ourselves, let not our souls come into their secrets; let us mourn at the lewdness of some, and the danger of all. And to this end let us consider duly the afflictions of Joseph, taking heed of sensualities, which, as Hosea saith, taketh away the heart, Hosea iv. 11. Moses saw the misery of his brethren, and pitied them; so should we consider of the danger of popery, of

schism, and rebellion: and this will break our hearts, and cause us, with Jeremiah, to mourn in secret for the sins of the times, Jer. xiii. 17.

They are the enemies of the cross of Christ.

In these and the following words is a description of these inordinate walkers which the apostle speaketh of. They are described by their disposition: first, outwardly, 'that they are enemies to Christ's death.' Then inwardly, 'Their belly is their God, they glory in their shame, and they mind earthly things.' Then by their end, which is 'damnation.' They are pointed out and described to us, to the end we might take notice of them. By the cross is not meant the sign of the cross, as the papists fondly imagine, but Christ's death on the cross, whereby was made satisfaction and redemption and reconciliation.

1. The enemies of this cross are, first, such as added hereto the ceremonial obedience to the law and their own satisfactory works.

2. Secondly, Such as are carnal, denying the power of Christ's crucifying in not crucifying their affections.

3. Thirdly, Such as could not endure or suffer for the testimony of Christ's crucifying; and therefore to avoid persecution, they pressed circumcision with Christ, and so were enemies to his cross, Gal. vi. 12. Such were the enemies thereof then, and such have we now of the papists; let them brag never so much of their esteem and reverence they give to the sign thereof. While they seem to kiss it, they betray it Judas-like. For while they teach merits, satisfaction in purgatory, indulgences, and the like, they make the cross of Christ of none effect, which is only and wholly sufficient in itself.

And whereas they say they do add, they take nothing from the sufficiency of Christ:— I answer, Circumcision was added here by those, who are notwithstanding condemned. For as to join poison with wholesome meat takes away the nourishment of the meat, so if we be circumcised, Christ shall profit us nothing; and grace is no grace where there is merit, Rom. xi. 6. Again, consider the equity thereof in natural reason. Can it be thought likely that God should become man, to do anything which lies in the power of man to patch up and make good, or else it is insufficient? Shall finite corrupt man be able to make an infinite work perfect. No. God will not give his glory to

another; and will he part with his glory in this great work, which propounds his glory as the main end thereof? Eph. i. 6, 12.

4. Fourthly, There are another sort of enemies, such as cast not themselves on the merits of Christ's cross, those whose consciences were never convict of sin. Abundance there are who glory in their proud presumptuous swaggering courses, showing that they are either blind or stark mad. They wilfully run to perdition, they will not hear nor be controlled. Others that see their forepast life how wicked it hath been, they are so far from casting themselves on Christ's merits, as they despair and grow more and more obstinate therein, even to their own destruction; either by not seeing the merits of Christ, or through want of confidence on them, though they see his righteousness to be above their sins. And some are so detestably wicked, as because they see no salve for them, they run desperately into a custom of sin, and continue therein to their death. As we would desire to avoid this fearful estate and condition, so let us take heed of custom of sinning, for that will make us senseless, and will move God to give us over. And therefore let us take heed that we receive not the grace of God in vain, it being so freely proffered to us. And to this end, know that so far as we suffer our lusts to overrule us, and we not crucify them, so far we are enemies, Gal. v. 4. For while we know and consider Christ as crucified for our sins, it will make us, if we have any grace, think of sin as of a thing that deserves to be crucified, and hate that that caused the death of our dear Saviour; for they were the cruel tormentors of Christ. And if we embrace Christ, we shall have the same affection to sin that Christ had; for Christ will not lodge but in a heart humbled for sin. And the estate of those men is miserable, that are so far from crucifying lusts, as they thrust themselves upon all occasions of temptation and sin, and esteem them as their only enemies, that tell them of their unchristian courses. Surely, however they may daub for a time, yet their outward profession will never administer sound comfort to them, but they shall find bitterness at their latter end.

5. There are yet another sort of enemies, namely, such as trill endure nothing for Christ; who notwithstanding bore his cross, and bids us take up our cross of reproach for religion. Some will endure any pain, travail, danger, and watchings, for riches or ambition, but dare not speak a word, or appear in Christ's cause. Are not these enemies? Shall Christ out of his love come from heaven to the basest abasement for us, and shall not we endure for a while here, seeing it is also for our own good, and we are gainers thereby, and considering that Christ called us to suffer. For while we live here, and

embrace true religion, there will ever be a cross and shame in the world, accompanying the profession thereof, if it be sincere.

Preachers therefore that preach not Christ plainly and boldly, and hearers that come to the hearing of the word rather for rhetorical flourishes, witty sentences fit only for discourse sake, even thus far they are enemies. For if Christ be not preached mainly and chiefly to this end, to amend the lives of men, to win souls to Christ; and if men, coming to hear, come not even for this end mainly, to be bettered in their salvation, to be strengthened in grace; they shall be damned as enemies for this, that the means of salvation they profane and despise.

And therefore let tis abase ourselves for our sins, and magnify God's goodness in affording means of salvation. Labour also to shew how we profit by suffering for the gospel, and count it an honour, and 'rejoice that we are worthy to suffer' for Christ, Acts v. 41, labour to overcome the world and our lusts, and to honour Christ even in his meanest children. If the love of Christ will not constrain us, no motives will draw us.

Verse 19

Whose end is destruction.

The word signifies a reward, and is translated and taken often for an end, because reward is given at the end of the work; and thus is salvation called a reward for goodness, because it is given at the end of a holy life. The other word signifies damnation or destruction, which implies all things tending to or accompanying the punishment of a wicked life. And the connection of these words with the former may be thus framed. He that is an enemy to the cause of life is an enemy to life, but those that are enemies to the cross of Christ are enemies to the cause of life and to that which saves them; and therefore they must needs be destroyed. This made the apostle judge of them thus, and withal he saw they were void of grace, and were incorrigible. And from hence we may infer,

That we may in some sort judge of the spiritual estate of men, even while they are alive. For as astronomers can judge of eclipses, and statesmen of the continuance or danger of the State, and physicians of the event of diseases, by the course of natural causes, so in religion there are predictions on good grounds, what will follow of ill courses tending to damnation.

But more particularly, there is a threefold judgment.

1. First, One by faith, which concerning ourselves brings certainty; and so we are able to judge of ourselves.

2. Secondly, There is a judgment by fruits, comparing men's disposition and state with their fruits; and so we say, if men walk riotously, we can infer, Surely he is in no good estate. 'By their fruits shall you know them,' saith Christ,' Mat. vii. 16.

3. Thirdly, There is a particular revelation of God's Spirit. This the prophets and apostles had, but now we have no such rule. Yet by the fruits and course of men, it is an easy matter to judge what the end of those men will be, following those courses; for God's word is the same now that it was then. Indeed, when we judge men in things indifferent, this is rash, and condemned by the apostle, Rom. xiv. 3.

For use hereof, let us learn to judge ourselves, and know if we break wilfully the known rules of salvation, we are in a fearful estate. And we should also submit to the judgment of God's ministers while we are here, and amend; for else look assuredly for the sentence of death hereafter from God himself, when there will be no revoking thereof. For though punishment may be deferred a while, yet assuredly it shall not go well with the wicked at the last, Eccl. viii. 13.

In the next place observe, There is an end to every way, for it is taken for granted that they have an end; and surely we will not, nor cannot, be always as we are. We are labourers, and there is a time of payment of our wages. And therefore, we should look whither our ways do tend. There will be an end of this life, but damnation shall be without end. We should also be inquisitive to see if we be out of this way, that we may be reformed; for these worldly pleasures must end in eternal vengeance, and this life is but a way to that end.

And in the third place, Learn to be patient. When we see the wicked run on in a broad highway, what though they be admired here and lifted up! They are but condemned persons; and therefore, envy them not, seeing we would be loath, upon serious deliberation, to change estates with them. Observe we further from those words, that God will judge eternally, not only for gross, scandalous sins in the course of our life, but even for errors in judgment. For we must judge aright, as well as affect aright, and God hath no service from

corrupt judgments. Those that join man's merits with Christ's merits, they cannot rely on God alone, neither can they rejoice in Christ. Christ hath but half of them. Therefore, let us keep the virginity of our judgments; prostitute them not to lies, but reserve them chaste and pure to Christ.

And secondly, Take we heed how we converse with such as are of corrupt judgments. They are God's and Christ's enemies, and will labour to bring us into their ways; and then, assuredly let us look for their end. It is reason, that those with whom we converse here, we should converse withal hereafter.

Whose god is their belly.

These words do partly shew the inward disposition of these men. By 'belly,' in this place, he means in general all contentments and worldly pleasures, whereof these teachers being satisfied, they lived at large and at ease.

Quest. But how may they be said to make their belly their God?

Ans. 1. I answer, We may be said to make anything our God, first, when we count it one, as some of the papists have esteemed of the pope, as of an essence between man and God; and some emperors have required themselves to be so esteemed, and adored as a deity.

2. Secondly, When we give such affections to it as are only due and proper to God, as to trust in it, to repose content in it, to joy in it; and so is that sentence true, amor tuus, Dens tuus.

3. Thirdly, When we use actions of invocation and adoration thereto; and thus the papists make saints their god, attributing such power in working to them, as is only proper to God.

4. Fourthly, When we bestow all labour to give satisfaction thereunto. For explication, these men gave the intension of their most inward affections, to procure content to their lusts. All their labour was to this end, and so quieted themselves in the enjoyment of them. And as they made their 'belly their god,' so their belly acted the part of a god, in giving them laws, bidding them to do, project, devise this or that; undermine such, and grounding them in this first fundamental law, 'Thou canst not live long, neither wilt thou live well; therefore, while thou livest, live for thy pleasure,

take thy ease;' and from thence, enjoins them to use all means thereto: take all acquaintance, undermine all that cross thee; and all to this end, that thou mayest have thy ease.

As it was then, so now is it with the papists, their successors. All the differences in religion between them and us, are by them grounded on the belly. That is the monarchy of the pope, and worldly pomp, and masses invented for idle priests, Latin prayers, little or no preaching; only that the people being ignorant, they might more easily command them. If their errors were not invested in gain, we should soon accord their worship, especially the manner thereof, only to delight the sense.

And among ourselves, many are not wanting that make profession of religion, but deny the power thereof. So long as religion and outward content do meet, and when religion brings preferment, all will be religious, for they live by no rules but those that their lusts prescribes: morning and evening taking care for the flesh, how to be rich, how to live at ease; and for this will sell their birthright in happiness, refusing the word, refusing good company, yea, heaven itself. And this justly comes as a judgment for man's first rebellion. When men will not serve God as they should, they are justly given over to the service of those that are no gods.

Quest. But it may be asked, May we not seek to content our flesh?

Ans. I answer, We may respect our bodies; and there is a due honour that belongs to the outward man, but we must so seek for them, as in the first place and principally we seek the kingdom of heaven, and its righteousness; and then God hath promised to cast these things upon us, Mat. vi. 33. But when we break order and measure, being first and principally careful for our lusts, the devil knowing our haunts, offers baits fitting for our humours, and we, like filthy swine, devour our own destruction.

And therefore, to avoid this, let us set the fear of God and damnation before our eyes; and if we use not these things moderately and soberly, let that in Rom. viii. 13 he as a flaming sword to keep us from the way of destruction. 'If we live according to the lusts of the flesh, we shall die and therefore, 'as strangers and pilgrims, let us abstain from fleshly lusts, which fight against the soul against our comfort here, and our happy estate hereafter.

Secondly, Let us avoid the company of condemned persons, but look on them with a kind of horror and detestation of them; and pass not for their wicked censures, 'Their end is damnation, and their belly is their god.'

But because the best are drawn away by these pleasures, let us observe some directions.

And first, Let us see the reasons why we are thus inveigled with them.

Reason 1. First, These earthly contentments are present to our sense. The other only are present to faith, which the carnal man looks not after, neither cares for.

2. Secondly, We nurse up ourselves in an opinion of the necessity of these things, seeing the present use of them; and we see no present use of those better things.

3. Thirdly, These things are bred up with us, and we are acquainted with them from our infancy, and so they plead prescription; and when we are thus taken up before, religion comes after, and very hard it must needs be, to keep our minds lifted up; and yet is it most necessary to be; for lusts do drown men in perdition, 1 Tim. vi. 9.

1. But for helps in this estate of ours, observe first, with due consideration, the nature, dignity, and excellency of the soul; that it is a spirit of an excellent beauty, adorned with understanding and judgment, not made to cast off the crown, submitting itself to the rule of every base lust, which indeed is the only happiness of the beasts; nay, if happiness consists in pleasing the senses, beasts are more happy than we, for they have neither shame without, nor conscience within, to disquiet them in the enjoyment of their pleasures.

And know also that this body of ours, being of that excellent temper, is a fabric which was not made only to be a strainer for meat to pass through. The quality of the brain in man, the structure of the eye, do testify man was made for divine meditation, to contemplate of the works of God, which it doth behold with the eye as through a glass.

2. Secondly, We must know, by giving our affections to these things, we are made like the things we affect; for the soul is placed in the midst, as it were, between heaven and earth, and as it affects the one or the other, so is it

fashioned. If we love the flesh we are flesh; if we follow the Spirit, we are transformed to its likeness.

3. Thirdly, Consider that God is better than the worshipper, else is he mad that will worship it. But the belly is baser than ourselves. Reason teacheth us the pleasures of this life end in death, when our souls must still continue after all. Now to seek such pleasures as cannot continue with us is madness, as appears even by the light of reason; and therefore are of more power with natural men than pure religious truths. But for those that are called, the Scripture puts them in mind of the last day of judgment, and tells them that they are made for heaven; and such are therefore to set their minds on things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God, Col. iii. 1; and when they begin to grow worldly, and to follow their belly, it calls them hack with a 'but know for all this, God will bring thee to judgment which, duly pondered, cannot but be as a hook in our jaws to bring us back to a more diligent watch over our ways.

And whose glory is in their shame.

A second part of the inward disposition, showing that they glory in that which brought shame to them; for circumcision was a ceremony given to the church when it was but in the infancy; and for them that were born in the strength of the church, being well grown, to glory in such beggarly rudiments was shameful. In the words, first consider the affection; second, the object or end, for the word implies both. And in the first consider the sin, then the cure.

The sin that is reproved in them is 'vain-glory;' that is, glorying in a thing not to be gloried in; and it is grounded upon pride, which is a desire of excellency in vain things; and it is for the most part in vain injudicious men, who ordinarily do glory in things that tend to shame. These Philippians saw that Paul was now committed. The doctrine he taught they thought was not good enough; they would be wiser than he, and of deeper reach.

And thus even within the pale of the church, what a scandal is it that men should glory in a graceless grace of swearing, filling up rotten discourse with new devised oaths! And others glory in their foolish conceited gallant apparel; which was for no other end but principally to cover shame. Is not this to glory in shame? And much more those, that blaming, as it were, God for making them no fairer, will mend the workmanship of God by painting. These, while they seek to keep outward blemishes from the eyes of men, do

discover to the whole world that they have a spotted rotten heart within them.

And, indeed, it is too common for men ill bred up, to think admirably of themselves, when all their courses are mere vanity. He is the only man of account that cannot put up a cross word without blood. Is not this to glory in shame, whereas it is the glory of a man to pass by an offence, and they are the best men that can overcome themselves? And as helpers on of this vain boasting, we have a generation of ignorant unsettled understandings, that admire at such shameless boasters, and so are causes of strengthening such in their vain-glory. Such are flatterers of great men. Let them remember what is denounced against such. Woe be to them that call evil good and good evil.

In the next place, Shame is not only the object of vain-glory, but the end. They that are vain-glorious shall be brought to shame at length. Thus it is said of Babylon in Isaiah, and mystical Babylon in the Revelations: 'Though she say, I sit as a queen, and shall see no mourning, yet shall her plagues come in one day, death, and destruction, and mourning,' Isa. xlvii. 9, and li. 19; Rev. xviii. 8.

For God hath knit vain-glory and shame, a punishment proportionable and fitting to the sin, and striking the offender most near, even to the heart. And thus did God meet with Ahithophel, Absalom, and Haman. They sought vain-glory, and their ends were shameful; and such shall be the end of all such as boast that they can do mischief like Doeg, Ps. hi., title, et seq. And the righteous shall see, and fear, and laugh at them.

. For use to ourselves, therefore, let us take heed of sin. For by nature the best of us are subject to it. We are all inclinable either to glory in such things as we should not, or to receive glory from such things as we ought not; or else to glory after an inordinate manner. And in that measure we glory amiss, in that measure we consult shame to ourselves. Glory we may, but it must be well grounded, and in a right manner.

And to the attaining thereto we must first labour for a sound knowledge of God, and for a sound dependence upon him in all things, and also labour for to see our own estate, and our many wants; for wanting this knowledge, men glory in merits while they live. But when they die they grow ashamed of their courses and blind judgment. For while they live they judge of themselves by their own conceit of themselves, which is grounded either by comparing of themselves with those that are worse than themselves, as the

Pharisee, that thanked God he was not as the publican, Luke xviii. 11; or else upon the conceit that shallow persons have of them.

1. But these are not rules for us to follow. Look rather what says the humbled conscience; what says God's word and his justice; and take example of the apostles and holy men of God, that gloried in the Lord reconciled to us in Christ, 'who is made to us wisdom, sanctification, and redemption,' 1 Cor. i. 30. 'Rejoice that our names are written in heaven,' Luke x. 20. Rejoice that we understand and know God to be just and merciful, Jer. ix. 23, 24. Glory in the testimony of a good conscience, that we are true Christians, though but weak, 2 Cor. i. 12.

2. Secondly, We should be content with the judgment and approbation of God, and hearken to the admonitions of his ministers, and care not for the censures of the world.

3. Thirdly, Take we heed of the first beginnings and motions of sin; at the first they are ever modest. The worst man that ever was, was not shameless in sin at the beginning, but giving way to sin by little, loses all shame, and causes at last corruption in judgment, and justifying a man's self in wicked courses. Pleasures, riches, and such things, they are like a vizard, only an outside of beauty; or like one that vaunted himself, he can act the person of a king, but is in himself a bond slave. They act their parts here on this worldly stage for an hour, and leave all their followers in eternal bondage for over. Therefore let us not be ashamed for Christ's cause; but stand out, labour for sincerity now, and we shall have glory hereafter, which as the light shall increase, whereas 'the candle of the wicked shall be put out,' Prov. xxiv. 20.

Who mind earthly things.

To 'mind,' in this place is taken largely, to think upon, remember, desire, joy, and to have all the soul exercised. 'Earthly things;' that is, lusts of the flesh, lusts of the eyes, pride of life, pleasures, and profits, and honours, which are therefore called 'earthly,' because they are conversant about earthly things, and because they make their followers 'earthly minded;' and lastly, they are called earthly, in opposition to those that are heavenly. And thus in particular, those that mind honour are ambitious; those that mind riches are covetous; if pleasure, then they are voluptuous, and all of them are earthly. For as the ocean is but one, and yet divers parts thereof have several names, so worldliness is but one sin, yet having many kinds it hath also divers names.

1. The observation that hence we may gather is, that the earthly disposition and mind is the temper of that man who is in the estate of damnation; for the mind of such do shew a dead soul, estranged from the life of God: 'To be carnally-minded is death,' saith the apostle, Rom. viii. 6. For a man lives as he minds and loves.

2. Secondly, Earthly disposition is opposite to God; so Rom. viii. 7, 'The carnal mind is enmity against God.'

Observe we further, the apostle describes not these by any notorious gross scandalous sin, but by the inward disposition of the heart; for outward actions are only effects and rivers flowing from the spring of corruption in our hearts.

Whence we may note, that God looks to the inward frame of the sold in men; and therefore though in the eyes of men a man may be without spot, yet is his corruption that is within, open and manifest to the all-seeing eye of God.

And therefore from hence we are to be stirred up to humble ourselves before God, by examining our hearts, and laying open our most secret corruptions.

2. And secondly, This ought to comfort us, that though in our daily practice we often fall, yet God in his goodness looks at the inward frame of the soul, and accepts of it.

3. Thirdly, This justly lays open the folly of men's censures. If a man break not out into open outrageous sins, they esteem and commend such for good men, though it may be his soul is full stuffed with atheism, revenge, and all manner of villainy.

4. Fourthly, This should teach us to condemn ourselves, even for sinful thoughts; for know, though thou livest without danger of man's law, thou mayest have a rebellious mind opposite to the divine law of God, by which thou shalt be judged.

Yet seeing for this present life we stand in need of earthly things, and are not to cast oft' all care of them, let us hearken to some directions in the use of them. For riches and other necessaries, God sends them unto us to be as means to sweeten our pilgrimage here.

Hides. 1. In using them, take heed they do not possess and take, up our whole heart, immoderately labouring after them, and before any spiritual grace. This the apostle blames in these men. He saw they made religion to be subordinate, and to give place to their worldly lusts, and that as he cared not, if by any means he could attain to the resurrection of the dead; so they contrarily cared not, if by any means, through any cross or loss whatsoever, they could attain to riches, honour, or the like; yea, if religion stood in their way, though it wore with the loss of religion and a good conscience.

2. Secondly, We must take hoed that we use these earthly things so as to draw good out of them, and to employ them to good. Labour we to see God in pleasure, in riches, and in our abundance, knowing and esteeming of them as a beam of the bright sunshine of God's favour to us, and thus to be lifted up to admire and praise his goodness.

3. Thirdly, Make them instruments of mercy and, bounty. It is an excellent way to further our accounts. So receive the good as we avoid the snare. The way is not to hide our talents in a napkin, to enter into a monastery, to live idle; but to occupy, use, and employ them in the service of God and of our neighbours.

4. To conclude, Let us so use them as they be helpers of us to a better life, not hinderers; for we are in an estate between two, in a warring and conflicting estate, even as a piece of iron between two loadstones, and know not which way to lean; and yet may offend in the excess of either side.

And therefore let us observe some signs, whereby we may know whether we be right or not.

Signs. 1. And first of all, this affection of love, being the primary and principal part, is known by other affections. If therefore our love he set on the world, we shall grieve and vex ourselves for worldly losses, and fret and he chafed when we are crossed in them; and this made Ahab so lumpish, as nothing could comfort him but Naboth's vineyard.

2. Secondly, Let us observe whither our labours and endeavours are carried, what we talk of most, what think we or meditate we on, first and last, morning and evening. If we observe our carriage, it will discover our mind.

Such are also opposite to any religious good course. He that is rich bitterly opposeth goodness; and therefore it is that Christ said, 'Ye cannot

serve God and Mammon,' Mat. vi. 21; and concludeth, 'It is harder for a rich man to get into heaven, than for a camel to pass through a needle's eye,' Mat. xix. 24.

But to cure this sore, let us fetch arguments from the nature of the soul of man, and the nature of these things; and consider the incongruity between the soul, a pure heavenly spiritual essence, and base earthly corrupt things. Dust was made meat for the serpent by a curse, and not for man.

And remember, the God of truth hath threatened vengeance against his dearest children that do not mortify their carnal lusts. Abhor we therefore the first thoughts of this sin, and divert our souls to higher thoughts; and be humbled, shaming ourselves for debasing our souls in that manner, else will God take us in hand. For he will not suffer his children to surfeit on the world, but will bring them back, that they shall see and know 'all is but vanity and vexation of spirit.'

Verse 20

For our conversation is in heaven.

The word translated here 'for' in the former translation is 'but'; and so it depends on the foregoing words, 'some walk as enemies to the cross of Christ,' &c. 'But our conversation is in heaven.' If it be as it is here translated, 'for,' then doth it follow the 17th verse: 'mark them that walk, as ye have us for an example. For our conversation is in heaven,' showing the reason why he was so confident in propounding his example to be imitated. Which way it be taken, it is not much material, only from the opposition between those examples he speaks of immediately going before, and is propounded in this verse.

Note That in the church there are always men of divers dispositions. Some ever go within the current into Mare Mortuum, and others ever against the stream, like the stars that are carried with a secret motion of their own, notwithstanding that in this world they seem to be earned by the violent motion of the common course of men.

1. And this was first in God's eternal decree, that there should be perpetual enmity between the seed of the woman and of the serpent.

2. Secondly, There is a difference in calling; some only outwardly, some inwardly by his Spirit: 'Many are called, but few are chosen,' Mat. xx. 16.

3. Thirdly, They differ in their rulers; one are governed by the devil, and led captive to do his will, others by God.

4. Fourthly, In regard of their conversation; some are heavenly minded, others are altogether earthly.

5. Fifthly, Their ends are different; the way of the one is upwards to heaven, the way of the other is downward, tending to the gates of death, even to hell.

But to come to the words. The apostle saith not 'my conversation,' but 'our conversation implying that those that mean not to be of the number of those that have their end in damnation, they must be of the number of those of a holy conversation. The word in the original signifies most properly a freedom, or a burghership. So as from the metaphor we may gather thus much.

Doct. That heaven is a city, and ail true Christians are citizens and inhabitants of this city; for as it is in the city of this world, so may it be said comparatively of this city and the inhabitants.

First, It is under a governor, who is the Lord Christ.

Secondly, It is governed by law, which is God's law.

Thirdly, It hath a storehouse of all good things, as of food, and of other of the like sort, which is heaven, for it hath bread of life; it hath rich and plenteous treasure.

Fourthly, It hath liberties. They are free from Satan's tyranny, free from the law's curse and condemning power; and are all kings, and shall all reign. They shall be free from all weakness, from ill company, from temptation. The Lamb shall be all in all. 'Glorious things are spoken of thee, thou city of God,' Ps. lxxxvii. 3.

Fifthly, They speak one language, the language of Canaan. The language of the beast they abhor.

And lastly, Their carriage is alike. Grave like citizens of heaven, their faces are still as they were going to Jerusalem, their continuing and abiding city; for while they are in this life, they are still as it were in the suburbs.

Hence we may gather divers grounds, that while we live in this world, a Christian is but a pilgrim and stranger. First, Heaven is his home, and this life is but a way, and he a passenger. And thus David accounted of himself, though a king, yet but a stranger, both himself and his fathers; and therefore, as a passenger, he provides for his journey, he stands not for ill usage, cares not to look after delights in the way, but uses them as advantageous to his journey.

And secondly, He is inquisitive after the way, fearing he should go amiss; and furnisheth himself with cordials, to cheer him and strengthen him in his journey. He inquires after the guide of God's Spirit, to be as the pillar of fire to guide him in the darkness of this world.

Thirdly, He is well provided of weapons against such enemies as he shall moot with in the way. He hath the shield of faith, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

2. The second ground that arises hence is, that a Christian's endeavours are of a high nature. His look is high, his soul and mind are ever upward, casting all burdens of earthly cares and delights from him, that he may freely mount up in the presence of his Maker.

3. Thirdly, This carriage of a Christian is not by fits, but it is his trade, his conversation and course of life. In all things he looks to heaven. His course is by rule and by law. Whatsoever he does he does as in obedience to God chiefly, with all his power, as approving himself to God, in whose sight he over sets himself. Briefly, he doth ail things as a citizen of heaven.

4. Fourthly, We may also ground hence, that a Christian may have his conversation in heaven, even while he is here alive; for he is born anew, having received the life of grace. God requires not impossibilities, but always gives ability to the discharge of that which he enjoins.

Quest. But in particular, how may a Christian be said to be in heaven, or to have his conversation in heaven?

Ans. (1.) I answer, A Christian may be said to be in heaven; first, as in his head Christ Jesus, who is in heaven already, being gone to prepare a place for us.

(2.) Secondly, he is there by faith, which makes things absent as present; and so it is that 'Abraham saw Christ's day and was glad;' and therefore is faith called, 'The evidence of things not seen,' Hob. xi. 1.

(3.) Thirdly, A Christian is in heaven by his hopes.

(4.) Fourthly, He is there by his desires. Animus est ubi amat.

(5.) Fifthly, A Christian is in heaven, whereas his meditations are there: when his thoughts are thereon continually busied, as St Paul was, when in admiration of those joys, he crieth out, 'O the depth both of the riches and wisdom of God!' Rom. xi. 33.

(6). Sixthly, He is there, when by continual prayers to God, he hath an inward admittance to the throne of grace, where he may freely open his heart to his God; and therefore it is that those that are Christians indeed are often in this duty.

5. Hence we may gather, that the glorious estate in heaven is of the same kind with this life of grace, only differing in degrees of happiness; both estates are free: there only a freedom of glory, here a freedom of grace. Both are estates of redemption. There we are redeemed from sin and death and the devil, here we are only redeemed from the power of them; there have we the full harvest, here we have the first fruits; here we are heirs by faith, there by full possession; to all of us Christ is all in all, only there he rules immediately, here he rules by means, by his deputies. There they have communion with the saints, here we also have communion, though we live amongst the wicked. There they praise God continually, here we endeavour it continually. There they have communion with the beatifical vision, here we have communion with the ordinances which will bring us to it.

And, therefore, let such as intend to be saints hereafter be saints here, and live by the laws that are given us from heaven, and that they live by in heaven; for the kingdom is in such sort one and the same. The kingdom of grace, the preaching of the word, is called 'the kingdom of heaven,' as well as the kingdom of glory; and men do think in vain ever to enter into glory, without coming in at the gates of grace, as appeareth out of the apostle's

argument, 2 Peter i. 10, 11, 'Give diligence to make your calling and election sure, for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.'

And to this end, amongst many other, observe with me these following directions.

1st Direct. First, For a preparation, hear the word of God; for by this we are in heaven in part already. For where the word is preached, there is the presence of the blessed Trinity, and the holy angels bringing down heaven itself to us, teaching us in the laws of that kingdom. Use reading also; for even thereby we talk with the saints who wrote those things for our instruction, and that Spirit that guided them in writing will also guide thee in reading. Receive the sacraments often, for these ordinances are the heavenly manna to us, and strengthen us in our way to the spiritual Canaan.

2d Direct. Secondly, Piejoicc in often communicating with the saints. These earth moles that are delighted in coeno, not in coelo, all company is alike to them; but a Christian will here converse with such as he shall be with hereafter, and the saints have found much help this way. Even Saul, in the company of prophets, became a prophet; and the most earthly man that is amongst good men, in good discourse, will suit himself to them; and indeed good discourse is of much avail this way, if it he frequent as it should be. I enforce it not as a duty to be done at all times, but it should be oftener than it is.

3d Direct. Thirdly, Use such means as are of force to subdue the hindrances of this disposition. Such as are lusts of youth, which ought to be tamed by fasts, and such watchfulness that may make us at the length wise; for so far as we overcome our lusts, so far we have our conversation in heaven; and therefore we must often in private watch, and in private pray; as the Scripture saith, we must watch unto prayer.

4th Direct. Fourthly, Use much meditation. Be ever setting our minds something to this end, that our affections may be wrought upon, to forsake the world with detestation, and to love and embrace heaven; and for this duty we ought to redeem some time continually. Thus principally Enoch walked with God; and David, though a king, meditated in God's law day and night.

5th Direct. And from this duty, let us be brought to a holy use of soliloquies; checking and shaming ourselves for following these pleasures, for unthankfulness and want of cheerfulness, as David, 'Why art thou cast down O my soul, why art thou so disquieted?' Ps. xlii. 5. By these recollections a Christian is indeed himself, and for the present even seated in heaven.

6th Direct. In the last place, besides ejaculations, use daily a set prayer; for thereby we ascend into heaven, and are fitted thereby to be more and more heavenly. It is the trade of citizens that make them rich. This is our trade, to trade by prayer with that heavenly city, where our treasure is, and by it we shall grow daily in riches. Thus is our soul strengthened and our affections stirred up to converse with God, and thus come we to set our faith in heaven, together with our love, where our Father is, where angels and saints, our city and eternal happiness, is. Thus is our hope strengthened, which carries us through all afflictions undauntedly, and so is a heaven to us before heaven; and thus are our desires in heaven, to be at rest, to be with Christ, which is best of all.

Obj. But some will say, We cannot always intend such things as these, we have our callings, and are busied about earthly matters and cares.

Ans. 1. I answer: True it is, yet in the use of these things, we may be heavenly minded; for God in mercy appoints us callings, to busy our minds about, which else would be delving in the idle pleasures of sin: only he requires, that we in the first place 'seek for heaven.' We shall not continue here, but we are travelling still; and therefore it is good for us ever to redeem some time for heaven, that we may come with more speed to our journey's end.

2. Secondly, As a help to us, he hath left us his Sabbaths, in pity to our souls, which else would altogether be rooting in the earth. Let us have a care of the well spending of them; for by this we pay homage to heaven, and are put in mind thereof.

3. Thirdly, Every day redeem some time for meditation of the vanity of this world. Hereby will our untunable souls he still set in tune; and for our callings, every day sanctify them by prayer, and then all is clean.

4. Fourthly, Go about them as in obedience to God, knowing that God hath placed us in these callings, and he looks for service in employing those talents bestowed on us, and in our serving one another. And let us endeavour

to shew what our religion is, in avoiding the corruptions of our callings. Labour also to see God in everything, in crossing us, in encouraging and assisting us; and this will stir us up accordingly to pray continually, and in all things to give thanks; and it will make us fear always, for the same care and love of God that brings us to heaven, doth guide us in our particular actions and callings. And in other matters use ourselves so as we by these things raise our minds on high, for there is a double use of the creatures. First, temporal, and from thence a spiritual use is raised. Thus did Christ. By considering water he was raised to think of spiritual regeneration and washing; and thus we should do, labour to see God in his creatures, and thus shall we help our souls by our bodies. God will have it thus, and therefore setteth down heavenly things in earthly comparisons.

7th Direct. Lastly, We must endeavour to make a spiritual use of all things as God doth. Doth God send crosses on us? Then before they leave us beg a blessing, that they may work his intended effect in bettering us. Doth God bless us with prosperity? Pray that God would sanctify it to encourage us on to good duties, so as in all estates we may have our conversation in heaven. Let no man therefore make pretence that he is poor, that he hath no time for this. No. Grace works matter out of everything. Poor Paul, nay, Paul a prisoner, see how he is busied; and the truth is, that worldly prosperity is the greatest enemy to a heavenly mind that can be.

Obj. But the weak Christian will complain that he cannot find this in him, but he is still carried away with worldly matters. Though he strive against it never so much, yet the world goes away with him.

Ans. To such I answer, Strength of grace this way is not in every Christian, neither is it at the first. Paul had his distractions, Rom. vii. from ver. 15 to ver: 24, yet must our labours and endeavours be that way. The sin that is in us cannot hurt us if we strive against it. God suffers his children to see their weakness, as he did deal with Solomon, to humble us and make us learn his lesson, that all 'is vanity and vexation of spirit.' Let not such therefore he discouraged, but cheerfully go on in a good course, wherein the more we labour and strive, the more we beautify religion, and credit our city, and draw on others to be fellow-citizens with us.

And thus shall we free ourselves from terrors of conscience, and from the snares of the devil, even as birds when they soar aloft need fear no snares. Thus also shall we get a portion here, for it is the promise of the God of truth, that if we first seek the kingdom of heaven, all these things shall he

cast upon us. Thus also shall we he sure of God's gracious and faithful protection, who hath said he will keep us in our ways.

And lastly, Thus shall we end our days with comfort. Woe be to him that dies not to the world before he goes hence. But to him that hath his soul in heaven, even while it is in his body, this life is but a pilgrimage, and death is advantage.

From whence we also look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

These words lay down such an estate of a Christian, as is both a cause and a sign of heavenly conversation; and in them we may consider, first, That Christ is in heaven. Secondly, That there is a second coming of Christ. Thirdly, That Christians expect it. Fourthly, That this expectation is a cause of heavenly carriage.

For the first, that Christ is in heaven, we have the Scripture to warrant it, but the text is pregnant here in. We look for him from heaven, ergo he is in heaven.

And therefore it is a gross conceit of the papists, that dream that his body is everywhere in the bread, or with the bread, as the Lutherans would have it. The Scripture determines that the heavens must contain him; that he sitteth now on the right hand of God; that he shall hereafter come to judge, and therefore he is not now here; nay, because he is not here he sent us the Comforter, the Spirit, that shall lead us into all truth, as he himself expressly saith, John xvi. 13.

Secondly, Hence we may observe, that there is another coming of Christ, which get is not fulfilled. There is a twofold coming of Christ, one whereby he comes in the flesh. This was his first coming. The second coming is in triumph, when he shall perfect our salvation. This appeareth by the desires of the creature, Rom. viii. 37, seq. Secondly, By the faithful desires of his children, which cannot be in vain. Thirdly, To this end he took our flesh to draw us after him. Fourthly, To this end he left his Spirit with us to testify it. Lastly, He hath loft us his promises and prophecies thereof, witnessed by the angels: Acts i. 11, 'This Jesus shall so come, even as you have seen him go into heaven.'

Thirdly, That Christians do expect this coming of Christ is evident out of the words, 'from whence we look for the Saviour,' saith the text. The

word 'look' signifies an earnest expectation, implying faith, hope, and patience. Faith is a ground of hope, supposing the promises which are grounded on an almighty God of truth. Now patience comes from hope, so as the word implies thus much. We hope, we believe, we patiently wait for the second coming of Christ. This is the disposition of every sound Christian, and it begins with the beginning of our new birth; for so, 1 Peter i. 3, it is said, 'We are begotten to a lively hope;' and Titus ii. 13, 'The grace of God once appearing, teacheth to look for the blessed hope.'

Reason 1. For as in nature the seed desires growth, everything desires perfection, so much more in grace. Where once it is settled it continually desireth a more perfect estate, until the coming of Christ, when it cometh to the top and pitch thereof.

Reason 2. Secondly, There is such a relation betwixt Christ and us, we being contracted to him here, as there is a continual longing for the consummation of this marriage; even as the time between the contract and the marriage is a continual longing.

Reason 3. Thirdly, Our estate here is a warring and laborious estate, and a painful service, and therefore what marvel if a sabbath, a peaceable, victorious, and triumphant estate, be sweet and to be desired?

Use. Hence we may learn that the estate of the children of God here is imperfect, for they are under hope of a better estate. Before Christ's time they expected the first coming of Christ. So it is said of Abraham, that he longed to see Christ's day. Now after Christ's first coming, we look after his second coming, when we shall he perfected; and thus the souls in heaven are in expectation of a further happiness.

Use 2. And this is the reason of the contrarieties of estate that are in a Christian. He rejoices because he is under hope, but he sorrows because he hath not already obtained the thing he hopeth for. He rejoiceth because of his assurance, but sorroweth because of the crosses he daily meets with; rejoiceth in the communion of saints, but 'woe is me that I dwell in Mesech,' Psa. cxx. 5. We are kings, but over rebels; prophets, but have much ignorance, for we see but in part; priests, but are daily polluted with the soil of this world, and therefore do stand in need of continual washing.

Use 3. Thirdly, This expectation is not only a work of ours, but a grace wrought in us by Christ, by virtue of the covenant: for God fits us with

graces that have reference to our future happiness; and it arises from love and patience, grounded upon assurance of an end and glorious issue. Christ knew we were to meet with enemies, and therefore gives us hope as an helmet and an anchor to keep us from shipwreck; for he is a saviour as well in saving us here from despair, as hereafter from hell.

Use 4. This, lastly, may serve for a trial of our estates: for many that think themselves to be good Christians, think with Peter 'it is good being here,' Mat. xvii. 4; it is good for them to be in this world. They fear the coming of Christ. The very thought thereof destroys all their mirth. It is to them like the handwriting on the wall to Belshazzar. The child of God is of another disposition. He is begotten to this hope: his desire is accordingly; his endeavour and labour is by any means to attain to the resurrection of the dead, Philip, iii. 11.

Obj. But it will be said, that it is often seen that good Christians do not always desire the coming of Christ.

Ans. To which I answer, It is true; but it is caused by their careless carriage. And yet, over there is a spirit in them, to endeavour to do something that may prepare for his coming. But a strong Christian hath ever this desire; and if he be a mortified and growing Christian, he never wants this hope, and comfort, and earnest longing: and therefore his prayer ever is, 'Como, Lord Jesus.'

Fourthly, We may observe out of the words, where this hope is, and this expectation, it stirs up and quickens the soul to a holy conversation. It is propounded here as a ground of the apostle's holy conversation.

For it stirs us up to be pure, even as he is pure, as it is 1 John iii. 3. For we are a holy spouse, and there will shortly come the marriage-day; and fitting it is that we prepare ourselves fitting for such a husband. Thus it was with the concubines of Ahasuerus. Though a temporal and earthly king, yet the custom was, they should be twelve months before they came to the king, Esther ii.; and much more should it be our duty, evermore to be prepared to come into the presence of our eternal, heavenly King, to meet with the bridegroom; because we know not how soon it may be that he will come, and send his angels for us to appear before him in glory, to call us to the wedding.

Secondly, This hope will stir us up to do all good duties, and to right performance of good duties; to do all things sincerely, as in the presence of God our judge. And therefore, not only the duty of preaching is urged upon Timothy, but the manner, 2 Tim. iv. 2, who is charged by the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge all at his appearing, that he should 'preach the word: be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-sufferance.' And the apostle Peter having declared the second coming of Christ, thence infers, 'What manner of men ought we to be in all godly conversation,' 2 Pet. iii. 11. And indeed, meditation of the principles of religion will inform us well in the manner of our duties, as in the nature of them; and thus shall we be fruitful in particulars, according as our meditations are directed, though the principal matters and objects of our meditation are but few.

Thirdly, This hope and expectation will stir us up to pray for the consummation and bringing to pass the performance of all those promises which are to be performed before the coming of Christ, as that the gospel should be preached in all places; that the conversion of the Jews might be hastened, and the downfall of antichrist might speedily come to pass. And this hope will also encourage us and put us forward, that in our several callings and standings, we should help on the performance of them as much as is in our power to perform, by helping on the building of the church and the enlargement of Christ's kingdom, and the confusion of his enemies.

Lastly, This hope will work in vs a sweet and comfortable carriage in all estates and conditions, carrying us through all impediments with courage. For 'yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry,' Heb. x. 87, and he will come full handed. 'My reward is with me,' saith Christ; and lest we should think it long before he comes, he told us long ago that those were the latter days, and that the ends of the world were then come upon them. Do men, then, molest us, persecute, and vex us? Let us be comforted. He comes that will tread all our enemies under our feet. Do we find that we have but short spirits, that our graces are but weak? Let us not dishearten ourselves. He that keeps heaven for us will give us necessary graces to bring us thither. If we want, go to the God of faith and love. He hath promised to give us his Spirit, to make all grace abound in us, never to leave us nor forsake us till he hath perfected his work, in setting us with him in glory.

But to proceed to the object of this expectation, it is Christ who is described unto us by the Saviour, whom he calls also Jesus, which signifies a Saviour; and this he doth to impress it the deeper into his affections.

Quest. But some may say, Christ hath saved us already. What need is there, therefore, of his second coming?

Ans. I answer, It is to perfect our salvation. For redemption of our bodies and glorious liberty are reserved to his second coming. We look not that he should die any more, but appear as a Lord of glory in glory, without humiliation for sin, having already gotten victory of it.

Doct. The observation is, that Christ is a Saviour, and the Saviour by way of excellency. He saves all that are of his mystical body from all evil, and preserves them to all good. He saves their bodies and their souls now from the power of all evil, and hereafter he will free them from all evil. He is the everlasting Saviour. While we live here his blood runs continually. This is the 'fountain opened for the house of Judah for sin and uncleanness,' Zech. xiii. 1. In it are we cleansed from the guilt and damnation of sin. What would we have more? 'We are kept by faith to salvation,' 1 Peter i. 5. Let this raise up our souls. Are we swallowed up with the sense of any misery? Let us know that we trust a Saviour that is every way absolute, that invites those that are sick with sin to come unto him; and 'how can we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?' Heb. ii. 3. Away, therefore, with all popish conceits of meriting by our works. All glory must be given only to his mercy; all that he did for us was to the glory of his grace, Eph. i. 6.

Lastly, This should comfort us when we think of the last day, to think withal, that he shall be our judge that is our Saviour, and therefore should cast away all terror from us, knowing that our head will not destroy his members, but that he our husband being a great king, will also crown us his spouse with a glorious crown. Therefore, when we see the foregoing signs come to pass, 'let us lift up our heads, knowing our redemption draweth near,' Luke xxi. 28.

To go on, in the next place: Christ is not only our Saviour, 'but he is our Lord,' wherein we may see the apostle's Christian wisdom. He useth such titles as may most of all strengthen his faith and affection of the present meditation, which being a point of the resurrection, a thing seeming contrary to reason, to flesh and blood, he strengthens himself in this consideration,

that he 'is the Lord,' who hath all power and authority committed to him, Mat. xxviii. 18.

Secondly, He is Lord by title of redemption, so as we are no more our own, but his; for he hath bought us with a price.

Thirdly, He is Lord of the world, and of the devil by conquest, Heb. ii. 14.

Fourthly, He is Lord over his church by marriage. He is our husband, governing his church with sweetness and love.

He is also the Lord by way of excellency above others, depending on no creature. He is 'Lord of lords.'

Secondly, He is Lord of body and soul and conscience, punishing with terrors here and damnation hereafter.

Thirdly, He is Lord eternal. He endures for ever, and cannot die.

Fourthly, He is such a Lord as cannot abuse his authority. He cannot tyrannize. His grace and virtue are of equal extent with his power.

Fifthly, He is a holy Lord. Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabbath, that is, Lord of hosts, Rev. iv. 8.

In all these he is far above any earthly man, yea, above all creatures. And therefore it is a sweet estate to be under government and rule. They then that are lords here on earth must consider, though they ride and are above others, yet they are under the Lord. Thus did Joseph. Therefore they must rule, 'but in the Lord.' It is his will that must rule their wills.

Secondly, This should comfort Christians, that they have such a Lord as is Lord of angels, at whom the devils tremble; whom storms, winds, seas, sickness, death, and all creatures do obey. Yet we cannot challenge this comfort, but upon condition of our obedience. The apostle joins Lord and Saviour together, to shew that he is a Saviour only to those that take him for their Lord to govern and rule them. As he is our priest, he must also be our king. He comes by water to purge and wash us, as well as by blood to suffer for us. The wicked they will not have this man rule over them, but they shall not say nay. God will be a Lord over them, ruling by his power; with a rod of

iron he will bruise them in pieces, none shall deliver them. If we will avoid this miserable estate, let us make him Lord in us. Thus shall we crown him, and then he will crown us with himself.

Verse 21

Who shall change our vile body.

The words are plain, and shall need no exposition; therefore we will briefly come to the doctrines.

Loot. 1. And first, We may observe hence that our bodies are base; and thus are the bodies not only of wicked profane men, but of the servants and dearest children of God; all are vile. And that in these respects.

First, In life our original is base. We are dust, and to dust we must return, Gen. iii. 19; and our continuance is full of change, subject to diversity of estates, sickness, health, pain, ease, hunger, fulness. And base we are, because we are upheld by inferior creatures. We enter into the world by one way, but go out by divers deaths; some violent, some more natural, and by divers sicknesses loathsome to the eyes, to the nostrils, and especially when we are nearest our end, whereas our countenance is pale, our members tremble, all our beauty is gone. But after we are departed, so loathsome is this our carcase, it must be had out of sight; yea, though it be the body of the patriarch Abraham, Gen. xxiii. 4. For as the body of man is the best temper, so the corruption thereof is the most vile. The best countenances of the greatest personages are the most ugly, ghastly objects of all others, by so much the more, by how much they were the more excellent; so much the greater is their change. And yet are we not to conceive of this body so as though there were no glory belonging to it; for, first, it is God's workmanship, therefore excellent, and so excellent as the heathen man Galen, being stricken into admiration at the admirable frame thereof, breaks out into a hymn in praise of the Maker. And David could not express it, but says, 'I am wonderfully made,' Ps. cxxxix. 14. God made this his last work, as an epitome of all the rest.

Secondly, We are told that we owe glory to our bodies; and therefore we are bidden that we should not wrong our bodies; and the Scripture speaks infamously of self-murderers, as of Judas, Saul, Ahithophel. They are branded with a note of shame and reproach. And God, to shew the respect we owe to our bodies, hath provided to every sense pleasing recreations, as

flowers for the smell, light for the eyes, music for the ear; to be brief, he made all things for the bodily use of man.

Thirdly, These bodies of ours are members of Christ, redeemed and sanctified temples of the Holy Ghost, as well as of our souls. And therefore we must take heed, when we read of the base terms that are given to the body, that we do not mistake. For it is true in regard it keeps the soul from heaven, it is the grave of the soul; but indeed it is the house, the temple and instrument of the soul. But being misused, it proves an untoward dark house, an unwieldy instrument.

We are to take heed, therefore, of the error of those who afflict it by writing and declaiming against it, or by whipping of it, when, alas! it is the sin of the soul, the unruly lusts and affections, that are the causes of all rebellions in us; and if the body doth rebel, as often it doth come to pass since the fall, this proceeds from the corruption of the soul yielding to the body aid to serve the lusts; and God hath appointed a religious abstinence as a means to tame such lusts and weaken them, which it were to be wished were used oftener than it is.

Quest. But it will be said, Are the bodies of Christians base, for whom Christ shed his most precious blood?

Ans. I answer, While we live here, we are in no better condition than others, as concerning our bodies. Hezekiah is sick; Lazarus hath his sores; David and Job troubled with loathsome diseases; and thus it is fitting it should fare with us.

For, first, Christ laid us this example. He took our base, ragged nature on him. He hungered and thirsted, was pained, and death had a little power over him. And shall we desire a better estate than our master, our head, had? or do we ever think to partake with him in happiness, that will not partake with him in his mean estate? The decree of God is, that to dust we must, as all the rest of our fellow-saints and servants shall.

Secondly, Hereby God doth exercise our faith and hope; causing us to look and expect a better resurrection; and by this means are our desires edged to a better life, for else would we set up our rest here, and make this our paradise.

Thirdly, As yet there is sin in us; from the danger whereof, though we be delivered, yet there is a corruption that remaineth behind in us; and by this he will teach us the contagion of sin, and teach us to see how the devil hath deceived us, by the effects thereof bringing pain, torment, and loathsomeness.

Fourthly, It shows God's wisdom in vanquishing sin by death, which is the child of sin; for by it shall we be purged from sin, from corruption both of body and mind, and thus is our base estate made a way to our excellent estate hereafter.

We must therefore moderate our affections to the best things of this life. Health is changeable, and will not continue. Beauty is a flower of a stalk. The flower quickly fades away and perisheth. The stalk that is more base continues longest. Flesh is grass, either cut down by violent death; or if by age, the longer it lives the baser it is, and increases continually therein till death, whereas it is most base.

It is therefore foolish for any to swell because of beauty or strength, which at the best are but curious excellencies of abase body; and far more sottish are they that think to resist old age and God's decree, by trimming up and painting a withered stock. This is not the way to conquer vileness. But if we will be rid thereof, labour for the meat that perisheth not, John vi. 27 But that which maketh us endure to everlasting life is, with Mary, to choose the 'better part, that shall not he taken away.' 'Meat for the belly, and the belly for meat: but God shall destroy both the one and the other,' 1 Cor. vi. 13.

And let this be as a cooler, to quench the base wildfire of love; and consider what is it we so affect. It is but beautiful dust, a painted sepulchre, a body that after death will be vileness itself, that while it breathes it is full of rottenness, the matter of worms, supported it may be by a carrion soul, that whether it willeth or nilleth must leave it and go into a far worse place.

And contrarily, in the last place, it should teach us to be at a point, cheerfully to honour God by sacrificing ourselves to him when he calls for vs. Count it no shame with David to be vile in the eyes of men for God's cause. If the worst could be imagined, which cannot he, we had as good perish with usage as with rust. But this is the only way to be glorious, to avoid vileness, even to sacrifice our bodies and all in a good cause. What though the world esteem vilely of us, as good for nothing but the shambles, Rom. viii. 36; shall we fear them? No. Fear him that can destroy both body

and soul. It is better to go to heaven without a limb, than to go to hell with a sound healthful body. Therefore when temptations of The world do begin to provoke thee, say to thy flesh with Bernard, Stay thy time; the time is not yet to be happy.

And therefore, to conclude, our sold is but a stranger here; we must entertain it well into this house of our body. It is but a guest, use it not basely. It is no ill guest. It gives us sight, taste, speech, motion. When it goes away, our body is but a dumb, dull, base lump of earth. Nay, when it is gone, whilst the body is in the ground, the soul having a most vehement and earnest desire to be knit to it again, puts God continually in mind of raising it up at the last day of the general resurrection, and of glorifying it in a holy, eternal, and happy estate.

2. Secondly, Out of the words we may observe, that these vile bodies of ours shall be changed. This we receive as an article of our faith; and yet were it believed truly as it ought, it would work a strange alteration in the minds and manners of men, contrary to that they are now; and howsoever it is not embraced, yet it remains a grounded truth, that these bodies of ours, sown in corruption, shall rise incorruptible, 1 Cor. i. 15. It was foretold in way of consequence in paradise; for the head of the serpent could not be broken but by conquering death, which is the last enemy. It was figured out unto us in Aaron's dead sear rod that budded, and Jonah's deliverance out of the belly of the fish, where he had been three days and three nights. It was believed of all the fathers, Heb. xii. 1, seq. And for security before the flood Enoch, and after the flood Elias, were taken up in their bodies.

And besides, it is not contrary to reason. I do not say that reason can reach unto it. For Christ he is alive still. The dust whereof we are made, and whither we go is preserved. It is not annihilated. And why cannot Christ raise a body out of the dust, as at the first make it out of dust. Why should he not be as able to quicken dust now as at the first? and especially, seeing the soul is reserved in heaven to this end, till the day of his second coming.

Nay, it is not contrary to the course of nature. We see every year summer comes out of winter, day out of night, youth out of infancy, man's age out of youth. And the apostle in the Corinthians, 'Thou fool, the corn is not quickened except it die,' 1 Cor. xv. 30. Nay, we see what strange changes are daily wrought by art; and shall we think God's almighty power cannot work far more strange effects?

Use. The use therefore is to instruct us if we believe that Christ shall change these vile bodies, then sure the same bodies shall rise that died; for change is of qualities, it abolisheth not substances. And therefore Job's confidence herein is remarkable, Job xix. 20, 'Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold,' speaking of Christ; so is it, 1 Cor. xv. 53, 'This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality,' and the ancient creeds had, credo resurrectionem carnis hujus.

Secondly, It is very unequal that one body should honour or defile itself, and another body should be honoured or damned. It is comfortable therefore to us that love our bodies and honour them, that they shall rise again and we shall enjoy them for ever.

Thirdly, Christ our surety he raised the same body that was crucified; and therefore the same bodies here that fulfil the measure of the sufferings of Christ here, shall partake of his fulness in glory.

Use 2. A second use is for comfort. Is this a life of changes? Let it not daunt us, but know they are all to end in glory, and they all tend to bring us thither. We ever change for the better, and the last change of all is the best of all. And therefore let us endure these changes with a light heart.

Use 8. In the third place, Who is the author of this change in us? The text saith that 'Christ shall change us.' John vi. 30 and 40, 'I will raise them up at the last day,' saith Christ, of those that know him and believe on him. He is furthermore our head. Now we know the body must be conformable to the head. If it be crowned the body is crowned; and therefore, Rom. viii. 11, the apostle saith, that if the Spirit dwell in us that did dwell in him, the Spirit that raised him up will raise us up also.

Thirdly, Christ is a whole Saviour. He therefore will raise up our bodies as well [as] our souls; for he is the Saviour of both. He hath delivered both from hell; he will raise up both to heaven.

Fourthly, he is the second Adam. As we did bear the image of the first Adam in corruption, so must we bear the image of the second Adam in glory.

Fifthly, he is the seed of the woman, that must break the serpent's head; and therefore he must work this change.

Sixthly, Christ changed his own body, being burdened with all our sins; and therefore, as an exemplary cause, shall much more raise us up. For sin being once overcome, which is the sting of death, what can keep us in the grave?

Use 1. Let this strengthen our faith in the consideration that we have such a strong Saviour, that nothing shall be able to separate us from his love, nor to take us out of his hand.

Use 2. Secondly, Make it a ground how to direct us how to honour our bodies; not making them instruments of sin against him, but so to use them, that we may with comfort and joy expect and desire his coming to change these vile bodies.

Use 3. Thirdly, Let us labour to assure ourselves of our parts in this change, in this resurrection. This we shall know if we find Christ's Spirit in us. The same Spirit that raised up him, if it be in us, will raise us up also, Rom. viii. 11. For the first resurrection is an argument of the second; and he that finds his understanding enlightened, his will pliable, his affections set upon right objects, will easily believe the second resurrection of his body. Secondly, If we hope for this change, and so hope that we are stirred up thereby to fit ourselves for it, to cleanse ourselves. Thirdly, If we grow in grace, 2 Pet. iii. 18, it is a sign that we have an entrance into Christ's kingdom; for God doth ever honour growth, with assurance of a blessed estate.

Use 4. Fourthly, This should comfort us in time of death, considering we lose nothing but baseness, and our bodies are but sown in the earth; and this deposition which God committeth to the fire, air, earth, and the water, they must render up again pure and changed by Christ. And, therefore, it was a foolish conceit of the heathen to burn the martyrs' bodies, and to cast their ashes into the water, thereby to put them out of hope of their resurrection, not knowing God is as able to raise them out of fire and water as out of earth.

Use 5. Fifthly, This ought to administer comfort to us at the death and departure of our friends out of this life, knowing that they are not lost; that the earth is but a house and a hiding-place-for them to sleep in; and that at length God will not forget to raise them up with the residue of his saints. He will change them, and make them like his glorious body; and this was the use made by the apostle, 1 Thes. iv. 18.

Use 6. And lastly, Pray to God to teach us to number our days, so as we may apply our hearts to wisdom, Dent, xxxii. 29. Rut when is the time of this blessed change? It is not laid down, only it is implied by the word 'shall,' that the time is to come. But out of all question it is meant at the last day, and not before.

First, Because nil are to be gathered together, oven those that were buried four thousand years ago, must stay till the number he fulfilled; and it will make for God's glory that we should all meet together to attend on him, with multitudes of angels, so as they cannot be perfected without or before us, and we shall not prevent those that are asleep, 1 Thos. iv. 15.

Secondly, It is for the comfort of Christians that are weak, that the martyrs and constant professors of Christ should he pledges of their rising, who continually cry, 'How long, Lord?' Rev. vi. 9.

Thirdly, God wills that things should now be carried as in a cloud, and that the last day should he a day of revelation; which could not be, if before there should be this change.

For use. This must teach us to desire that day, and pray for the hastening thereof; till when, the souls in heaven are not perfectly happy. For all must be brought in before they can be made perfect. And therefore they desire and hope for, and pray for, to be united to those bodies again, that they lived withal, and so dearly loved.

But who are these that shall be thus changed? The text saith, 'our bodies;' that is, our bodies that have had 'our conversation in heaven.' And, therefore, those that have had no part in the first resurrection, they shall have no part in the second. The baker and butler of Pharaoh all shall arise and be lifted out of prison, but some to the resurrection of life, and others to the resurrection of condemnation. But to proceed.

That we may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.

So that Christ shall be the exemplary cause, as well as the efficient cause of our resurrection. For he is our head and our husband; and it is reason we should he suitable to him, and be ruled by him. He came not to make himself like us, but us like him. He first must be a king, blessed and anointed, and a Son. The head makes us like to him, kings, blessed and glorious. Enoch and Elias, though before his real incarnation, yet they ascended by virtue of his

resurrection, and so shall we. They are glorious like to him; so shall we in his good time and pleasure.

Quest. But how?

Ans. I answer, In these particulars:

First, As he is immortal, never to die again, so shall we. We shall be freed from all sin; and so, consequently, from all mortality.

Secondly, We shall be incorruptible. We shall have no corruption within us or without us, as it is, 1 Cor. xv. 53. We shall be embalmed with the Spirit, that shall cause us to remain for ever incorruptible.

Thirdly, We shall be unchangeable; always the same, without sickness of body, or indisposedness of mind.

Then, in the fourth place, we shall he in perfect strength. Here we contract to ourselves weakness by every little thing, as alteration of air, study, and the like; there the body shall be enabled to every thing. But here we are wreak, unfit, and soon weary of any duty, soon tired in prayer, weary in hearing, so as even Moses his arms must be supported, Exod. xvii. 12.,

Fifthly, We shall have beauty and comeliness, the most lovely complexion and proportion of parts. There shall be no dregs in our body: all shall be, spent by death; far better than after physic, which notwithstanding brings the body into a quiet repose. All wants shall be supplied. What is misplaced shall be reduced into right order. And therefore, what though we lose limbs for Christ's sake, he will not be indebted to us; none shall go thither maimed.

Obj. But some will say, Christ himself retained wounds after his resurrection, and therefore much more shall we be imperfect.

Ans. I answer, This was a voluntary dispensation. He suffered them to appear for the faith of Thomas, not of necessity.

Sixthly, These bodies of ours shall he spiritual, as it is 1 Cor. xv. 53, seq. A natural body is upheld by natural means, as meat, drink, physic, but then shall there be no need of such things. Christ shall be all in all to us. And again, our body shall obey the spirit. Now the body keeps the spirit in

slavery, but then shall it readily yield to every motion of the spirit. The ubiquitaries when they speak of the spirituality of Christ's body, they would have it in all places. But they may as well conclude, because we shall have spiritual bodies, therefore our bodies also shall be in all places like to Christ's body. The ground of the glory of these bodies shall be the beatifical vision, and our union with Christ. If our beholding him here in his ordinances be of such a power as to transform us from glory to glory, 2 Cor. iii. 18, what a change shall be wrought in us when we shall see him as he is! And if his first coming had that power to make all things new, 2 Cor. v. 17, much more when he cometh the second time in glory shall he make all things new and glorious.

Use 1. This therefore, in the first place, should encourage us in all causes of dismay and trouble, rather than we will offend God to lose our bodies, knowing that we give them to God, and shall receive them again with advantage.

Use 2. Secondly, Labour we to make our bodies instruments of his honour, that honours us; and let us honour our bodies wherein are the seeds of immortality, and glory in so using them as that they be carried to the grave with honour.

Use 3. Let us also honour the bodies of the deceased saints of God, and the places of their sepulture, as cabinets wherein the precious dust of the holy saints are laid up in keeping.

Use 4. And let us not be like them without faith, that think the bodies are lost for ever that are cast into the grave; like children seeing the silver cast into the furnace, think it utterly cast away, till they see it come out again a pure vessel.

Use 5. And when we die, let us not trouble our minds with the discomfortable thoughts of worms, rottenness, darkness, and the like; but with the eye of faith let us look beyond these, on the haven whither we are going. This made Job, though covered all over with ulcers, to say with a cheerful heart, 'My Redeemer liveth, though after my skin worms consume this flesh,' Job xix. 26.

Use 6. If we want limbs to our bodies, to comfort ourselves, the resurrection will restore all things.

Use 7. Furthermore, Let us serve here with our best endeavours. It is but a while, and it shall not be in vain. Is it not better thus to do and partake of this blessed change, than to spare this vile body, and pamper it by sacrificing all, or to employ all our time in the serving and pleasing others; and to that end not to care to prostitute ourselves to all manner of filthiness? What shall we get by these courses? but at the resurrection of the just, when we should lift up our heads because our redemption draweth nigh, then shall we be overcome with shame, grief, terror, and horror of conscience. But happy are we therefore, if in a good course we can so resign up ourselves, so as to be resolute with Esther, 'If I perish, I perish,' Esther iv. 16; 'if I live, I live to Christ; if I die, I die to him,' Philip, i. 21. What I have committed to him he will keep. I am assured thereof; and therefore I will not offend him for any pleasure or profit whatsoever. These resolutions had the patriarchs and God's saints, and these made them die with comfort.

According to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things to himself.

The word that is translated 'working,' may and doth signify powder; and so it was translated heretofore, and is to be so meant. But the words being plain, we will come to some observations.

Doct. 1. And first of all observe, That Christ hath a power able to subdue all things to himself; and this he hath by virtue of his office of mediator-ship, and this in respect of God to reconcile and appease him. Secondly, In respect of opposite powers to overcome all of them. Thirdly, In respect of the persons to be saved, that he might free them from all ill, and raise them to all happiness; and these things requires a power that must be above all created powers. For God could not be appeased but by an infinite price, the blood of one that is God. And we could not be defended from sin and hell—whose power is the greatest of all finite power—but by a power beyond it; and such a power as must regenerate and renew us, notwithstanding the opposite power of the devil, and our corruptions within us, which is a greater work than the work of our creation. And all this he hath done. 'He hath subdued him that had the power of death, the devil,' Heb. ii. 14. He hath subdued diseases and winds with a word, and with a word he smote his enemies to the ground. He hath subdued all ill of the body and mind, forgiving sins, opening our hearts, subduing our corruptions, and death hath yielded to his power. 'O death, I will be thy death.'

Doct. 2. In the next place, as Christ hath this power, so he will use this power for the good of his saints; and this he will do because whatever Christ is, he is for the good of his church. He is powerful, merciful, and loving for his church's sake. And secondly, Because our bodies do require it. For it must be an infinite power that makes the body of dust. And therefore though Christ was the Son of God, declared from the beginning, yet it was said he was mightily declared to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead, Rom. i. 4. For from a privation to a habit there can be no regression by a natural course; and therefore for our bodies to return from dust, must be by a supernatural infinite power of one that is God. Let those that are enemies to Christ his members consider this. Against whom do ye strive? even against the Almighty, who in his humiliation was able with a word to strike his enemies to the ground; and now being in glory, how fearful and terrible should his power be to such? who should learn betimes to kiss the Son, before they perish in the midway, Ps. ii. 12. And for his children, let them comfort themselves that are under the government of so powerful a majesty; for he will bruise all their enemies under them. Nay, they are already all conquered. And let them consider of all his promises, and apply them to his power. It is a powerful Saviour that said, 'Come to me, all you that are heavy laden, I will raise you up,' Mat. xi. 28. It is he that is able to subdue all things to himself, that promises, 'My grace shall be sufficient for you,' 2 Cor. xii. 9. He is a prophet, to instruct fully; a priest, to satisfy God's wrath to the utmost; a king, to subdue all their corruptions. Thirdly, Let this encourage us to set ourselves against our corruptions. Some there are that having a little strove with their lusts, and finding that they have not gotten any sensible ground against them, they as out of hope and heart sit down with this opinion, 'as good never a whit as not the better,' and so yield up the bucklers. What a distrustful incredulous estate is this! Is not he God that hath promised? Is he not truth itself? Hath he said, and shall it not come to pass? Fear not those Anakims nor Canaanites. Depend on God in the use of the means, and let him alone with the performance of his promises. Fourthly, Despair of none, though never so weak, so long as they use the means; for Christ hath created all by his word, he will raise us up by his word, and will change us by his word; and by this word he is able to change others though never so obstinate. For so long as they are under the word and means, they are under the arms of an almighty power; and therefore, if any be in our power, or if we wish well to any, we should persuade them to prize the word and to use the moans. In the next place, this is a ground of trial of our estates. Would we know whether we are of the number of those that shall be raised up hereafter and changed? Then examine whether we have found this

power changing us, and bringing us to grace here; for, Eph. i. 19, 20, the same power worketh in us to believe, that raised up Christ. Do we then find our understandings enlightened, our wills conformable to his will? Do we find the strongholds of sin in us rased, and now spirits, new thoughts, new desires in us? Oh, those are blessed evidences of Christ's almighty power in us, that will raise us up at the last day.

By this means also we may try our profession. Do we come by faith and religion, with pleasure and case? Alas! this is no sign of any powerful strong work in us. It is easy to go to church to hear the word or read it, to receive the sacraments. Contrarily, if we find an inward change, that our hearts are so altered as we can overrule our members contrary to our lusts, and contrary to occasions, then 'stronger is he that ruleth in us than he that ruleth in the world,' 1 John iv. 4. It is easy to resist a temptation where none is. The mighty power of Christ is seen, when, being environed with temptations, we are enabled to resist. I pray, saith Christ, that thou should[st] keep them from evil in the world, and not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, John xvii. 15. If we be under crosses, if this Spirit and power of Christ be in us, it will enable us to bear all patiently, it will keep us from murmuring and fretting. It will also convince us of our natural estate, so as we shall see evident necessity of God's almighty power to change us. This made the apostle Paul and the jailor to look about them for help. 'Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?' And thus it will make us never to give God rest, nor Christ respite, till that power that shall raise up our bodies do raise up also our souls, and he shine in us by his Spirit that did bring light out of darkness, and fashion us as in his wisdom shall be most meet.

In the next place, the consideration of God's almighty power should teach us not to be dejected or cast down at the reports of the afflicted state of the church abroad. It should bring us rather to God, to rely upon his goodness and power, for God is ever God almighty, and the same merciful God that ever he was; and therefore, we should pray for the church the more instantly, that God would give them beauty instead of ashes. We should urge him with his promise of building up and defending of his church, and destroying of antichrist; and let us make the resurrection of the body a ground to strengthen us in the belief thereof, as the return of the children of Israel from Babylon was sealed by the resurrection of the dry bones, Ezek. xxxvii. 1, seq.; as also the apostle, from the resurrection of the dead, gathereth that God by that power hath and will deliver him, 2 Cor. i. 9, 10.

Furthermore, when we are oppressed with any extremity, though never so great, by continual meditation of his promises, we should strengthen ourselves, and apply them to our present estate and condition, knowing that he that raised us out of dust will not suffer us to be buried in misery, but will with the trial give us a gracious issue at the last, by raising up our bodies at the last day by his almighty power, which made also the patriarch Abraham to hope above hope. What though our helps be few? It is no matter what the instrument is, so as Christ is the chief worker.

In the next place, This should encourage us to stand out stedfast in a good cause for the truth. Do not think with ourselves, Alas! I am but one, and a weak, silly man: what can I do against a multitude? Let not such thoughts discourage thee. Think of Luther, a poor monk, who alone set himself against the whole world, and wrought that effect that we have all cause at this day to honour the memory of him. It is not thou, but God in thee, that is able to confound all thine enemies; and therefore, with Moses, behold him that is invisible.

Yet further, This should be observed by a Christian, as a ground of his perseverance to the end; for when we know we are Christians, what can bereave us of our blessings? what can make our faith fail? It is God's power that will keep us to salvation, and he that believeth shall have life, and shall not come into condemnation, John vi. 39, 40, 44, 47, and many other places; and Christ, by his almighty power, sways all our life to our building up to salvation; and therefore in contraries we should believe contraries, that death will work life, misery happiness, corruption incorruption, and this vileness glory; for it is God's order to work by contraries, that his power might the more appear.

And at the hour of death, then behold him that is thus able and all-sufficient; that shall presently glorify our soul, and at length will raise up our body also, and unite it to our soul, to partake with it in glory and happiness; that will then quit us of all sin, corruption, death, change. All our enemies shall be trodden under our foot, and all this by his almighty power, whereby he is able to do far above that we are able to think; and therefore let us, with a holy admiration thereof, say with the apostle, Eph. iii. 20, 21, 'To him be glory for evermore. Amen.'

The Redemption of Bodies

To the Reader

So precious the remembrance should be of God's thoughts of mercy to us-ward, when he delivered us from that hellish plot of the Gunpowder Treason, that if there were nothing else to commend this treatise to us, the first sermons here presented to us, which were preached upon that occasion, may justly procure it a ready and hearty welcome.

When God works such wonders for a church and people as that was, it is not enough to praise God for the present, and to rejoice greatly in the great salvation he hath wrought for them; yea, the more a people are in such a case affected for the present, the more inexcusable they must needs be if afterward they slight and disregard it, and that because their former joy proves they were thoroughly convinced of the greatness of the mercy, and so discovers their following ingratitude to be the more abominable; whence it was that when Jonathan put his father Saul in mind how David killed Goliath, and thereby had wrought a great deliverance for them (to the end he might no longer seek his ruin, that had been the means of so much good to God's people); withal he wished him to consider that he himself stood by, an eye-witness of that noble exploit of David's, and was then mightily affected with joy when he saw that formidable giant fall under his hand: 'Thou sawest it,' saith he, 'and didst rejoice,' 1 Samuel xix. 5, intimating how inexcusable it would be if he should forget that deliverance, concerning which himself had been so wondrously affected when it was done.

As therefore we have great cause to bewail the general decay of men's thankfulness for this great deliverance; at the first discovery of that cursed plot, 'Our mouths were filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing,' Ps. cxxvi. 2, all the land over, and every man could say, 'The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad,' as Ps. cxxvi. 2, 3; and yet now scarce one amongst many is affected with it, as in former times; so have we also great cause to bless God for the holy alarms of God's watchmen, whereby they have endeavoured to stir up those that are fallen from their first joy; and so amongst the rest for these of Reverend Dr Sibbes, the author of them, wherein he hath so feelingly set forth the misery of that antichristian bondage, from which we were delivered in that deliverance, that methinks he that reads them with due care must needs find his heart rousing up itself, as

Deborah did: 'Awake, awake, Deborah; awake, awake, utter a song,' Judges v. 12.

As for the other sermons, which, in this third tome, be styled Evangelical Sacrifices, which are published together with these, you shall find them no less profitable than these, though in divers other respects. The most of them tend to fit Christians for their latter end, a work of greatest importance, and do so sweetly set before our eyes that recompense of reward reserved for us in heaven, that I hope many of that brood of travellers, 'the generation of those that seek God's face' and favour here on earth, shall find them a great help to the 'finishing of their course with joy,' and others shall be wakened that are too ready to slumber and forget whither they are going, 'to strive to enter in at the strait gate,' Luke xiii. 24, and not to content themselves with a lazy Balaam's wish; which, reader, let us seek from Him who only gives the blessing, to whoso grace I commend thee, resting still Thine in the hearty desire of thy spiritual welfare,

Arthur Jackson.

The Redemption of Bodies

Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself.—Philip. III. 21.

The apostle was now in prison, yet he had a spirit of glory resting upon him; for he speaks as if he were entered into heaven, as if he were there before his time; and therefore in chapter i., ver. 23, saith he, 'I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which is best of all.' And 'I account all but dung in comparison of Christ,' as he saith in this chapter, ver. 8. And here in the former verse, 'Our conversation is in heaven; from whence we look for the Saviour, Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile bodies,' &c. God reserves abundance of comforts to the fittest times, as we see here in St Paul in this place. Now he brings in his own example to good purpose, as opposite to false Christians and false teachers, that he had mentioned before. 'There are many walk, of whom I have told you oft, &c. They are enemies to the cross of Christ: that mind earthly things,' &c., ver. 18. But saith he, 'Our conversation is in heaven.' He regards not which way they went. He took an opposite course to the world, and swims against the stream. As we see the stars, they have a motion of their own, opposite to the motion that they are

carried with. So St Paul had a motion of his own, opposite to the course of the world. 'Their end is damnation,' but 'our conversation is in heaven.' A Christian hath his conversation in heaven. While he is on earth, he rules his life by the laws of heaven. There are alway in the visible church some that walk contrary ways, who make 'their belly their god, whose end is damnation.' There were some that were Christians, nay, and teachers of Christians many of them, yet he saith, 'Their end is damnation, their god is their belly.' Carnal Christians say, We have all received the sacrament, &c. Alas! we may all partake of this common privilege, and yet our end may be damnation. St Paul looked on them with a spirit of compassion, 'I tell you weeping.' So it may be with us in our Goshen here. There may be a spirit of castaways in many; and in the abundance of means there may be many dead souls. But St Paul regards not what their course was, for saith he, 'Our conversation is in heaven.'

'From whence we look for the Saviour,' See.

That shows why his conversation was in heaven, because his Saviour was in heaven; and therefore his hope was in heaven: 'Where the treasure is, the heart will be,' Mat. vi. 21. Having entered into this blessed discourse, he goes on still: 'Who shall change our vile bodies, and fashion them like his glorious body.' He brings it in by way of answering an objection. If our conversation be in heaven, why are our bodies yet subject to such afflictions and baseness in this world? It is true they are; but the time shall come that Christ shall change these vile bodies of ours, and 'fashion them like to his glorious body.' Ay, but this requires a great deal of power and strength, and we see not how it may be. Therefore, saith he, he shall do it by 'that almighty power whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself.' Therefore he shall subdue death, the last enemy. He will not do it perhaps according to thy fancy and conceit, but 'according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself.' We must not regard our weak conceits in great matters, but God's power. 'Ye err,' saith Christ to the Pharisees, 'not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.'

St Paul then in these words, and in the verse before, sets down three reasons why his course is opposite to the course of wicked men in his time.

1. First, My city is in heaven, and my conversation is answerable. I take a contrary course, for I am a citizen of another city.

2. And then another reason is, his hope and expectation of a Saviour from heaven, the Lord Jesus. Hope, and faith, which is the ground of hope, carry up the sold where the thing hoped for is. 'Our conversation is in heaven: we hope for a Saviour from thence.'

3. The third reason is, from the condition of the body. However it was now for the present, 'he shall change our vile body, that it may be like his glorious body.'

'Who shall change our vile body.'

You see here the apostle, having set himself upon a holy and heavenly meditation, he could not satisfy himself, but goes from point to point, setting down his present holy conversation, grounded upon his future hope of a blessed state to come. 'Christ shall change our vile body.' Our bodies are vile, and our bodies. Here is the point then, that The best men's bodies in this world are vile.

Vile in regard of the matter whence they are taken, the earth, from the dust. The fairest body is but well-coloured dust; base and vile from the beginning, from the womb; base in the whole life, base in death; most base after death. They are base, I say, in the beginning.

But especially, base in our life. Our bodies are base in reward of labour. 'Man is born to labour'—in this world—'as the sparks fly upward,' Job v. 7. God would humble the body of every man with labour; or else those that have not the labour of men here shall have the labour of devils hereafter. The best body of the best saints are condemned to labour.

Vile likewise in regard of sickness and diseases, which grow out of the body; so that be it kept never so warm and tenderly, yet as the worms grow out of the very wood, and consumes the wood that breeds it, so diseases grow out of and come from the body. There is a fight and conflict between moisture and heat, till the one prey upon the other and consume it. In regard of sickness therefore they are vile bodies.

In regard likewise of disposing the soul the worst way; for take all tempers of the body, they incline the soul to some sin or other, to some ill disposition or other. Choler inclines it to intemperate anger, melancholy to distrust and darkness of spirit. The sanguine inclines it to liberty and looseness, &c., phlegm to deadness and dulness of spirit. So our base bodies

make the soul dull. It becomes an unfit instrument, whereby the soul cannot work as it would; an unfit house. The body is ofttimes a dark house; sometimes a house that drops in with moist diseases; a house that lots in water, and so consumes it to rottenness. Sometimes it is a house fired by hot diseases. It is thus indisposed, and therefore a vile body.

A vile body likewise, that when it is thus indisposed, there is no comfort in the earth that can comfort it; for all the foundation of comfort in this world is the health of this poor body. A kingdom, nay, all the kingdoms in the world, will not comfort a man if his body be not in tune; and, alas, how soon is this body out of tune! An instrument that hath many strings is soon subject to be out of tune, and there are many strings in the body. How many turnings, how many instruments, doth the soul use! If any be out of tune, the music is hindered. It becomes an unfit instrument. In this regard it is a vile body.

In regard likewise of the necessities of nature, this body is vile in this world. I speak not of what comes from the body, in which respect it is base and vile. But how many things doth this vile body stand in need of! Man, in that respect, is the basest creature in the world. He is beholden to the worms; he is beholden to nature to feed him in health, and in sickness the body needs patching up and piecing by this creature and by that. So it is a vile body in regard of the necessities of it, in health, in sickness, in youth, in age. It is vile in life. I need not stand on this.

It is more vile in death. In the hour of death, then it is base and vile indeed. Can we endure the sight of our dearest friends? How noisome is their presence after death! And the most exquisite temper is the most vile and noisome of all. Those that are most delicately fed, and most beautifully faced, are most offensive; and this is the condition of all. That head that wore a crown, those hands that swayed a sceptre, those brains and that understanding that ruled many kingdoms, all are subject to death, yea, and to baseness after death, as well as those that are poorer. And then they are vile bodies, because they are subject to all manner of deaths. The bodies of God's saints have been cast out to the fowls of the air. The poor martyrs, how many ways have they tasted of death! These bodies are subject to all manner of deaths, to variety of deaths; therefore they are vile bodies.

And then they are vile after death. As we were taken out of dust at the first, so we return to dust again; and if these bodies be not transformed to be like the glorious body of Christ, they are most vile of all. The spirit of

despair, the spirit of anger, that is in reprobate persons, how doth it disfigure their faces! One may see their shame, their grief, their despair in their very looks. So their bodies are most vile and dishonourable. But I speak of God's children. I say here in this world, in regard that they come of parents that are miserable and sinful, 'Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery,' Job. xiv. 1; man that is born of a woman, of a weak, miserable, sinful woman. In this respect it is a vile body. And in all passages of our life, in respect of labour, and pain, and sicknesses, and diseases, and likewise for indisposing the soul, that it is an instrument to ill. And in death itself more vile than in life; and after death most of all vile. So you see they are vile bodies every way. To make some use of this.

Use 1. If this be so, considering what the condition of our body is here, let this abate the pride of the greatest. Let them consider, when they look upon their gay apparel, what doth these garments hide? When great magistrates and others have their purple on, let them consider, what doth this glorious garment cover? Nothing but dust; a vile body. Why should we he proud then of our bodies, or of any ornament of our body, seeing it is a vile body?

Use 2. Again, If our bodies be vile and base, why should we spend the strength of our souls in searching to satisfy the lusts of so vile a body, and so make our souls nothing else almost but stewards to prowl how to content, how to clothe, and how to feed this body? As it is the study of many idle vain persons, almost all the day long, to give contentment to the craving lusts of this vile body; they make even an idol of this poor base piece of flesh, and sacrifice the best of their thoughts, and the best of their studies and endeavours and labours, to the contentment of it. Certainly this is forgotten which the apostle saith here, 'It is a vile and base body.'

Use 3. Again, Is our body a vile body, a base body, as we have it here? Then let us not make it more vile by intemperate courses, as wicked persons do. They dishonour their bodies. They are vile indeed, make the best of them we can, and they will end in dust; but we ought not sinfully to make them more vile and base, as many wretched persons do by their loose and licentious courses of life.

Use 4. Again, If our bodies be vile, base bodies, while we live here, let us not offend God for anything to gratify our vile bodies. Let us do as Joseph did, when his mistress tempted him; he left his garment behind him rather. So when we are tempted to any sin, let us rather leave our garments behind

us, let us leave our bodies. They are but vile bodies, let us be stripped of them, rather than offend God. It is pitiful to consider how this vile body, as vile as it is, and shall be in death, how it tyranniseth over the poor soul, and how men wound their souls for their bodies. How many are there that justify errors that they condemn in their hearts, to live a lazy, idle, a full, a plentiful life. And how many do condemn those things, those courses, and those truths, to please others, and to live a large and idle life —which they justify in their very souls—and all to please the flesh? It is but a bad counsellor, a bad solicitor I say, it tyranniseth over the poor soul. Let us not offend God or conscience, to break the peace of it for anything, to gratify this vile flesh. This I thought good to touch concerning that.

'Who shall change our vile bodies.'

'Change.' The action that Christ shall exercise about them is 'change.' Christ will 'change' our vile bodies. They are vile now. They shall not be always so; but Christ will 'change' our vile bodies. He will not give us other bodies for them, but he will change them in regard of quality. For oven as the great world was the same after the flood as it was before the flood, and shall be when it is consumed by fire, it shall be a new world for quality, but the same for substance; so this body of ours, it shall be the same after the resurrection for substance that it is now. It shall be altered for quality, it shall not be changed for substance. Therefore he shall 'change,' he shall not abolish our vile bodies. This is the action that our blessed Saviour will exercise upon these vile bodies; they shall be changed. Man is the most changeable creature in the world, for soul and for body too.

Take him in his soul, how many states is he in? There is first the state of nature in perfection; and then the state of corruption in original sin; and then the state of grace in the new creature; and then the state of glory. So likewise he is changeable in his body. He was first taken out of the dust. Out of the dust God made this glorious creature of man's body. He is a painful creature, in labour, in sickness; and then from strength he is changed to old age; and from thence to death, and dust; and from dust then he is changed again to a more glorious estate than ever he was in. The body is made like the glorious body of Christ. He is changeable in soul and in body.

But this is our comfort, we shall change for the best. All the changes of our body serve for the last change; after which, there shall never be any more change. When they are changed once to be glorious, they shall be for ever glorious. A blessed change, a blessed estate of a Christian; all his changes

tend to a state that shall never change. For after these bodies are once changed from base to be glorious, they shall be for ever glorious.

'Who.' The person that shall change them is Christ: 'who shall change our vile bodies.' In the person, we may consider the object and the action. Christ shall change our vile bodies. He that made us will make us again. He that is the image of God will refine us. He will renew us in body and soul to be like God, to be like himself; and he that changeth our souls in this world, will change our bodies in the world to come. His first coming was to change our souls, to deliver them from the bondage of Satan. His second coming shall be to deliver our bodies from the bondage of corruption, that is, the day of 'the redemption of our bodies,' as the apostle calls it, Rom. viii. 23. So it is he that shall change. But of this I shall speak more afterward.

What is the pattern according to which this body shall be changed, by this author of it, Christ Jesus? His own body. 'He shall change our vile bodies, 'That it may be made like, or fashioned like, his glorious body.'

He is both the cause and the pattern; the efficient and the exemplary cause. He is the pattern. Our bodies shall be like his glorious body, even as our souls are like Christ's soul. For this is certain. We are renewed in grace, not to the image of the first Adam, but to the image of the second Adam. We are conformed in soul to the image of Christ in holiness and righteousness. So likewise in the body, we shall be conformable to the body of Christ, 'the second Adam.' As we bare the image of the first Adam in our first creation, so we must bear the image of the second in our restoration, at the day of the resurrection. The glorious body of Christ is the pattern of this transmutation and change.

But we must understand this, as I said, in regard of quality, and not in regard of equality: our body shall be like his glorious body, not equal to his glorious body. There must be a reservation therefore of difference in heaven, between the head and the members, the husband and the spouse. Our bodies shall be like his glorious body, not equal to it. To our capacity we shall have full satisfaction and contentment for body and soul too; and they shall have security to be in that estate for ever. Therefore, though there be a difference of glory, yet that difference is no prejudice to the glory we shall have. We shall have that that is fit for us. 'Our body shall be made like unto his glorious body.' Christ is our pattern.

Whence we see this point of divinity clear to us, that Whatsoever is in us, both for soul and body (but here we speak of the body), whatsoever excellency is in us, it is at the second hand.

It is first in our head, first in Christ, and then in us. He is first the Son of God by nature. We are the sons of God by adoption. He is the predestinated Son of God to save us, to be our head. We are predestinate to be his members. He is the Son of God's love; we are beloved in him. He is full of grace: 'Of his fulness we receive grace for grace,' John i. 10. He rose and we shall rise, because he rose first. He ascended into heaven; by virtue of his ascension we shall ascend into heaven too. He sits at the right hand of God in glory, and by virtue of his sitting we sit there together with him in heavenly places. Whatsoever is graciously or gloriously good that is in us, it is first in our blessed and glorious Saviour.

Therefore let us look to him, and be thankful to God for him. When we thank God for ourselves, let us thank God first for giving Christ, who is the pattern to whom we are conformed. Let us give thanks for him, as St Peter doth, 'Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,' 1 Peter i. 8. If he had not been his Father, he had not been ours. We cannot stand before God of ourselves, but in one that is perfect in himself, God-man. Therefore when we bless God for grace and glory that belongs to us, let us bless him for giving Christ, that in him we are happy. He conforms us in grace here and in glory hereafter, in body and soul, to our glorious Saviour.

And as it is a ground of thankfulness to God for Christ, so it yields us a ride for meditation. When we would think of anything in ourselves, let us go to our head, to Christ, in whom we have all we have and that we hope to have. 'Of his fulness we receive, not only grace for grace,' but glory for glory. Of all the glory he hath, we have answerable to him; and surely it is a transforming meditation to think of Christ's glory, and to see ourselves in him; to think of grace in Christ, and of our interest in grace in him. We must not think of him as an abstracted head severed from us, but think of his glory, and our glory in him and by him. He is glorious, and we shall be glorious likewise.

Again, You see here that howsoever our bodies are vile for the present, yet they shall not be so for ever. They shall be 'glorious bodies,' like to Christ's body. The point then is that,

As Christ is the pattern of the glory of our body, so our body undoubtedly shall be glorious as his body is.

This vile body shall be glorious, even like Christ's glorious body. I need not stand to prove it. I proved it before. What should this afford us? Then let us use them to a glorious end; let us not use these base bodies to base purposes. Let every member of this vile body, while we live here, be a weapon of a sanctified soul; a weapon of righteousness ready to do good. Let us put honour upon these bodies that shall be thus honoured; let us use them for honourable purposes. Let us lift up our eyes to heaven; let us reach forth our hands to good works. Let our feet that have carried us to ill heretofore, carry us to the service of God; for these very vile bodies shall be glorious bodies. The very same eyes that have been lift up to God in prayer; those very hands that now are instruments of good works; those very knees that are humbled to God in prayer; and those feet that have carried us to holy exercises; and those spirits that are wasted and spent in holy meditation: even these, this vile body that is thus holily used, shall be a glorious body. Therefore let us use it answerably.

And labour to lay it down with honour in the dust, to leave it with a good report to the world, considering it shall be so glorious afterward. Do those think of this that use their bodies for base 'purposes? whose eyes are full of adultery, whose hands are full of rapine, whoso feet carry them to base places where they defile themselves, whoso bodies every member is a weapon and instrument of sinning against God? How can these dare to think of that glorious day, wherein our vile bodies shall be made like the glorious body of Christ? Can they hope that those hands and those feet of that body shall be made glorious that have been defiled, that have been instruments to make others likewise sin? Can such a body look for glory? Let us not deceive ourselves. This vile body indeed shall he a glorious body. Ay, but it must be used accordingly, unless we have a presumptuous hope.

This body shall be glorious; this very vile body, 'this corruptible shall put on incorruption,' the same body, as the apostle saith, 1 Cor. xv. 54. I believe the resurrection of this body, as we say in the creed. St Paul pointed to his own body: this body, 'this mortal shall put on immortality.'

If this body shall be glorious, how base soever it be in this world, then again let us honour poor Christians, though we see them vile and base, and honour aged Christians and deformed. Alas! look not on them as they are, but as they shall be; as they are in the decree of Christ, and as they shall be

ere long by the power of Christ. He will make them like his glorious body. Let us not despise weak or old or deformed persons. These vile bodies shall he glorious. Those that died in martyrdom, whose bodies were cast into the fire and cast to wild beasts, &c., they shall be glorious bodies. The Emperor Constantine would kiss the very holes of the eyes of those that had their eyes pulled out, that had been martyred; so even our vile bodies, when they are used in the service of God in suffering, they shall be glorious bodies. Let us honour our bodies, or theirs that suffer for Christ. St Paul made it his plea, and a ground of his confidence, because his body was vile for Christ. 'I Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus, the dying of Christ, that the life of Christ might be made manifest,' 2 Cor. iv. 10, and Gal. vi. 17. He carried, Christ's marks in his body, making this an argument of respect, that he was a prisoner. So when any are abased for Christ's sake, let us think these are such as shall have glorious bodies, however they are esteemed of the world. But to enlarge the point a little further. These bodies shall be made like the body of Christ.

Quest. Wherein shall this glory of our bodies consist?

Ans. Especially in these six endowments. Our bodies be now vile and perhaps imperfect. They want a member, a sense, or a limb. Our bodies then shall he perfect, even as Christ's body is. Those martyrs that have been dismembered shall then have perfect bodies. Let us not be afraid to lose a limb or a joint for Christ or a good cause. If our bodies be made vile for Christ, they shall he made perfect afterward.

Then again, our bodies then shall be beautiful. Adam in his innocency had such a beauty in his body that the very creatures reverenced him. He was awful to the very creatures. So the body of our blessed Saviour, now in heaven, is wondrous beautiful; and so shall our bodies be, how deformed soever they be now. Let us not stand, therefore, upon any present deformity of our bodies now with years, or sickness, or other means. They shall not always be so. We shall have beautiful bodies.

Nay more than so, the third endowment is, we shall have glorious bodies. As we see Christ in the mount when he was transfigured, and Moses and Elias were with him, his body was glorious. They could hardly behold him. And Christ, in Rev. i. 16, he appears 'as the sun in his full strength.' His body is wondrous glorious now in heaven, and so he is represented there. If the very representation of him while he was upon earth was so glorious in the mount, what is it in heaven? St Paul could not endure the light that

shined to him, Acts is. 8, seq. So shall our bodies be like the glorious body of Christ.

What a glorious time will it be when the glorious body of Christ shall appear, and all the saints shall appear in glory! what a reflection of beauty and glory will there be, one shining upon another, when Christ shall come 'to be glorious in his saints!' Oh, the glory of the body of God's children, it shall put down all created glory. All the glory of the sun and moon, and all the glory of these inferior bodies, are nothing to the glory of the body of a Christian that doth abase his body here for Christ and the church's sake. You see, then, these bodies shall he perfect, and beautiful, and glorious bodies in regard of the lustre of them.

And likewise, in the fourth place, they shall he immortal bodies—bodies that shall never die, unchangeable bodies. There shall be no alteration, no death, no sickness. 'All tears shall be wiped from our eyes,' Rev. vii. 17. They shall be immortal bodies, that shall never die; as St Peter saith, 'We shall have an inheritance undefiled, immortal,' &c., 1 Peter i. 4. This is clear: therefore I will not stand in the enlarging of it.

In the next place, Our bodies shall be powerful and vigorous. Now they are weak, as St Paul saith, 1 Cor. xv. 43. Our bodies are 'sown in weakness,' but then they shall be able to ascend and descend. They shall he strong, even as the body of Christ. We shall have strong bodies; as all imperfections, so all weakness shall be taken away.

In the sixth place, They shall be spiritual bodies; that is, they shall not stand in need of meat, and drink, and sleep, and refreshings as now they do, but Christ will be all in all to them. He will be instead of meat, and drink, and clothes. Yea, and instead of the ordinances that we stand in need of here, the word and sacraments, he will be all in all. And our bodies shall he spiritual in another regard, because they shall be subject to the spirit. Whereas now, our very spirits are flesh, because the flesh rules and tyranniseth over them, so our souls follow our bodies. The soul of a carnal man is flesh, but then our flesh, our bodies, shall he spiritual. Not that they shall he turned into spirits, that is not the meaning, but spiritual bodies, obedient and obsequious to the very guidance of the soul, to a sanctified and glorious soul. These shall be the endowments of our bodies. They shall be perfect bodies; beautiful, glorious, shining bodies; immortal, unchangeable bodies; powerful, strong, and vigorous bodies, ready to move from place to place; and spiritual bodies. They shall stand in need of no other help, and they shall be obedient

altogether to the spirit. You see now how these vile bodies draw away our souls. Then all imperfections shall be taken away. We shall have purged bodies and purged souls. Thus you see wherein the glory of the body shall consist.

Let us therefore often seriously think of these things; and let me renew my former exhortation: let us be content to make our bodies here vile for Christ's sake, that they may he thus glorious. Let us abase them in labour and pains in our calling; in suffering, we do no more than he did for us first. Was not his body first vile and then glorious? And do we think that our bodies must not be vile before they be glorious? Not only vile whether we will or no, but we must willingly make them vile. We must be willing to be disgraced for Christ's sake, to carry his death about us, to 'die daily' in the resolution of our souls. How was he abased before he was glorious! He took on him our bodies at the worst, not in the perfection as it was created, but he took the body of man now fallen. Again, what pains did he take in this body! And how was he disgraced in this body! That sacred face was spit upon; those blessed hands and feet were nailed to the cross; that blessed head, that is reverenced of the angels, it was crowned with thorns. How was his body every way, in all the parts of it, abased and made vile for us! He neglected his refreshings for us: it was 'meat and drink' to him to do good. If he became vile for us, if he abased his body for us, certainly we should be ashamed if we be not content that our bodies should be made vile for him, that afterwards they may be made like his glorious body. Away with these nice Christians that are afraid of the wind blowing on them or the sun shining upon them, that are afraid to do anything or to suffer anything, and so in sparing their bodies destroy both body and soul. Consider, whoever thou art, this is not a life for thy body. This present life is a life for the soul. We come now to have the image of God in our souls in this life especially, and to have in our souls the life of grace here, but the life and happiness of our body is for this second coming of Christ, the glory of the body. This life is not a time for the body. Do what we can, it will be a vile body: cherish it, set it out how thou canst, those painted sepulchres that would out-face ago and out-face death, and by colours and complexions, Ac., hide those furrows that age makes in the face, they are but vile; and age and death will; be too good for them; to dust they will. Why should we regard our bodies? This life is not for them though we be dainty of them. Let us use this body here so as it may be glorious in the world to come. We should suffer our souls to rule our bodies, and to do all here, that both body and soul may be glorious after. For indeed all that the body hath here it is beholding to the soul for. Why, therefore,

should it not be an instrument for the soul in holy things? Doth not the soul quicken it? Hath it not its beauty from the soul? When the soul is gone out of the body, where is the life? Where is the beauty? Where is anything? The body is a loathsome carcase. Now, therefore, while the soul is in this body, look to the soul especially, that when the soul shall go to heaven, the soul be mindful of, and speak a good word for, the body, as Pharaoh's butler did for Joseph; that the soul there may think of the body, that it may think of the pains, of the suffering; as the soul doth, it hath an appetite in heaven, a desire to be joined again to the body which it useth to labour in, to pray to God in, which it used to fast in, which it used as an instrument to good actions. Let us use it so here that the soul may desire to meet it again, that Christ at that day may bring body and soul together to be glorious for ever.

'That it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.'

We see here, then, that the best is to come. The best change, after which there shall be no change, is to come. The weakest is the first, and the second is better. The second Adam is better than the first; and the second life shall be better than the first. Our bodies, as they shall be glorious, shall be bettor than they were in the first creation. They shall be glorious bodies, like unto Christ's. Oh, the comfort of a Christian! There is nothing that is behind, nothing to come, but it is for the better. There shall be a change, but it shall be a change for the better. A Christian is a person full of hope. He is under a glorious hope, under a hope of glory of soul and body. He is alway under hope, the 'hope of glory.' Therefore 'he joys under this hope,' Horn. v. 2.

'That it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.'

Quest. But how shall any Christian know that his body shall be like to the glorious body of Christ?

Ans. 1. I answer, He may know it from this: The change of a Christian begins in his soul. Christ begins the change of our souls to be like his: full of love and obedience to God; full of pity and compassion to men; full of industry to do good. Our souls will be like Christ's soul. First look to thy soul, what stamp that bears. Is there the image of Christ on thy soul? Certainly he that hath transformed this soul to be gracious, he will transform the body to be glorious, like his glorious body. Look to thy soul then. If thou art the child of God by adoption, if thou hast the spirit of adoption and grace, and findest peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost, thou mayest know thou shalt have the adoption of thy body. Thou hast the first

adoption in thy soul; thou art the child of God: know that thou shalt have the second adoption, spoken of Rom. viii. 23, 'We wait for the adoption of our bodies.' If thou partake of 'the first resurrection,' that thy soul is raised from sin, thou shalt partake of the second resurrection at the day of judgment.

For Christ is a perfect Saviour. He saves not only the soul, but the body. Though he begin with the soul, he ends with the body. He took our bodies as well as our souls,' and he will glorify our bodies as well as our souls. And if we find the work of grace a 'spirit of glory' in our souls, undoubtedly we may know that our bodies shall be glorious.

Ans. 2. Again, Thou mayest know that thou shalt partake of this glorious estate, that thy body shall be like the glorious body of Christ, by the use that this body is put to. How dost thou use this vile body for the time thou livest now? Dost thou use it to the base services of sin? Dost thou beat thy brain, and thy breast, and thy spirits? Dost thou take up thy time and all to provide for the flesh? Whither doth thy feet carry thee? What dost thou meddle with in the world? Are all thy members weapons of an unsanctified soul to offend God, and to 'fight against thy soul?' 1 Pet. ii. 11; to cherish lusts that fight against thy soul and against thy Maker and Redeemer? Then know this, that thou hast no hope of glory: 'He that hath this hope purgeth himself, and is pure as he is pure,' 1 John iii. 3. This hope, where it is found, it is a purging, a cleansing hope; and all the members of the body will be used to a sanctified purpose. A man will not sacrilegiously use those members that are dedicated to Christ; that are temples of the Holy Ghost; that are fellow-heirs, as St Peter saith, concerning the wife and the husband, 1 Pet. iii. 7. The body is a fellow-heir with the soul, of glory. He will not use it to the base services of sin. He that shall have a glorious body will esteem so of it here. What! shall I use the temple of the Holy Ghost? That that is a fellow-heir of heaven with my soul! that is the spouse of Christ, a member of Christ, as well as my soul! Shall I use it to these and these base services? It cannot be. If a man have the new nature in him, he cannot. It will not suffer him to sin in this manner. He cannot prostitute his body to base services.

Those that do so, how can they hope that their bodies should be glorious, like unto Christ's?

St Paul gives three evidences in one place, to know our interest in this glory of our bodies, in 2 Cor. v. 1. Saith he, 'We know that when this earthly house or tabernacle shall be dissolved, we have a building,' &c. We know we

have a glorious building, a double building, heaven and our bodies. We have two glorious houses. Heaven and these bodies shall be a glorious house. But how do we know this?

Saith he, in the second verse, 'We groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon.' There is a wondrous desire after this clothing, Rom. viii. 28: 'The creature groaneth, much more we that have the first fruits of the Spirit.' There will be a sighing for this glory, a waiting for the blessed coming of Christ; for Christ to redeem soul and body perfectly. That is the first sign, a desire and groaning earnestly.

In the fourth verse there is another evidence, 'He that hath wrought us for the same things is God.' He that hath wrought us for the blessed estate to come is God. So, whosoever hopes for a house in heaven, when this tabernacle is dissolved, he is 'wrought' for it, that is, he is anew creature for it. God hath wrought his soul and body for it. God fits our souls here to possess a glorious body after; and he will fit the body for a glorious soul. So both shall be glorious; a glorious soul and a glorious body. He hath 'wrought us' for the same. If a man therefore find the beginning of the new creature, that it is begun to be wrought in him, he may know that he shall partake of this glory of the body, because he is 'wrought' for it.

The third is, 'Who hath also given us the earnest of the Spirit.' Whosoever finds in them the Spirit of God, sanctifying their souls and bodies, stirring them up to holy duties, guiding, and leading, and moving them to holy actions, they may, from the sanctifying Spirit that is an earnest to them, know what shall become of their bodies: 'He hath given us the earnest of the Spirit.'

To confirm this, there is an excellent place in Rom. viii. 10, 'If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.' 'If Christ be in you, the body is dead,' &c. It is a vile body: it is as good as dead; it hath the sentence of death already. It is dead, in regard it is sentenced to death for sin, as a malefactor that hath his sentence. 'But the Spirit is life in regard of righteousness.' What then? If the sanctifying Spirit of Christ dwell in you, 'he that raised Jesus from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies.' The same Spirit that sanctifies these souls of ours, and quickens them to holy duties, the same Spirit shall raise our bodies. As the same Spirit that sanctified the blessed mass of the body of Christ that he carried, and raised his body, the same Spirit that sanctifies our souls shall raise our bodies. The Spirit of God, when he hath begun to sanctify us, he never leaves us. He goes

along in all changes, in life, in death, to the grave, as God said to Jacob, 'I will be with thee there,' Gen. xxxii. 28, seq. The Spirit of God he will mould our dead bodies, and make them like the glorious body' of Christ. The Spirit of God never leaves our souls or bodies. Therefore, if we find the earnest of the Spirit, if we find the work of the Spirit, or the comfort of the Spirit, which is the term the Scripture gives, 'joy in the Holy Ghost, and peace of conscience,' together with the Spirit sanctifying us, especially in the time of trouble, when God sees his children have most need, they have the earnest of the Spirit, the beginnings of grace and joy, the beginnings of heaven upon earth. By this they may know, as the first fruit is, so likewise is the harvest; as the earnest is, even so is the bargain; as we have it now in our souls, so we shall also have it in our bodies and souls hereafter. These three grounds St Paul hath, why his hope of heaven was a good hope. We groan for it, and we are wrought for it, we are fitted for it. There is no man can hope to be glorious in his body, but his soul must be fitted for it. It must be a fit jewel for so glorious a casket, a fit inhabitant for so glorious a temple as the body shall be. The body shall be fitted for the soul, and the soul for the body: they are 'wrought' for it. And then he hath given us 'the earnest of the Spirit.' What need I quote further evidences, the Scripture being thus pregnant?

I beseech you, often consider your desires, whether you be content to live here alway or no, to satisfy the vile lusts of your body; or whether you desire 'to be dissolved and to be with Christ,' when you have done the work that God sent you for into the world. If we be content to abase ourselves for God here, who hath provided so much glory for us hereafter, and when the time comes, we can desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ, it is a good sign,—if we have the beginnings of the new creature, 'ye are wrought for it'—that our souls are fitted for a glorious body. We have 'the earnest of the Spirit,' the same Spirit that sanctifieth our souls, and that quickens our souls with joy and peace, the same Spirit shall raise our bodies. Comfort yourselves, you that are Christians, though you be weak, with this, that if you have but the earnest of the Spirit, undoubtedly you shall have a glorious house, instead of this tabernacle of dust.

Christ 'will change these vile bodies, that they shall be fashioned like his glorious body.' I beseech you, therefore, oft think of this; think of the time to come, comfort yourselves with things to come. In 1 The?, iv. 18, St Paul would have us talk one to another often of this. This should be the matter of our conference: not only the state of the church, and our own estate here, but how it shall be with us when we are gone hence; how it shall be with us

world without end hereafter. We should confer and speak, and oft meditate and think of these things.

What can be grievous,—what can be over-burdensome to that soul that knows it hath the pledge and earnest of glory hereafter? How doth it quicken the soul to any endeavour, when once we know that howsoever we abase ourselves here, yet we shall have glorious bodies hereafter! It will quicken us to any endeavour, to anything for Christ. Therefore let us oft think of our estate to come: let us set our thoughts forward to the time to come; let faith make the times to come present, and that will make us heavenly-minded. What made St Paul converse as if he were in heaven? Faith made the estate to come present; and hope, which is grounded on faith, it looks to Christ's' coming to change our vile bodies. So faith and hope they make the soul look upward, they make it heavenly-minded.

Our souls are dull, and our bodies are dull in this world, but as iron, if it be touched with a loadstone, up it will; so if we get faith and hope to look forward, what shall be done to us for the time to come! The Spirit of faith and hope, if it touch the soul, will carry our dull bodies and our dead souls upward.

Therefore let us cherish our faith and hope by often meditation of the blessed estate to come, and think of these two things, of the excellent estate of our bodies and souls then. For if our bodies shall then be glorious like the body of Christ, our souls much more; the inhabitant, which is the special part, the soul shall be much more glorious. Let us think oft of this glory as it is described in the word. It transcends our thoughts. We cannot think high enough of it, and our interest and assurance of it. And daily search ourselves, whether our hope be good or no, that we have found evidence that our title is good to glory. Let us examine ourselves by those signs I named before. Where are our desires? What work hath the Spirit of God in us? How do we use these bodies of ours? As we use them now, we must look they shall be used hereafter. Let our tongues be our glory now, and they shall be glorious tongues afterward to praise God in heaven. Their bodies that have been glorious here shall be glorious in heaven. We may read our estate to come by what we are here. Those that carry themselves basely, and filthily, and dishonourably here, we may know what will become of them hereafter. Let us oft think of the estate to come, and of our interest in it; and both these together, the excellency of the estate, and our interest in it, without deceiving of our souls, what life will it put into all our carriage! What will be grievous to

us in this world when our souls are thus settled? Oh, let us spend a few days fruitfully and painfully here amongst men, and do all the good we can; and use these bodies of ours to all the happy and blessed services we can! Why? We shall have glory more than we can imagine.

Let it comfort us in the hour of death, what death soever we die, or are designed to. Now you know the sickness is abroad; and alas! those bodies especially are vile bodies that are under the visitation: so that their dearest friends dare not come near them. Yet let this comfort us. They are vile bodies for a time. Put case we die the death that may hinder the comforts of this life. Those that die in much honour and pomp, and have their bodies embalmed, do all what they can with the body, it will come to dust and rottenness. It will be vile in death, or after death, at one time or other; and those that die never so vile and violent a death for God's sake, those that die of this base death, that they are deprived of much comfort, yet let it comfort them, Christ will transform their vile bodies to be glorious.

They talk much of the philosopher's stone, that it will change metals into gold. Here is the true stone that will change our Hie bodies to be glorious. Let us die never so base or violent a death. Let us comfort ourselves in our own death, if it be thus with us, and in the death of our friends; these vile bodies, when they are most vile in death, they shall be made like the glorious body of Christ. Let us oft think of these things.

The Art of Contentment

I have learned, in what estate soever I am, to be content. I know how to be abased, and how to abound: everywhere, in all things, I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me.—Philip. IV. 11, 12, 18.

The words are the blessed apostle's concerning himself, expressing the glorious power of the Spirit of God in a strong and grown Christian, and are to wipe away the imputation of worldliness in the apostle, serving herein also for a pattern to all God's children, that they may learn by his example that as they must he careful to avoid all blemishes and imputations, so especially that of worldliness, as being most contrary to the profession of a Christian, who hath an 'high calling,' and whose 'hope is in heaven,' Philip, iii. 14.

The Philippians had sent Paul some relief; and lest they should think that he expected great matters, he tells them that he had 'learned to be content in what estate soever he was.'

It is not amiss sometimes for God's children to speak of themselves, as Paul here as to other good ends so also to avoid false imputations in the way of just apology, and likewise to be exemplary to weaker Christians. Is not the doctrine of contentment and the power of grace in all estates better learned by this blessed example of Paul, when he speaks thus of himself, 'I have learned, in what estate soever lam, to be content: to want, and to abound,' &c., than if he had weakly said, Be content with your present condition? The Scriptures be intended for practice; and therefore it is that there are so many examples in them, to shew the power of God's Spirit. This is the end of Paul's speaking so of himself, 'I have learned,' &c.

To come to the words. First, In general he sets down the power of God's Spirit in him in regard of that blessed grace of contentment. 'I have learned, in what estate I am, therewith to be content.'

And then he doth parcel out this general into particular conditions in this same state, 'I know how to be abased, and how to abound.'

And then he wraps up all in general again, 'I can do all things,' &c. But lest this should seem to be somewhat vain-glorious, 'I can do all things,' as if

he were omnipotent (in some sense, indeed, a Christian is omnipotent), therefore he adds, 'I can do all things,' but with a blessed correction, 'through Christ that strengthened me.'

'I have learned,' saith he, 'I am instructed.' It is very significant in the original, viz., I am consecrated to this knowledge of contentment in all estates. It is a learning not of great persons, or of learned persons, but of holy persons. It is a mystical knowledge. There is a mystery in it. For as all religion is a mystery,—'great is the mystery of godliness,'— not only the speculative part, but likewise the practical part of it, so every part of religion is a mystery, repentance a mystery, faith a mystery, and this practical part of contentment in all conditions is a great mystery. And therefore St Paul saith he is instructed in it, as a consecrated person, having in him the Spirit of God. All the degrees in this world cannot teach this lesson that Paul had learned, 'to be contented.' He learned it in no school of the world, not at the feet of Gamaliel; he learned it of Christ, and by blessed experiences in afflictions. Some graces are reserved for some estates. He had learned patience and contentment in variety of estates. He had it not by nature, for he saith, 'I have learned.' It is a mystical thing, not so easily attained unto as the world is fondly persuaded. Your ordinary Christian thinks that religion is nothing, that it is easily learned; whereas there is no point in religion but is a mystery. There is no Christian but he finds it to be so when he sets himself heartily to go through any religious work; as to humble himself, to repent, to go out of himself, and to cast himself upon the mercy of God in Christ. Oh, will he then say, it is a mystery. There is a difficulty in this work that I never thought of till I came to it. And so to be content with our condition, whatsoever the case be, to bring our hearts low, it is a mystery. Nature never teacheth this. It is learned in the school of Christ, and not without many stripes. We must be proficients a good while before we can learn to any purpose this one lesson of contentment in any condition. But the last verse is that which I will now dwell on, wherein we may see three things observable.

First, That Gad carries his children in this world through variety of conditions. They sometimes want, and sometimes abound. Their condition is sometimes more comfortable than at others. That is the first point.

2. The second is, That in this variety of conditions, as they know what it is to want and to abound, so in all variety of conditions they know how to carry themselves.

Thirdly, They know in all variety of conditions how to avoid the sins incident to that condition. As there are graces belonging to every state, so there are sins incident to every condition. And the child of God hath learned to practise the one, and to avoid the other.

1. First, God's children know what it is to want, and to abound by experience. God leads them through variety of conditions, Their estate is not always one and the same.

Quest. What is the reason of this dispensation in God thus to rule his children, to bring them to heaven by variety of conditions?

Sol. Among many other reasons this is one, that their graces may be tried. Every grace that brings a Christian to heaven must he a tried grace. He must try his patience, his contentment, his humility. How shall these graces be tried but in variety of estates and conditions? And secondly, How should we have experience of the goodness of God but in variety of estates?

When we find the stable, certain, constant love of God in variety of conditions, that howsoever our conditions ebb and How, be up and down, like the spring weather, sometimes fair and sometimes foul, yet notwithstanding the love of God is constant always, and we have never so sure experience of it as in the variety of conditions that befall us; then we know that in God there is 'no shadow of changing,' howsoever the changes of our life be. Is it not a point worth our learning, to know the truth of our grace, and to know the constancy of God's love, with whom we are in a gracious covenant? And then again, we learn much wisdom how to manage our life hereby, even in the intercourse of our changes, to be now rich, now poor, now high, now low in estate. Wisdom is gotten by experience in variety of estates. He that is carried on in one condition, he hath no wisdom to judge of another's estate, or to carry himself to a Christian in another condition, because he was never abased himself. He looks very big at him. He knows not how to tender another, that hath not been in another's condition. And therefore to furnish us, that we may carry ourselves as Christians, meekly, lovingly, and tenderly to others, God will have us go to heaven in variety, not in one uniform condition in regard of outward things.

Use. Learn hence not to quarrel with God's government; for though he alters our conditions, yet he never alters his love. A Christian is unmoveable in regard of the favour of God to him, and in regard of sanctifying grace. In all moveable conditions he hath a fixed condition. Therefore let us not find

fault with God's dispensation, but let him do as he pleases. So he bring us to heaven, it is no matter what way, how rugged it be, so he bring us thither.

2. The second general thing is this, That in this variety of conditions, God's children know how to carry themselves. As they know what it is to want and to abound, so they know how to abound and be abased as they should do. For there is no condition but a Christian may pick good matter out of it. As a good artist will make a good piece of work of an ill piece of matter sometimes, to shew his skill, so a Christian can frame matter that is good out of any condition; he knows how to want, and how to abound, and that with the expression of graces too. He can practise the graces that ought and may be practised in all conditions. For instance, he can abound; that is, with expressing the graces that should be in abundance, which is, thankfulness to God; he hath, in abundance, a spirit of thankfulness; he hath a spirit to be a faithful steward in abundance; a spirit to honour God with his abundance. He hath a spirit to be humble in abundance, knowing all is as 'grass and the flower of the field.' He can be humble, he can stoop under the mighty hand of God, he can have experience in the abasement of the vanity of worldly favour, and worldly greatness. He learns what it is, and so he can learn patience, and all other graces that are to be practised in a mean estate. It were too long to name particulars; a Christian can do this. Grace is above all conditions. It can manage and rule all estates of life. It makes them serviceable to its own ends. A gracious man is not dejected over much with abasement; he is not lifted up over much with abundance, but he carries himself in a uniform manner, becoming a Christian in all conditions.

3. The third general thing is, He can want and he can abound, without tainting himself over much with the sins of those conditions. For instance, he can abound without pride, though it be a hard matter. Abundance works upon the soul of a man. He had need to have a strong brain that digests abundance; it is a wild untamed thing. And we see by experience in God's children how hard a matter it is for them to manage abundance. We see how it wrought upon Solomon and David. They were better in adversity, 1 Kings, xi. 1, 2 Sam. xi. 2; and yet notwithstanding the child of God hath grace even to overcome the sins that are incident to abundance. He hath grace to be lowly-minded in a great estate; not to trust to uncertain riches; he knows by the Spirit of God what they are, and that he hath an inheritance of better things in another world, which teacheth him to set a light esteem upon all things below.

And so for dejection; the sin that we are subject to fall into in want, is putting forth our hands to evil means, to shift. God's child can learn to want without tainting his conscience with ill courses, and then he can want without impatience, without too much dejection of spirit; as if all were lost; whereas, indeed, a Christian in a manner is rich all alike. For God is his portion, and howsoever a beam may be took away, the sun is his; take away a stream, the spring is his; in the poorest estate, God all-sufficient is his still; and so in a manner a Christian is rich all alike. God never takes away himself, Gen. xvii. 1. He knows this, and therefore he can want, he can be abased as long as he hath the spring of all. Though a cistern be took away, he cares not, he can want and abound without murmuring, without dejection of spirit. Whereas those that have not been brought up in Christ's school, nor trained up in variety of conditions, are able to do nothing. If they abound, they are proud; if they be cast down, they murmur and fret, and are dejected, as if there were no Providence to rule the world, as if they were fatherless children. This is the excellency of a Christian, that as he knows what it is to abound by experience, so he knows how to abound with the practice of the graces, and how to want with the avoiding of the snares that usually are in that condition.

Obj. But hath a Christian learned this at the first?

Ans. No; he learns it not very easily, nor very soon. Self-denial is the first lesson in Christ's school: to have no wit of our own further than Christ's wisdom; to have no will of our own further than his commandment guides us; and he that hath learned self-denial, he is in a great way to learn this blessed lesson of contentment in any condition whatsoever. So that every Christian hath some degree of that, as he can deny himself. But there are many things to be learned before we can come to carry ourselves wisely in any condition.

For besides self-denial, we must learn the doctrine of the covenant of grace, that God in Christ is become a Father to us, and carries a fatherly mind to us. In what condition soever we are, he is a father still, and intends us well, and will provide for us in the hardest condition. Having took the relation of a father upon him, do you think that he will fail in the carriage of a father towards us "? He is pitiful to us, he respects us in the basest condition. He that knows God to be his father, cast him into what condition you will, knows he hath a good portion.

And then we must know the doctrine of the providence of this Father, that all shall work together for the best to those that love him, Rom. viii. 28,

want and abundance, prosperity and afflictions, whatsoever. God by his overruling power will bring all things to this blessed issue, to help forward the eternal good of his child. A man must know this, and divers the like things that are to be known, before he can learn this blessed lesson of contentment. There is a venom and a vanity in everything without grace, wherewith we are tainted; but when grace comes, it takes out the sting of all ill, and then we find a good in the worst. There is a vanity in the best things, and there is a good in the worst. Grace picks out the good out of the worst; as God turns all to good, so grace finds good in every condition. The Spirit of God sanctifies a Christian to all conditions, and sanctifies every condition to him. Now, I beseech you, think of this that I have said, which I wish without further enlargement may add to your care, and desire to be in the happy condition of Christians. What a blessed thing is it to be in the covenant of grace, to have God to be our father, to be in Christ, that let our condition outwardly he what it will be, we shall have grace to carry ourselves in it, God will go along with us by his Holy Spirit! What a blessed thing is it, in all the uncertainties of the world, to have a certain rule to go by, as a Christian hath, which carries him along in all the uncertainties in this world! None but a Christian hath this. 'I have learned,' saith Paul. When did he learn it? Not before he was a Christian. This I could desire to press, but that I have other things to speak of, to make us in love with religion, with the state of Christians, that is thus above all conditions whatsoever, and can rule all other conditions. A Christian is not at the mercy of the world; his contentment is not a dependent contentment. You may cast him into prison, you may impoverish him, you may labour to debase and disgrace him; but can you take away his comfort? Can you take away his grace? Can you take away the love of God? No; God will rather increase all upon him. For the best things of a Christian are not at the mercy of the world, nor at the mercy of his several conditions. Prosperity and adversity, these are out of him. He hath a state depending upon the good will and pleasure of his Father, that loves him better than he loves himself, and out of love will work good out of the worst condition that can befall him. So I hasten to that which follows.

4. Having spoken in particular, then he comes to the general, wherein he wraps up all: 'I can do all things, but in Christ that strengthens me.' Here is,

1. First of all, The blessed apostle's ability, 'I can do all things.'

2. And then here is, secondly, the spring of his ability, whence he hath it: 'I can do all things, but in Christ that strengthens me.'

In the apostle's ability you have,

1. His strength itself. 2. The enlargement of it.

'I am able.' And what to do? A few things? No; 'all things.' The point of doctrine offered is this, that a Christian man is an able man. Whosoever hath the Spirit of Christ is an able man, and his ability is a large ability; he is able to do all things. Take doing in a transcendent sense, not only to do, but take it to resist ill, to resist temptation, to suffer affliction, to enjoy prosperity, to break off sinful courses, and to take a new course, to practise all duties; for so the apostle means 'I can do,' that is, I can carry myself in all conditions, I can express all graces, I can resist all temptations, I can suffer all afflictions, I can do all this. What is the reason a Christian is so able?

1. Because, first of all, he hath a stronger and abler spirit than his own. The Spirit of God is a spirit of strength, 2 Tim. i. 8. It is the Spirit of power, which is the soul of his soul, and the life of his life. Now the strength of a man is in his spirit. The stronger spirit makes the abler man, and the Spirit of God being the strongest of spirits, indeed the strength of spirits, it makes a Christian in whom it dwells the ablest man.

2. And then again, A Christian is a new creature; therefore he is furnished with abilities fit for the new creature. When Adam was created he was endued with all graces fit for an entire state. As when God made heaven he made stars to beautify heaven; when he made the earth, he made trees and flowers; so, when he made man, he furnished him with graces, and fitted him for that estate. Now after the fall, when God brings a man in Christ to be a new creature, he hath abilities to furnish him for that new condition.

3. And then again, Every particular grace of the new creature is a grace of strength. As the Spirit is a strong Spirit, so the spirit of love is as strong as death, it hath a 'constraining power,' 2 Cor. v. 14. The Spirit of God is so strong in his children, that are truly his, that it makes them even with willingness to lay down their lives, that is dearest to them in this world. Here is a sweet kind of tyranny in the affection of love, that will carry a man through thick and thin, through all, and that with pleasure, willingly and comfortably too; as the apostles were glad to suffer anything for Christ's sake, their hearts were so enlarged with a spirit of love. The spirit of faith it is a strong and mighty spirit, an able spirit. It conquers God himself, as Jacob wrestled with the wrestlings of God, and by the strength of God overcame God, Hosea xii. 3, 4. And the woman of Canaan overcame Christ by the

strength she had from Christ, Mat. xv. 28. In the sense of God's displeasure it will believe God's favour in Christ, and is able to break through the thickest clouds of discomfort whatsoever, and to see the loving face of God. In a base condition it can struggle with God, saying with Job, 'Though he kill me, yet will I trust in him,' Job xiii. 15. It is a strong grace. Faith prevails with almighty God. It prevails in all inferior conditions whatsoever. You see the fruit and strength of all graces is attributed to faith, Heb. xi. 33. By faith they overcame, by faith they were strong, and did this and that; insinuating that faith is not only a strong grace in itself, but it gives vigour and strength to all graces. And so we see love, 1 Cor. xiii. 4, it is not only a strong grace, but the office of other graces is attributed unto it. It suffers long, which is the office of patience. What should I speak of other graces, these radical and fundamental graces being of such force? Now every Christian in some measure hath a spirit of faith and a spirit of love, and these are very strong, to carry him through all estates and conditions; and that with such glory and lustre that every one may wonder at the condition of a Christian. Even in the worst estate he hath a spirit not of the world but above the world. This faith overcomes the world; and he that is in them, the Spirit of God, is stronger than he that is in the world, 1 John iv. 4.

To proceed to a further demonstration of a Christian man's ability, which is intimated unto us in his very name. What is the name of a Christian? 'Anointed.' The Spirit of God is compared to oil. What is the virtue of oil? It is to make nimble, for the Spirit of God makes Christians nimble; and oil it makes strong. The wrestlers were wont to be anointed beforehand with oil; so the Spirit of God makes Christians strong. The virtue of oil anointing is to be above. Jumble it together with other liquors, it is a regal liquor, it will have the pre-eminence, and be above. So grace, although it he mingled with corruption, the Spirit of grace and faith at last will appear, the Spirit of God will be above all, at length it will work itself clear. In all temptations, a Christian as a Christian is an able man. If he be answerable to his own name, if he be not an hypocrite, he hath an ability in him, he can do more than the world.

Use 1. First of all then, learn here, that religion is not a matter of word, nor stands upon words, as wood consists of trees. To speak thus and thus, it may come from parts, from memory, and wit; but religion is a matter of power, it makes a man able. It made Paul, what! To speak only? No; his learning made him able to do all things. It is a matter of practice, and there is nothing so speculative in religion but it tends to practice. Religion is an art,

not of great men, not of mighty men, but of holy men. It is an art and trade. A trade is not learned by words, but by experience; and a man hath learned a trade, not when he can talk of it, but when he can work according to his trade. So we see Paul shows his learning he speaks of before, by his ability. The point of the Trinity it is a speculative point, and it tends to practice. First, to be a foundation of our worship, that we worship one God in three persons. And then it tends to shew the unity among Christians, that God will work among Christians at length, that they shall be all one in some sort, as the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are one: which, though it be a point of high and deep speculation, yet it tends to practice. Now if the sublime and high points do, what point is there in religion but it tends to practice? And therefore let us not please ourselves that we have deep understandings, but let us shew our understandings by our practice. As the sheep shows how he thrives in his pasture by his wool and fleece, so shew how thou profitest in religion, by being enabled with the power of grace, that carries thee through all conditions, to avoid the sins and to express the graces in such conditions. So much grace as thou hast to carry thyself thus, so much ability thou hast, and so much religion.

Use 2. If a Christian be an able man, I beseech you, let it serve to try ourselves by this scantling that I have spoken of. Is Christianity a point of strength and ability? Let us try the truth of our estate then. Thou wouldst be a Christian; what canst thou do then? What sin canst thou resist? What canst thou boar? What holy duty canst thou do? How canst thou enjoy the good blessings that God sends thee, without defiling of thyself with those blessings, that thou art not proud of the riches nor of the honour thou hast? Grace manageth all conditions. Thus, if thou be a Christian, answer thy name; if not, thou art a hypocrite yet. For a Christian in some measure is able 'to do all things, through Christ that strengtheneth him.' I beseech you, let us not deceive ourselves. The best of us all may mourn for our want in this kind. Our consciences tell us that we might have done a great deal more than we have; that God would have enabled us if we had not been false-hearted, and betrayed ourselves, and been negligent in the use of the means, to have done a great deal more than we do. What a shame is it for Christians, that indeed have some truth of grace in them, that they cannot be a little abased in the world, but they are à la mort. Why, where is the power of grace? They cannot be lift up in their condition a little, but they will scant know their brother of low degree. Where is religion now? What hast thou better in thee than a worldling hath? Nay, a heathen man, out of principles of morality, would learn to conform his carriage, outwardly at the least, better than thou.

Let us learn therefore to shame ourselves when we find any murmuring and rising of corrupt nature in any condition whatsoever, and know that this becomes not a Christian. This is it which the apostle presseth so oft, that we should carry ourselves as becometh Christians. Oh, doth this become a Christian? A Christian should be able to do all things through Christ that strengtheneth him. What a shame is it for a professor of religion to be as worldly, as distracted with cares, as passionate, if he be a little touched, as a man that professeth no religion at all? Where is the power, where is the glory and credit of religion here? I beseech you, let us be ashamed, and know that our profession requireth that we should be able.

Use 3. Again, This answers the common objection of carnal men. They ward oil' all reproofs with this. Tell them of their faults, why it is my infirmity, it is my weakness. Is it so? Art thou a Christian or no? If thou be a Christian, thou labourest for strength against thy weakness; thou dost not make a plea for it. There is weakness indeed in the best; but that is the matter of their humiliation, and the object of their mortification. It is not their plea for idleness, to give themselves to sinful courses. Men therefore make a false plea of infirmities and weaknesses. There is no infirmity in a carnal man that hath not the Spirit of Christ. He is dead. There is no weakness in a dead person. In regard of civil carriages there may be weakness in such a man. He may be passionate, he may be froward, unbeseeming a man that is civil; but that is not in the rank we speak of. None can have infirmities but a Christian that hath the life of grace in him in sincerity and truth. And therefore if thou discover that thou hast not the truth of grace, never say it is thy infirmity. To shew what infirmities be, I rank them to three heads.

1. In the first rank of infirmities are the imperfection of good actions, which are either distractions and deadness in prayer and hearing; or invincible infirmities, of which as an ancient father saith well, 'Lord, deliver me from my miserable necessities'. A man may be in such a state sometimes in regard of the temper of the body, it being out of tune, that he cannot pray as he would do. 'The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak,' saith our Saviour, Mat. xxvi. 41. It was almost an invincible necessity in the apostles then. Again, we might resist, and we might be more cheerful than we are ofttimes. But sometimes there may be such distemper in the body, that may almost of necessity unfit us for the duty. This we call the infirmity of a Christian, because he is ashamed of it, and grieved for it.

2. Again, Infirmities are those indeliberate passions that carry us sometimes to actions that we should not do, being carried with a tempest of passion, when we understand not ourselves well.

3. And lastly, It is an infirmity when we are hindered from doing that which we should do, upon passion, upon surprised of some great fear and terror, that we are not so bold as we should be to stand out in a cause on the sudden, as Peter was surprised with a spirit of fear that he should lose his life, Mat. xxvi. 70. It was no presumption in him, it was an infirmity in the blessed apostle for that time. These then be the signs of infirmities: to have invincible imperfections, or distraction and deadness, accompanying our good actions; to be carried in the heat and tempest of passion to that which afterwards we are ashamed of and repent for; or to be hindered from that we should do by some prevailing passion.

But otherwise infirmities are not, when we live in them, when we make a custom of them. Customary sins are not sins of infirmity, but the sins that we fall into, that we are overtaken with, on the sudden. Only in some cases a man may live in a sin of infirmity, when the ground of the infirmity is rooted within him, and he hath not yet purged out the root. As for instance, a man by temper prone to anger may live long in that infirmity, being many times inordinately pettish and peevish, because he carries about him the root, temper of the body, and inclination that way. Now he that lives in such an infirmity repents daily, and gets ground of it; he is still hewing at the root, and at length, at the last stroke it falls, and he gets the victory over it.

Again, A sin of infirmity is not a sin that we plead for. A man is ashamed of his infirmities; he is grieved for them. Now when a man pleads for them, and makes them a shelter and cover-shade to go on in sinful courses, they are not infirmities. Therefore whosoever pleads for sins discovers a false heart; his sins are enormities, not infirmities. A Christian gets the better of infirmities. After he falls, he riseth stronger and stronger still. But when a man grows worse and worse, and is habituated in an evil course, it is not an infirmity, because he grows not out of it. Let us not deceive ourselves with this plea, to say, It is my weakness. A Christian should be ashamed to plead this; he should be able to do all things. Well, you see then this point is clear, that a Christian is an able man, he hath a strength above nature in him, notwithstanding all his infirmities. This will appear more in the second branch, in the generality, he is able to do 'all things.'

To come to that, therefore, there are many things required of a Christian. Christianity is a busy trade. If we look up to God, what a world of things are required in a Christian to carry himself as he should do! A spirit of faith, a spirit of love, a spirit of joy, and delight in him above all. And if we look to men, there are duties for a Christian to his superiors, a spirit of subjection. And duties to equals, to carry a spirit of love; and to inferiors a spirit of pity and bounty. If we look to Satan, we have many duties, to resist him and to watch against the tempter. If we look to the world, it is full of snares. There must be a great deal of spiritual watchfulness, that we be not surprised. If we look to ourselves, there are required many duties, to carry our vessels in honour, and to walk within the compass of the Holy Ghost, to preserve the peace of our consciences, to walk answerable to our worth, as being the sons of God and co-heirs with Christ. The state of a Christian is no idle condition. Sometimes a Christian is in this state, sometimes in that; and then he must have these graces, and anon use other graces; he must have a suit of all graces, fit for all conditions. Now answerable to the variety of all the duties that are required of him, he must have ability; and therefore the apostle saith, 'I can do all things through Christ.'

5. So then the point of doctrine is this, that the trial of a sincere Christian's estate is universality of obedience. Universality of carriage in all conditions is the trial of Christian sincerity. He must dispense with himself in no sin, and he must be a vessel prepared for every good work, 'a vessel of glory,' as the apostle speaks, 2 Tim. ii. 21. He must balk no service that God calls him to. What is the reason of this?

The reason is, because a Christian hath the sanctifying Spirit, and the sanctifying Spirit hath the seeds of all graces in it; so that where it is, there is the subduing of all sin in the root. And then all graces are answerable to the commandments of God in all duties, and to the avoiding of all sins. And therefore James saith pregnantly to this purpose, he that 'offends in one is guilty of all,' ii. 10.

Use 1. Let us take heed we plead not immunity and freedom from some things, and think that the good we do in some kind may excuse the bad we do in others. You have some that will take liberty in an unclean conversation, because they are bountiful and liberal; and they will take liberty to be oppressive in their callings, because they attend upon the means of salvation. Oh no! take heed of that carriage that is against the profession of religion. There must be an universal disposition to all graces and to all duties, though

they be never so contrary and cross to corrupt nature. The devil knows well where to have some men, for he sees they mind some sin, and are careless in the practice of other duties; and therefore, in the hour of temptation, the devil will surprise such men, and it will be a ground of despair if they take not heed. Put the case a man will say this, I can part with all things else, Oh, but I cannot die: I can be content to be imprisoned, but I cannot endure to be disgraced. Let a man dispense and favour himself but in one thing, and when the time comes he will be discovered to be but an hypocrite. Then Satan will work upon that, and there he will be shaken in his condition. By reason that he did not learn self-denial perfectly, he hath not grace disposing him to the practice of all Christian duties. He hath not learned to know God in covenant, to supply his wants of honour, credit, wife and children, and all that he is to part withal for Christ's sake. Now he that hath not learned this in resolution, though God do not yet call him to it, by entering into his own soul, and asking himself what he can part with, and what he can resist for Christ's sake, 'What can I endure? what can I suffer?' If his heart do not tell him, I can part with all, I will rather endure death itself, rather endure shame, or any thing, than break the peace of a good conscience, and grieve the Spirit of God. If he cannot answer his soul thus, surely I can speak little comfort to that man. For we see a Christian must be able to do all things; that is, to resist all ill, to practise all duty, to break off all sinful courses.

Quest. But some will object, May not a Christian be subject to some especial sin?

Ans. Yes, he may. God, for especial purposes sometimes, will have men of eminent graces to be subject to notable infirmities. But what, do they plead for them? No; but as by temper, or by former custom, or as they find themselves more inclined one way than another, so they gather strength especially against their especial sin. And in the beginning of conversion, there is a blow given to the reigning sin that was before; and as when Goliath was slain, and all the rest lied, 1 Sam. xvii. 51, so grace strikes at the Goliath. In conversion, there is a main stroke given unto sin. Perhaps somewhat remains still, that grace will be hewing at, and therefore grace may stand with an especial sin that a man is inclined to. But this he labours to get all strength against, as other, so strength of direction. You shall find a Christian when he is subject to any infirmity, he will speak more learnedly, and more judiciously, with greater detestation against that sin that he is most prone unto than against any other. He labours to make up the breach where the wall is

weakest. So a man may be a good man, and be subject to an infirmity, but then he gathers more strength against it.

Use 2. Well, you see then a Christian is able to do all things through Christ that strengthens him. I beseech you, let us often enter into ourselves, and make an use of trial, also of that which hath been spoken, what we can do, what we can part with, what we can resist. Let us never think ourselves to be in such an estate as is fit to be, to comfort ourselves, till we can in truth and sincerity of heart renounce all whatsoever. Yet notwithstanding, this must be understood evangelically, 'I can do all things.' What! legally, without a flaw? No; 'I can do all things' so far forth, as shall shew that I am a true Christian, and not an hypocrite; so far as shall be beautiful in the eye of others, to allure them to the embracing of religion; so far as shall make base spirits to envy to see my even carriage, and to see the power of religion; so far as shall put the world to silence for reproaching; so far as I shall enjoy assurance of the truth of grace; so far as Satan shall not get his will in every sin. Our obedience is evangelical, and not legal.

Quest. Now, what is it to do all things evangelically? To clear that point.

Am. To do all things evangelically is, first of all, for a man to know that he is in the same state of grace, and that he hath his sins pardoned, and that he is accepted in Christ to life and salvation. That is the ground of all evangelical obedience. He must know that he is in the covenant of grace; that he hath the forgiveness of sins, and a right to life everlasting in Christ. And then comes obedience answerable to that condition; that is, a desire to obey God in all things: a grief that he cannot do it so well as he would; a prayer that he might do it so; and an endeavour together with prayer that he may do so, and some strength likewise with endeavour. For a Christian, as I said before, he hath the Spirit of God, not only to sot him to an endeavour, but to give him some strength. So there is a desire, and purpose, and prayer, and grief of heart, and endeavour, and likewise some strength in evangelical obedience.

A Christian then in the gospel can do all things when he hath his sins forgiven, and is accepted in Christ, when he can endeavour to do all, and desire to do all, and in some measure practise all duties in truth. For the gospel requires truth and not perfection. That is the perfection that brings us to heaven in Christ our Saviour. We have title to heaven; in him is the ground, because forgiveness of sins is in him. Now a Christian's life is but to walk worthy of this, and to fit himself for that glorious condition that he hath

title unto by Christ, to walk sincerely before God. Sincerity is the perfection of Christians. Let not Satan therefore abuse us. We do all things, when we endeavour to do all things, and purpose to do all things, and are grieved when we cannot do better. For mark, this goes with evangelical obedience always. God pardons that which is ill, for he is a Father. He hath bound himself to pardon, 'I will pity you as a father pitieth his child,' Ps. ciii. 18. From the very relation he hath took upon him, we may be assured he will pity and pardon us, and then he will accept of that which is good, because it is the work of his own Spirit, and will reward it. This in the covenant of grace he will do. A Christian can do all then; and wherein he fails, God will pardon him. What is good, God will accept and reward; and what is sick and weak in him, God wall heal, till he have made him up in Christ.

Thus we see in what sense this is to be understood, a Christian can do all things through Christ. For as it is said of gold, the best gold you have hath allowance of such grains, so take the best Christian, you must have some allowance. Some imperfection cleaves to him. He cannot do all perfectly. For then what need the covenant of grace? He can do all things so as he flies to the mercy of God in Christ for life everlasting. He can do all things required of a Christian in the covenant of grace in regard of sincerity. These things must be well and soundly understood, and then we can take no offence at the doctrine.

Quest. What is the cause that a Christian fails then when he doth fail?

Ans. 1. A Christian fails, when he doth not understand the promises of the new covenant of grace, that God hath given not only promises of the pardon of sin, but of all kind of graces, a promise of the Spirit in general. He will give his Spirit to those that ask it, and a promise of every other particular grace: that he will write his law in our hearts, and he will teach us to love one another, and he will put his fear into our hearts. We have not a grace but either there is a promise of it generally, or specially. Now when a Christian forgets this, he fails for want of understanding the privileges and promises.

Ans. 2. Again, he fails for want of wisdom to plant himself in such helps, whereby he might be able to do all things; for it is the folly sometimes of Christians to be rash in venturing upon occasions; and then he hath no more strength than Samson had when he adventured. He loseth his strength when he ventureth rashly. But if a Christian be wise to keep out of temptation, and to keep himself in good company and acquaintance, using

holy means and helps to godliness, wherein the Spirit works, a wise Christian may perform all.

Ans. 3. Again, for want of resolution. A Christian goes not out always with his spiritual armour, as he should. He goes not out with a purpose to please God in all things, and to avoid all sins; but his armour is loose about him. If a Christian would resolve, in the power of God, to break through all difficulties, and to do all duties, God would second him.

'Arise, and be doing, and the Lord will be with thee,' 1 Chron. xxii. 16. Let a Christian go on constantly in a good way, and he shall find experience of God's helping of him. Without manly resolutions, a Christian fails.

Quest. What is the reason that a Christian many times stands in strong and great duties, and is foiled in little duties?

Ans. Because he is watchful in the one, and careless in the other. Indeed, it is want of will. If we would have strength, and would carry ourselves manfully, we might have grace to carry ourselves even to the glory of our profession and to the credit of it. But we willingly favour corruption, and are not willing to put it out of ourselves to the utmost; whereupon we want much comfort that Christians should enjoy; and hereupon come many breaches in our life. In a word, if a Christian were careful, there is no duty, but he might perform it in some measure. He may go wondrous high upwards, always with this exception, that he never look to be justified by it. For God hath not established the covenant so. That is done by Christ. Again, if he be careless, he may sink wondrous low. There is no sin but the sin against the Holy Ghost, but he may fall into it in some manner.

I hasten to the last point. 'I can do all things,' but how? with what strength? 'Through Christ that strengthened me.'

This is to salve up an objection which might be made against the blessed apostle, 'I can do all things.' Here is a proud word. Oh no; 'it is in Christ that strengthens me.' St Paul was wondrous cautious and careful to avoid spiritual pride, or the least touch of it, as it is 1 Cor. xv. 10. 'Not I,' saith he. He checks himself presently: 'I laboured more than they all; not I, but grace within me.' Of all other sins, take heed of spiritual pride, check it presently. 'I can do all.' Oh but, lest proud thoughts should arise, 'it is in Christ that strengthened me.' My strength is out of myself. As the heads of those rivers, that ran through paradise, and that watered the city of God, they were out of

paradise, so the head and spring of those streams that water the church of God, and particular Christians, they are out of themselves, they are in Christ. It is otherwise with us than it was in the 'first Adam.' He had strength, and had no promise to stand. He had power to stand, if he would. But a Christian's strength is out of himself, in the 'second Adam,' Christ. And it is well that it is in the keeping of so strong a Saviour, for we should forfeit it as Adam did, if it were in our own hands. It is derived to us, as much as he thinks good; but the spring is in him. And we have not only a will, but the promise and ability to do good; we do all through Christ.

G. So the point of doctrine is this, that the original of a Christian's strength is in Christ. God is the original of all strength. But God himself hath no intercourse of the new covenant with man out of the second person. All our comfort, and all our grace, it comes through Christ, who having taken our nature upon him, and having satisfied God, is fit to derive all grace and comfort to us. For he is near us, he is of our nature, and God in him is well pleased so as we may now go boldly to Christ; we are bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. God himself out of Christ is 'a consuming fire.' Now, in Christ God favours man; he is gracious and lovely to us, and we to him; because Christ his beloved Son hath took our nature upon him, and now in our nature he is in heaven. So Christ the mediator is the fountain of all strength; he is the spiritual Joseph that had laid up store for all Egypt, and all that came. He is the high steward of his church, the second in the kingdom of heaven; he is the Joseph, he dispenseth all riches and treasures; all are in him for the church's sake. In him we do all things. As we can do all things for him as a mediator that died for us and procured favour for us, so we can do all things in him as an head to whom we are united. For there must be union before there can be communion. As in marriage there must be a uniting before there be a communion of estates and conditions, so before we can do anything for Christ we must be in Christ. We have all as through Christ, as in Christ. Thence comes communion with Christ's Spirit. So then it is Christ by his Spirit, for he doth all by his Spirit: 'The Lord is that Spirit,' 2 Cor. iii. 17. Christ doth all in the church by his Spirit. Now, the Spirit is the union of Christ, he strengthens all; all our strength is by Christ's Spirit. Now, this Spirit of God first sanctifies Christ, the human nature of Christ, before he sanctifieth us. We have all grace and power and strength at the second hand. It comes not from Christ as God immediately. And grace comes not from the Holy Ghost immediately to us; but the Holy Ghost first sanctifies Christ his human nature and then he sanctifies us, and we out of Christ's fulness receive grace for grace. The same Spirit that sanctified his nature in

the womb of the virgin, and that sanctified his holy nature that now he hath in heaven with him, the same Spirit is sent from him to sanctify every member of the church. All is in the head, John i. 16. As first the ointment was poured on Aaron's head, and from thence it ran down to the skirts of his garments, Ps. cxxxiii. 2, so all grace is poured upon the head of Christ first, and then from him upon the skirts, even upon the meanest Christian, as answerable to their portion; and to those things that God means to call them to, they have grace to carry them. You see then how to conceive of this, how we have all in Christ, that is, by the Spirit of Christ, and how it comes by the Spirit.

Use 1. First of all, then, you see here how these two agree: a Christian, when he is a Christian, hath freedom of will and power. He hath power and free will. As far as he is freed by the Spirit of Christ, so far he is free. For, 2 Cor. iii. 17, 'where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.' So, John viii. 36, Christ says, 'If the Son shall make you free, then you shall be free indeed.' 'He can do all things,' therefore he is free. But it is in Christ; therefore his freedom is from him. We speak, but it is Christ's Spirit that openeth our mouth. We believe, but it is Christ by his Spirit that opens our hearts to believe. We are mighty, but it is in God. We are able to do great matters, but it is in Christ that strengtheneth us. We are strong, but it is in the Lord; as it is written, 'Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might,' Eph. vi. 10. The understanding is ours, the affections are ours, the will is ours; but the sanctifying of all this, and the carriage of all these supernaturally above themselves, to do them spiritually, that is not ours, but it is Christ's. So we see what is ours, and what is not ours. We are able to do; but the strength, and the grace, and ability is from Christ. A wind instrument sounds, but the man makes it sound by his breath. We are like wind instruments. Indeed, we sound, but no further than we are blown upon; and we yield music, but no further than we are touched by the Spirit of God. We are light, but as the air is, as it is enlightened by the sun; and therefore we must understand these points, that God may have glory, and that we may know what is ours.

And then again we see here, that we have in Christ not only a general ability, that we are able, but we have the very act itself, the deed itself. He strengtheneth us. There is a spiritual life and a spiritual power and will, and then the act and deed itself. Now, we have not only from Christ the life of grace at the first, and then a spiritual power answerable to that again, whereby our powers are renewed, so as we are able to do something in our will, but we have the deed itself. The doing is from Christ; he strengtheneth

us for the present. Now, you have some that teach loosely this point, that we have general universal grace, whereby we are enabled, if we will, to believe, and to do this thing, if we will. But I say that is not all; but we have the will and the deed itself from Christ by his Spirit, and in every holy action Christ helps us to do these things in very deed.

First, He moves the soul to the action, and applies the soul to the thing. By the Spirit he doth this. For though we have power, we could not exercise it but by the Spirit, in this or that particular act.

Second, Again, he works a preserving of the grace in that act. God preserves his own work against temptation, and against impediments; for there is no act but it is opposed. The devil is in every good work, either at the beginning to hinder it, or at the end to defile it, one way or other. Now, God preserves his own work by his Spirit. First, He moves us to do, and then he preserves us in doing, and arms us against the impediments of good works. Then he determines the good work, and limits it, how far we shall do well, thus far, and thus far; the degrees come from Christ. For sometimes he doth it by his glorious power, as Paul saith, Eph. i. 19. Sometimes we are strengthened to do more, and sometimes less, as he will. Not only the act itself, and the application of the soul, and the preserving of grace in every act, we sink else, but the degree that we do sometimes better, it comes from Christ now strengthening of us more, and now loss, as he sees good.

Know, by the way, that he is a voluntary head. Though he be an head of influence that flows into every member, yet he is a voluntary head, according to his own good pleasure, and the exigent of his members.

Sometimes we have need of more grace, and then it flows into us from him accordingly. Sometimes we have need to know our weakness, and then he leaves us to ourselves, that we may know that without him we cannot stand; that we may know the necessity of his guidance to heaven, in the sense of our imperfections; that we might see our weakness and corruptions, that we had thought we had not had in us: as Moses was tempted to murmur, a meek man, Num. xi. 21, seq., and David to cruelty, a mild man, 2 Sam. xi. 15, that thought they had not had those corruptions in them. God leaves Christians sometimes to themselves, that they may know that they are not strong by their own spirit. So the degrees are from Christ, sometimes more and sometimes less. Sometimes we are in desertion, that we may know the manner of Christ's governing us till we come to heaven.

Use 1. Well, I beseech you, let us know that out of Christ there is no grace. A civil man doth nothing in religion well. There cannot be a beam without the sun; there cannot be a river without a spring; there cannot be a good work without the spring of good works, Christ. Therefore, we should fetch alt from him, since there is no grace out of him at all.

Use 2. Again, let us be sure, in all particular actions, to be poor in spirit. When we have any temptation to resist, any trouble to bear, or any duty to do, let us empty ourselves. No grace is stronger than humility. No man is weaker than a proud man. For a proud man rests on nothing, and an humble man that empties himself, he stands upon the Dock. We should therefore make use of the strength of Christ, that hath not only abundance for himself, but an abundance for us, an overflowing for every Christian for his good. Let us empty ourselves, as the prophet saith to the widow, Bring 'empty vessels' now, and we shall have oil enough, 2 Kings iv. 3. There is enough in Christ; but first we must empty ourselves by humility, and then there is fulness in him. 'Of his fulness we receive grace for grace,' John i. 10. His fulness is like the fulness of the clouds that is ready to drop, and like the fulness of breasts, that are ready to yield what they have. He is willing. It is our fault, and baseness, and pride, that hinders us. Let us as much as we can empty ourselves of ourselves, and stir up the spirit of faith. Go to Christ. So much faith as we carry, so much grace we bring from him. If we do but touch him by faith, the issue of our corruptions will be dried up in some measure, and we shall have a spring of graces in us answerable to the graces in him, Mat. ix. 20.

I beseech you, therefore, let us labour for these two graces, especially since all is out of us in the covenant of grace; not only salvation is out of us, but grace that brings us to heaven is out of us, to empty ourselves in humility, and by faith to go to Christ. The one grace makes us go out of ourselves, the other carries us to Christ and to the promises of Christ. Learn to do this in every action, for we may be foiled in every particular action for want of humility and faith. We must not trust to any grace or any ability in us, but trust to our spring, go to Christ when we have anything to do.

Quest. What is the reason that Christians fail?

Ans. They think, I had grace yesterday, and before, and hereupon they go not for supply of new strength to Christ. Know that in every act, in every temptation, in every particular suffering, we need a particular new strength, and a greater strength than we had before, if the temptation be greater, if the

work be greater. As it is with a porter, he cannot carry a new burden that is heavier than he did before, without a new strength, without more strength than he had before, so a Christian cannot bear a new affliction without new strength, without more strength. Therefore consider what the nature of the business is that we are to do, and the strength of the temptation that we are to encounter with, and answerably go to Christ for a measure greater than we had before. He never upbraids us nor casts us in the teeth, as James saith, chap. i. 5. There is an art, a shill of fetching strength from Christ to do all things, if we would learn it. As there is a skill to be a Christian, it is a trade, so there is a skill to fetch the strength that he hath from his spring, from Christ. Now, that skill in a word is this:

1. First, To know our own want, and to know the necessity of grace, and the excellency of the state of holiness, that of all conditions it is the best, and of all conditions a sinful estate is the worst. This will make us go out of ourselves to Christ. Well, how shall we fetch strength from Christ then?

2. Consider wherefore Christ hath the treasures of all in him, and go to him for particular graces we want whatsoever. When we know the excellency and necessity of it before, then make use of-the virtue of his death and resurrection. Thus, are we tempted to any sin? Make use of the death of Christ, of his great love in giving himself, and then of the holiness of God in giving Christ to die for sin, he hates sin so; and then,

3. Consider of the fruit of his death that was to free and deliver us from sin. When we think of these things, Hid God and Christ so love me? Is it the holiness of God, and the holiness of Christ, that God became man to die for me, and shall I go and trifle, and be tempted to sin, and offend so holy and so gracious a God, that hates sin so infinitely?

These be strong reasons fetched from Christ. We have from him both the reasons why we should do good and why we should not do evil, and we have the strength. There are two things requisite for a man to do a thing as a man. The reason why he should do it, and strength to perform it, both these are from Christ.

As from ill we are stopped by the consideration of Christ's death, so when we are moved to grace, consider the virtue of Christ's resurrection. Why is Christ now in heaven in our nature? Is it not to fill his church with his Spirit? Why doth he make intercession in heaven? Is it not that we should not be discouraged notwithstanding our daily infirmities? Shall we not make

use of it? He is glorious for us, not for himself, but for his mystical body. As he hath made his natural body glorious, so he will make his mystical body glorious by little and little. He being, therefore, in heaven making intercession, go to him in the want of grace. And so for infirmities. The Spirit of God raised him at the lowest, and shall not the Spirit of God raise me from this and that. Yes, the Spirit of God will raise me from the baseness and misery of sin to be better and better. The same Spirit will enable me that raised his body. And so fetch virtue and strength from Christ, make use of Christ for every turn. Oh that we could learn these things! Then we should be able to go through all conditions: we should be able to live, able to die. I beseech you, therefore, consider what hath been spoken. Let us study Christ every day more and more, not for redemption and reconciliation only, though that in the first place, but study Christ to be all in all to us, to be our sanctification to fit us for heaven. Study the promises in Christ, lose no privilege. God would not have loft them in his word but for our good. Take heed of base despair; Oh, I shall never overcome this sin and that. What! shut the people out of Canaan? Base despair lost them earthly Canaan, Numb, xiv. 22, seq. So take heed it shut not yon out of heavenly Canaan. I shall not be able to get the victory over sin, and I shall not be able to suffer. No. Why are the promises? and why is Christ in heaven? Shall we, by despair and by base infidelity, lose Christ, and the promises, and all that is put into our hands, and betray our souls basely to Satan? I beseech you, consider of the necessity of these things. We know not what times God may call us to ere long. Despair not beforehand. Let fall what will, get into Christ, to be in him in an happy and eternal condition. We shall have strength from him to carry ourselves in all estates. Come what will, he will stand by us; he will not fail us nor forsake us. When did Paul speak these glorious words? In prison. 41 can do all things through Christ,' &c. Did the Spirit of God leave Paul in prison? Was it not better for Paul to have grace than to be freed from the thing? Wicked men may be freed from trouble, only a Christian hath grace to carry himself well in trouble. Come what will, if we be in Christ, either we shall be freed from troubles, or we shall have grace to bear them. Either we shall have that we want, or we shall have contentment without it. Is it not better to have grace without the thing? Is it not better to have a glorious Spirit of glory resting on us? Did not the Spirit of glory rest on Paul? Could not God have freed Paul from prison? Yes. But where had been then the demonstration of a contented spirit, of an heavenly mind? Where had been this example of a Christian bearing the cross comfortably? Paul lost nothing. Here you see how many stars shine in the night of his affliction, what a lustre he had in the dark state of imprisonment. Shall we then be afraid of any condition? No. Get the

Spirit of God; get understanding of Christ, and the promises and privileges by him, and then let God cast us into what condition he will, we shall be safe and well.

The Power of Christ's Resurrection

If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. — Col. III. 1.

This verse hath dependence on the second chapter, and the twelfth and thirteenth verses of that chapter, where the apostle tells the Colossians that 'they were risen with Christ from the dead by faith, and quickened by his Spirit;' and thereupon follows this inference: 'If therefore ye be risen with Christ,' shew it by seeking after those things which are in heaven, and are heavenly.

The apostle hath much ado to root out those dangerous conceits, which false teachers had settled in the hearts of the Colossians, touching some legal ceremonies, as 'touch not, taste not, handle not.' These dead things he tells them have no more use now; and therefore, 'if you be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above.' These ceremonies were indeed appointed by God at the first, but now they are ended and brought to their grave; and therefore no more to be revived, because they were not only dead, but deadly.

Now the apostle finding their hearts tainted with this false doctrine, having first sought to purge it out of their hearts, he then begins to season them with heavenly doctrine; and he begins with general instructions, and so proceeds to particular callings, as of husbands and wives, and children and servants. Now because the well managing of the particular duties of these particular callings depends on a good general; therefore he begins first to season their hearts with grace, knowing that it is so much the easier to be good in their particular callings, when they are first good in their general. But if not good in general, then never good in the particular. If a good man, then a good husband, a good father, a good master, fit for any good service; but if not a good man, then good for nothing. So a woman, if a good woman, then a good wife, or good in any calling. So for children and servants, if good in the general, then good in every particular.

These words contain a ground, and an inference upon the ground: 'If you be risen with Christ.' There is the ground. 'Then seek the things that are above.' There is the inference. From the ground observe two things: first, that Christ is risen himself; secondly, that we shall rise.

Doct. 1. For the first, It is an article of our faith; and the Holy Ghost hath taken a great deal of pains to prove it. It is the confidence of Christians. It is the main freehold that we have, for we hold all by the resurrection of Christ. Therefore we had sixteen apparitions of Christ to make it firm and evident. It was impossible that he should be held of the bonds of death, Acts ii. 24. Impossible, first, as he was invested with these three offices, a king, a priest, and a prophet. Impossible, first, as he was a king; for how then could he have triumphed over his enemies? Secondly, impossible as he was a priest; for if he had not risen, how could he have made daily intercession for his people? Thirdly, impossible as he was a prophet; for else how could he have instructed his people? Use. Now as Christ rose the third day — manifesting thereby that he was dead — to his greater glory, so is it with his members. Never nearer help than when they are at the worst. Then that it may appear to be God's work, he will raise them apparently, f that he may be glorified. So likewise when we are in any distress in the world, void of the help of man, then comes God in and raiseth us up, whether in our credit, estate, &c., as he will do our bodies at the last day. Let us therefore have patience for a while.

Doct. 2. Secondly, As Christ is risen, so shall we rise. He is the meritorious cause of our resurrection, he hath deserved that we should rise; he is the worker of it. By that same power whereby he rose again, by the same will he raise us up at the last day. He is every way the cause; and which is something more, we are risen with him. He was a public person. Upon the cross he stood in the place of all the world, and all their sins committed, or foreseen to be committed, lay upon him. 'He bare the iniquity of us all,' Isa. liii. 6; and then he freed himself, and so us, by his resurrection. First, freeing himself of his suretyship; and we are freed in him; and he rising, we also rise with him. This resurrection is twofold, spiritual and corporal: spiritual, when we take life from Christ; and being quickened by him, then we begin to rise with him when we believe that Christ is dead for our sins. Christ is then crucified to thee, when thou beginnest to believe in him.

Use 1. And every true Christian may draw from hence water of life to comfort him in all distresses; for Christ hath conquered all our spiritual enemies; and his resurrection is an evidence of his conquest. For if he had not conquered he could not have risen; and therefore when he rose again he bade his disciples not to fear, Mat. xxviii. 10. Fear not death, for I have overcome death; and witnessed the same by my resurrection. Fear not sin, for I have satisfied for it. Fear not the devil: I by my resurrection have bruised his head; nor the world, for I have overcome it. He hath trode upon

the necks of all our spiritual enemies, and conquered them all. Fear not, for if once you be risen with Christ, you are begotten to a lively hope. Where spiritual resurrection is, there is hope of life, as the apostle doth soundly reason, 1 Peter i. 3. A ground of precious comfort to every true Christian.

Use 2. Now in that we are raised by the same power to a spiritual life, whereby Christ rose from the grave, it teacheth us how to conceive of the work of the new birth, of the image of God, of the new creature. The work of grace in a Christian is not a slight work, a word and away, as many think; but it is a powerful work, as appears in that there are more hindrances to keep a man dead in sin from rising out of it, than there was to keep Christ from rising out of the grave. Yet in his resurrection did the power of God mightily appear, as Eph. i. 19, 20. As Christ was killed and had a stone rolled on his tomb, so he that is dead in sin hath the stone of custom rolled upon him, which is as great a work of God's power to remove as it was to raise Christ. Wherefore let those that find a change in their hearts break forth into hearty thanksgiving unto God for his inestimable favour, especially for this powerful work, more powerful than the making of the whole world, because there are many oppositions.

Use 3. Consider this aright, partly for thanksgiving, if you have been wrought upon, and partly for prayer if you are not, seeking unto God in the use of the means, who only is able to work this change in you.

To cut off many things, we shall now speak of the inference: 'If you be risen,' and risen 'with Christ' by his power, 'then seek those things which are above.' The reason depends thus. They that are risen have a new life, for every resurrection notes a new life; if spiritual, then a spiritual life; if bodily, then a glorious life, Rom. vi. 5, seq. Life is suitable to our resurrection. You are risen with Christ from the death of sin. Therefore manifest your resurrection by actions proportionable and suitable to your estate. From hence we note this doctrine,

Doct. 3. That every life and state requireth answerable actions. 'If you be risen with Christ,' and so have a spiritual life as you profess yourselves, then carry yourselves answerably, and 'seek those things that are above,' that may maintain that life of yours. This is the apostle's reasoning in this place. This is so in nature. It is so in corrupt nature. It is so in grace, and shall be so in glory.

For the first, Those creatures that are in the water, they delight in it, because it is their proper element, and they cannot live out of it; secondly, it is so in corrupt nature. He that is covetous, the very conceit that he hath of his riches doth as it were feed him; and he cannot live without them. For he that lives a carnal, brutish life, he dieth if he be taken from it. He is like a fish upon dry ground. Tanquani piscis in arido. Take him out of his element and he cannot live. It is so in grace, and shall be be in glory. When the body is risen unto glory, there is a forsaking of all communion with sinful men here, and we have communion with God and Christ. Christ shall be all in all unto us. Col. iii. 11. Then that which all creatures supply to us here, Christ supplieth to us there. Then our songs are holy and our actions holy, fitting such a glorious estate. Now heaven is begun here, or else never begun. Grace is therefore called heaven, because heaven is begun here. Glory must begin in grace.

Use 1. So then a Christian that is risen with Christ, must have nothing to do with carnal men, no further than he is thrust upon them, or that he may convert them. They must not accompany with men of a contrary spirit; seeking by all means to express the love of piety. Thus should the life of a Christian be suitable to his state that he is in and called unto.

Use 2. If we should try all by this rule, how few then would he found to he risen with Christ. How few delight in heavenly company, in heavenly actions! as to praise God, or to commune or partake with God in prayer. This is a death to most men to have such company, or to exercise themselves in such actions.

Explan. 1. The apostle saith here, 'we must seek those things which are above with Christ.' Seeking implieth, first, want; for a man will never seek for that which he hath; secondly, it implieth a valuation and esteem of the excellency of the thing that is sought for; thirdly, it implieth hope to get it, else none would seek it, but leave it as a thing desperate; fourthly, it doth imply means and me of means to attain to that we want, esteem of, and hope to attain; lastly, he that wants a thing which he doth highly esteem and hopes to attain in the use of the means, will by all means avoid all contraries that may hinder him from, attaining thereunto.

2. Now consider what this thing is that we must seek for. Briefly this is here meant, viz., Christ Jesus the joy of our hearts, in whom are hid all the treasures of knowledge and wisdom. Col. ii. 3, together with all those things which are above, or whatsoever tends thereunto. And indeed all the

excellency which we have or can hope for, is from above. Our full happiness and glorious inheritance is kept for us in the heavens. All our privileges are from above. Our kingdom is in heaven; qualification for this happy estate is from above. Our holiness and heavenly-mindedness is from above, fulness of grace is from above, and all graces to lead us to that perfection are from above. Power to enable us to any holy duty is from above; yea, the means, as the ordinances, the word and the sacraments, are from above. Here then is the sense of the words, seek for a nearer communion with Christ, for a further assurance of heaven, for a further qualification for heaven, that you may be more and more in heaven while you are here, by enjoying through faith your heavenly privileges, prerogatives, and excellencies. Seek for further actions of holiness; for fulness of grace; for grace to bring you to the fruition of all from above. Therefore attend upon the word of God, upon the sacraments, upon holy conference, where Christ will be present in a special manner; and by holy actions seek for glory in the use of the means. Reach not for things above your reach. That is arrogance. But seek for heavenly things, such as before named.

We see from hence this further to be observed:

Doct. 4. That heavenly duties have their spring from the articles and grounds of religion. 'Seek those things which are above.' Why? Because you are risen with Christ.

The ground of our faith is the cause of holy duties. Whosoever is corrupt in faith, is corrupt in obedience in that degree. Evil opinions breed an evil life, and a sound understanding breeds an holy life.

Use. Understand therefore the main grounds of religion; and labour to digest them, to see the truth of them; and labour with God by prayer that he would write them in your hearts by his Holy Spirit.

Again, in that the apostle willeth them to seek heavenly graces: and that because they are risen with Christ, note further this inference.

Doct. 5. That as a Christian ought to he heavenly-minded, to seek heavenly graces, so he must do it for this reason, viz., because he is in an estate fitting for it.

Use. Therefore let none say, he cannot for outward troubles or business, unless thou wilt deny thyself to be a Christian at the same time. He that will

be a Christian must pretend no impossibilities herein. Art thou risen with Christ? Then thou hast power to seek those things that are above, to be heavenly minded. A Christian or no Christian! God doth not as Pharaoh, bid us do our work, and we must gather straw ourselves; but he bids us do, and quickens us by his Spirit, and enables us to do. He fits us for such actions; he gives us power to do them.

Doct. 6. Again, So far as a Christian is raised by Christ, so far he cannot but seek those things that are above. We need not teach a bird to fly, for it will learn it of itself; it is natural to her. So a Christian cannot but do the things answerable to his nature. He is of a new nature, and therefore cannot but be heavenly minded. He cannot profane the Lord's day; he cannot swear; he cannot lie; he cannot blaspheme; he cannot delight in carnal courses. He cannot do these things, so far as he is a Christian. In the hour of temptation he is not himself. It is in this sense that the apostle saith, 'He that is born of God sinneth not,' 1 John iii. 9. So far as he is born again he cannot sin; he can do no evil.

Again, as a Christian may do it, and ought to do it, and cannot but do it; —

Doct. 7. So I add further, he glories in it. To be heavenly-minded, and exercised in spiritual duties, is his happiness and his joy. He is never so well, never so much himself, as when he is most possessed with heavenly-mindedness, and most frequent or exercised in spiritual duties. So far forth as he is a Christian, and enlarged with the Spirit of Christ, so far forth he glories in holy actions, in heavenly-mindedness.

Use. Is this in all true Christians? What then may we think of the most part in the world, that profess religion but from the teeth outward? They are not risen with Christ, as the ambitious man, the covetous man, the voluptuous man. They savour not the things that are above. They have no new nature; for if they had, it would lead them higher than these things. Those that live in defilements of the flesh, shew that they have no new natures; for if they had, they should get strength against them, at least they would have a continual conflict and wrestling in themselves to overcome them.

For trial of thy estate, see what power is there of the Spirit of God in thee to make thee heavenly-minded: to joy in things that are above, more than in all the world besides. If thou find this power in thee, then thou art a

Christian indeed. Thou canst then speak by experience what is the work of the Spirit; and thou knowest well what is the virtue of the resurrection of Christ. Then thou canst say with St Paul that thou art still striving to find the virtue of Christ more and more in thee, to make thee more fully assured of thy part in Christ, and to find the power of his Spirit subduing corruption in thee more and more, Phil. iii. 9 and 10. Let us therefore labour for this power. This is to 'seek the things that are above.' Labour to find a want of them, that we have not so much of them as we have need of. Labour then to know the excellency of them: esteeming of them to be more excellent than all other things. When all other things leave us, then they will comfort us. Labour also to see an hope to grow in them. Thou hast hope to attain unto them, because the same Spirit is promised thee that raised up Christ from the dead. Use then all sanctified means for the attaining of these spiritual good things. Use heavenly means for heavenly things. Attend upon the ordinances of God, labour with him in prayer, that he would make us such as he may delight in, fit us for that estate that he hath provided for us. Labour to increase in all holy actions; take heed of all contrary courses, of worldly-mindedness, of the pleasures of the world, that they draw not away thy heart from an earnest seeking of heavenly things as we should be. We are all seekers. We are a generation of seekers. As the psalmist saith, we are seeking while we are here; our possessing is hereafter, Ps. xxiv. 6.

Labour, therefore, to see the want of heavenly graces, and to esteem of them aright; and to see hope to attain them, and hope to increase them; and use the means, and avoid all contrary courses. So shall you find the virtue of Christ's resurrection raising you up more and more to seek after heaven and heavenly things, 'those things that are above.'

The Hidden Life

For ye are dead, your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.—Col. III. 3, 4.

The dependence of these words, in a word, is this. The apostle, after he had laid the grounds of some doctrines, he doth frame the building of a holy life and conversation. It is in vain to believe well unless a man work accordingly. He that lives against his faith shall be damned, as he that believes against it. Thereupon in this chapter he comes to raise their affections to be heavenly-minded, and stirs them up to subdue whatsoever is contrary to heavenly-mindedness. And because it is a duty of great moment to be heavenly-minded, and to subdue base affections, he inserts weighty reasons between. 'If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above.' And among other reasons there is this, 'Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.' And thereupon he forceth seeking of the things that are above, and the mortifying of earthly members. For the duties of Christianity are to be applied two ways; to be heavenly affected, and to subdue that which is contrary; to be heavenly-minded, and to mortify our earthly members. Now how shall we do both? 'For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God,' Ac.

You see the first proposition, 'Ye are dead.' With whom? 'With Christ, in God.'

A Christian is dead many ways. He is dead to the law, to the moral late. He looks not to have comfort and salvation by it, by the law; he is dead to the law, and so flies to Christ.

A Christian is dead also to the ceremonial law. Now, in the glorious lustre of the gospel, what have we to do with those poor elements that wore for children? A ceremonious disposition is opposite to the glory and lustre of the gospel, as the apostle speaks in the former chapter.

He is dead likewise to sin. Having communion with Christ, when he died for sin, he is dead to sin. He that hath communion in the death of Christ, hath the same affection to sin that Christ had. Christ hated it infinitely

when he suffered for it; so every Christian thinks that Christ died for my sins, and by union with Christ he hath the same affection to it, he is 'dead' to it.

And because this is but an inchoation and beginning, a Christian is not perfectly dead to sin. He stands in need of afflictions, and in regard of afflictions he is dead. They must help the work of mortification. And because no affliction can sufficiently work mortification but death itself, which is the accomplishment of mortification, we are dead in respect of death itself, which is the accomplishment of all. Though we live here for a time, we are dead in regard of the sentence that is passed on us, as we say a man is dead when the sentence is passed on him. In that respect we are dead men, for our life is but a dead life. Besides the sentence that is passed upon us, death seizeth upon us in the time of our life, in sicknesses, &c. And so they prepare us to death. Thus, and many other ways, we are dead.

The second proposition is, 'Our life is hid with Christ in God.'

We are dead, and yet we have a life. A Christian is a strange person. He is both dead and alive, he is miserable and glorious. He consists of contraries. He is dead in regard of corruption and miseries, and such like, but he is alive in regard of his better part, and he grows two ways at once. It is a strange thing that a Christian doth. He grows downwards and upwards at the same time; for as he dies in sin and misery, and natural death approaching, so he lives the life of grace, and grows more and more till he end in glory.

This life is said to be a hidden life, 'It is hid with Christ in God.'

The life of a Christian, which is his glorious spiritual life, it is hid. Among other respects,

1. It is hid to the world, to worldly men, because a Christian is an unknown man to them. Because they know not the Father that begets, therefore they know not them that are begotten, as St John saith, 1 John iii. 1. They know not the advancement of a Christian: he is raised into a higher rank than they. Therefore, as a beast knows not the things of a man, no more doth a carnal man, in any excellency, know the things of the Spirit, 'for they are spiritually discerned, 1 Cor. ii. 14. Therefore it is a hidden life in the eyes of the world. A worldly man sees not this life in regard of the excellency. He passeth scorns and contempts of it, of folly and the like. A Christian, in respect of his happy life, is a stranger here, and therefore he is willing to pass through the world, and to be used as a stranger.

2. It is a hidden life likewise ofttimes, not only to worldlings, but in regard of the children of God themselves; because by reason of some infirmities that are in the best of God's children, they are apt to judge amiss, harshly and rashly one of another. Likewise by reason of those calamities that are common to all men alike. They are afflicted as others, and have sicknesses, and are contemned more than others; and by reason of this the children of God often censure those that have the beginnings of spiritual life in them. It is hid from them.

It is hid likewise from themselves, for often God's children know not themselves, in temptation, in their nonage, in the beginning of their conversion, in the time of desertion, and spiritual slumber and sleep, grace seems to be dead in them, and then they know not that they have this spiritual life. Especially if this desertion be joined with outward abasement, they call their estate into question, as in Ps. lxxiii. 2, seq., and in divers places of Scripture. God's children ofttimes, by reason of their inquisition and search, they raise clouds, whereby they conceal from their own eyes their own life. Partly through distemper of body, and partly by distemper of spirit, there are clouds raised between them and their happiness, that they cannot see their spiritual life.

I)ut especially it is hid in regard of common infirmities, wanting gifts that others have, that have not a dram of grace sometimes, that live to please men, and look altogether to the outside. They do that many times to please men better than a Christian.

Sometimes God himself hides himself out of wisdom and mercy to us, when he sees that we carry not ourselves so reverently as we should. And this reason may be sufficient of God's dispensation. God will have it so, partly for the further hardening of wicked persons, and for trial. For if all were laid open in this excellent estate of a Christian, who should try their patience? Who would not be a Christian for the comfort, and for the sense and feeling? Oh, but this is not so. A Christian hath a life, but it is a hidden life. Therefore God will try whether men will live by faith or sense, whether they will have their ways now or no, or whether they will depend upon that glorious life that God will reveal in time to come, and to exercise and strengthen faith. God will have it so that this life shall be now hid, that we may live by the promises, though we have no feeling at all; that we may persuade ourselves in the greatest desertions and extremities, yet I have a hidden life in Christ. Though I have little influence and manifestation of it in me, yet I have a

glorious life in my head; and I live now by faith till I come to live by sight. This is one reason.

We should not therefore take offence. We must not judge of Christians by outward show and appearance, as Christ saith, 'We should not judge of ourselves by outward appearance,' John vii. 21, nor of the church. The whore of Babylon hath more painting and setting out, in all glorious shows —it being an outside religion—than the true spouse of Christ, whose glory and beauty is within. Doth it follow therefore that she is the true church? Oh no; for the beauty of the wife of Christ it is a hidden beauty, 'She is glorious within,' Ps. xlv. 18. A stranger doth not meddle with the joy of the church. Christians have a name indeed, and 'a stone that none know but them that have it,' Rev. ii. 17. It is 'hidden manna.' We must not judge of the church, or of Christians, by outward appearance; we shall be deceived in that. Our life is hid with Christ, the spring of all spiritual life. The life of a Christian is a secret life. It is a peculiar life. It is a safe life. It is secret because it is hid. As I said, God's children are secret ones. They are not known to the world, nor to themselves ofttimes.

But ordinarily faith in them breaks through the cloud, and unmasks God himself; and sees God's fatherly face, though he hide himself. They have a promise to lay hold upon; and they acknowledge him to be their Father, and wrestle with him. It is a secret life, but it is not so secret, but that faith sees into it. It pierceth the veil and secs a glorious life there. Faith will see God's glorious countenance. Faith makes it a glorious life though it be secret. Therefore let us not judge ourselves nor others by appearance.

And it is also a sure life. 'It is hid with Christ in God.' Mark on what grounds it is sure.

First, it is hid in heaven. No enemy can come there. The devil comes not there since he first lost it and was cast out. It is safe in regard of the place. It is hid in heaven.

And it is safe, because it is hid in Christ, who purchased it with his blood; who hath trampled upon all opposite powers, over death, and hell itself. It is hid in heaven and in him who hath overcome all opposite power. Therefore it is a safe life.

And it is hid with Christ in God. Christ is in the bosom of God, Christ mediator. 'It is hid with Christ in God.' He is the storehouse of this life. It is

hid with him. If any can rob God, then they may rob our life from us; for it is hid with Christ in God. It is a sure life therefore.

Obj. Oh, but we may lose it, though it be sure in respect of God.

Ans. Nay, saith St Peter, 'We are begotten again to an inheritance, immortal, and reserved for us in heaven, and we are kept by the power of God to salvation,' 1 Peter i. 4. It is kept for us, and we are kept to it. God hath prepared it for us, and prepared us for it. So it is a most sure life, especially because Christ lives for ever, with whom it is. 'It is hid with Christ in God.'

It is likewise a peculiar life; only to God's people. For they only have union and communion with Christ; and therefore he saith here, 'your life is hid with Christ in God.'

It is likewise a glorious life; for it is hid with Christ, who is the glory of God; and he saith in the next verse, 'When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory.' It is a glorious life. But of that I shall speak in the next verse.

We see then that our life is hid in Christ; and what kind of life this is.

It is a secret, sure, peculiar, glorious life. Alas! we are ready to judge of ourselves by the present, and not to think it a glorious life. But he saith, it is hidden for us. 'Light is sown for the righteous,' Ps. xcvii. 11. It doth not appear for the present. A garden hath seeds sown and herbs, but in the winter there is no difference between it and a common field; but when the sun shines and appears, then the herbs appear in their lustre. So it is with a Christian. There is light and immortality and happiness sown for him. When Christ, the 'Sun of righteousness' shall appear, 'then we shall appear with him in glory,' 1 John iii. 2.

As we may say of all things below, they have a hidden life: the plants and the flowers in the winter, they live by the root; and when the sun appears, then they also appear with the sun in glory. So it is with the righteous: they have a hidden life. It is hid now in the root, in their head, in this life. When Christ the Sun of righteousness shall appear; when the spring comes; when the resurrection comes: then we shall appear with him in glory. And so I come to speak of that verse.

'When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye appear also with him in glory.'

Our life is now hid. Our happiness is boiled over. There are many things between us and our life. But shall it always be so? Oh no! 'When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we shall appear also with him in glory.' He meets with a secret objection. The parts here to be stood on are these.

1. First, Christ he is our life. He shall appear in glory as our life. This is taken for granted, it is a supposed truth, 'when Christ, who is our life, shall appear.' It is taken for granted that he shall appear in glory.

2. The next thing is, that we shall appear likewise with Christ. Christ shall appear, and we.

3. And then the consequence: how these depend upon one another. Because Christ appears in glory, therefore we, 'when Christ, who is our life, shall appear.'

The apostle cannot mention Christ, without an addition of comfort; and the Christian soul loves Christ. It sees such matter of comfort, and such righteousness in him, that it cannot think of Christ without a comfortable addition of Lord, Saviour, life, hope, glory, &c. Christ carries with him all comforts. He is food, the bread of life, the water of life, all that is good to the soul. Therefore the apostle gives this sweet addition 'Christ our life.'

How is Christ our life?

He is every way the cause of the life of grace and of glory. And not only so, the cause, but the root and spring in whom it is. We have it from Christ and in Christ. We have it in Christ as a root, and from Christ as a working cause, and by Christ as a mediator. For Christ procured life at God's hands, by his sacrifice and death. We have it in Christ as a head, from him as a cause, together with both the other persons; and through him as mediator, who by his death made way to life, appeasing the wrath of God. So we are reconciled and pardoned by the death of Christ.

Christ is not only our life so, but as the matter of our life that we feed on. When he hath wrought spiritual life in us, then the soul lives by faith in Christ still, and feeds upon him. He is our life because we feed on him. For as food nourisheth the body, so the soul, being every day set on by fresh

temptations, and afflictions, and troubles, and fresh discomforts, the soul of necessity is forced to look to Christ every day; and to feed upon Christ; to feed upon his blood afresh, which runs continually. For he is a mediator for ever; and he is in heaven to make good that he hath done by his death; and we look upon him every day and feed on him; and so he maintains the life he hath begun. Christ is our life thus.

More particularly—for memory's sake—Christ, when by faith we have union with him once—as we can have no communion without union with him—-when we are one with him once by faith, we have life from Christ, the life of reconciliation in law, opposite to our death in law and in sentence. For by nature we are all dead and damned as soon as we are born, for our own sins and the sins of our first parents. We are dead in sentence. Now by Christ there is a reversion of this sentence. Christ by his obedience and suffering hath satisfied his Father. So by our union with Christ we are alive in sentence. We are absolved in God's court of justice; for he will not punish sin twice.

And then after the life of justification, being justified by faith, we have the life of sanctification and holiness. For God out of his love, when he hath pardoned our sin, he gives his Spirit as the best fruit of his love; and we having our consciences absolved and acquitted by the Spirit of God, through the obedience of Christ, we love God. God so loveth us when he is appeased by Christ, that the bar being taken away, our sins being pardoned, and the sluice of mercy open, there is way made for another life, the life of sanctification by the Spirit. Upon pardon of our sins he gives the Spirit; and we feeling that love, have love wrought in us to him again, and that love stirs up every Christian to obedience.

In the next place, After he hath acquitted us by his all-sufficient satisfaction, being God and man, and hath given us his Spirit, there is another life, the life of comfort, which is the life of our life, in peace of conscience and joy unspeakable and glorious. This life issues from the former. For when we find our conscience appeased, that God saith to our souls he is 'their salvation,' Ps. xxxv. 3, and find a newness wrought in our nature by the Spirit of God, and some strength to obey him, then we begin to have a sweet peace, as the children of God find in themselves, and joy unspeakable and glorious.

This is the life of this life. Having union with Christ and his righteousness and Spirit, we have this peace, which is the way to glory and

the beginning of it. For besides that Christ is our life in glory afterwards, in this life he is our life. Answerable to our servile fear, as we are dead in law, we have a life in justification. As we are dead in nature, so we have a life in sanctification. We are dead in despair, and run into terrors of conscience; so we have a life in joy and peace.

But all those in this life are imperfect, because there is only an union of grace here, till we come to the union of glory in heaven; and then at the day of judgment there will be a perfect justifying of us. We shall not only be acquitted in our conscience, as we are now, but we shall be acquitted before angels and devils and men, and Christ will acknowledge us. These are they for whom I died. These are they for whom I made intercession in heaven. We shall be acquitted there, and there we shall be acknowledged.

And then the life of sanctification, that is now in part, shall then be perfect, and likewise the peace that now 'passeth understanding' shall then be full; and our joy shall be full by Christ who is our life.

So then we see we have in Christ, 'the second Adam,' whatsoever we lost in the first root. Whence did we draw sin and misery? By union with the first Adam we have damnation, we have the wrath of God, we have corruption opposite to sanctification, we have terrors and horror of conscience. By the second Adam, and union with him, we have a spring of life and peace, and all that we lost in Adam; and more than all we lost, he being God-man. The sin of the first Adam was the sin of a man; the obedience of the second Adam was the obedience of God-man, which raiseth us to life everlasting, Rom. v. 16, seq. So that there is more comfort in the life we have by Christ than there is discomfort in our death by Adam.

We see then hence that in all our deadness and dulness and want of grace, there is a spring in our nature. God hath given Christ, God-man, that there should be a treasure in him for all the church, that we may fetch supply out of our nature. He is fit to be our life, for our nature in him is united to the Godhead; therefore Christ is a fit fountain to derive grace to believers, because man's nature in him is advanced; by being united to the second person he is God-man, able to derive all grace and comfort and righteousness whatsoever. Shall the first Adam derive unrighteousness, discomfort, and misery, that was a man? and shall not Christ, God-man, derive righteousness and comfort and joy and peace, and whatsoever is good? Undoubtedly he shall. Therefore in all want of grace, in all temptations and assaults, let us go to the fountain, to the fulness of grace, to the fulness

of God's love in Christ. Christ, God-man, is our life. As when we are cold we come to the fire, so when we are dull-hearted let us come to this quickening Spirit.

And to this end let us be stirred up to use those means wherein Christ will be effectual, whereby, as by veins, the blood of this spiritual life is conveyed, as the word and sacraments, the communion of saints and all sanctified means, whereby the life of grace and comfort may be conveyed to us. Let us never be out of such ways and courses as whereby Christ derives this life of grace; and let us take heed of those that are contrary.

Quest. But how shall I know, saith a wreak soul,—that finds little comfort and peace, and little sanctification; and is besieged with troubles and is doubtful, and knows not whether his sins be forgiven or no, how shall I know,—whether Christ be my life or no?

Ans. I answer that the life of Christ is but now begun in us, and it is very little at the first. There is nothing less than grace at the beginning. The life of Christ is conveyed to us from Christ voluntarily, not by necessity. 'He gives the will and the deed according to his pleasure,' Philip, ii. 13. Therefore we must know that we have more or less comfort, and more or less grace as he pleaseth. He brings all to heaven in all ages that have the true life of grace, though he make a difference, and give to some more and to some less; because he is a head that flows into his members, not out of nature, but out of his own pleasure.

2. And a Christian soul that hath union with Christ, that hath a being and station in him, may know it. There are always some pulses from this heart. As we know there is some life by the beating of the pulses, so Christ's dwelling in the heart is known by these pulses. There will be striving against corruption, and complaining of it. Nature and corruption will not complain against corruption; corruption will not strive against corruption. There will be sighing and groaning, which is seconded with a constant endeavour to grow better. It is not a flash. These pulses beating in the soul of a true Christian shew that there is the life of grace in him, that Christ dwells in his heart. And this ofttimes doth more appear in the greatest temptations. Take a Christian at the worst, his heart sighs to God to recover him; he is sick, and yet he hopes in Christ. Christ in the greatest desertion is his life, who was also our pattern when he was at the lowest: 'My God, my God.' So a Christian at the lowest, he hath a spirit of prayer. Though it may be he cannot pray distinctly, yet he can sigh and groan; and God hears the sighs of his own Spirit always.

Therefore when these pulses beat in him, in the greatest temptations he may know that Christ lives in him.

Sometimes Christ, in respect of this life, in this world reserves himself to the chief occasion, as some great affliction of the outward man. In 2 Cor. iv. 10, we see there when the body of Saint Paul was afflicted, when it was abased by many afflictions, 'the life of Christ was most manifest in him.' God reserves to poor Christians, that now live in peace and quiet, the greatest feelings and manifestations of Christ's living in them, till some great cross, till the hour of death, till a time of need. The life of Christ is most manifest in the time of abasement.

By the way, therefore, let us not avoid crosses for Christ's sake. would not any abasement, though it be imprisonment or death. The more our outward man is abased, if it be for Christ's sake, the more this life of Christ, this blessed life, this peace that 'passeth understanding,' and this 'joy in the Holy Ghost' is increased. We shall feel our absolution and justification the more. This life of Christ is most manifested when we honour him most by suffering for him. Therefore let us avoid no cross for him.

'Christ, who is our life, shall appear.' There are two appearings, we know, of Christ; his first appearing and his second appearing. His first appearing was to work our salvation; his second shall be to accomplish and finish what he hath begun to work. His first appearing was to redeem our souls from death, and his second shall redeem our bodies from the corruption of the grave. So his second appearing shall be to accomplish all the good that he came to do and to work by his first. As verily, therefore, as Christ is come in his first appearing, so verily and certainly he shall appear the second time. And as it was the description of holy men before his first coming to wait for him, 'to wait for the consolation of Israel,' Luke ii. 25, so Christians now. Those blessed souls that have the report of this, they wait for the coming of Christ.

There were all kind of witnesses then of his first coming: angels, men, women, shepherds, the devils themselves. The Trinity from heaven witnessed of him. So for his second coming there are witnesses. Christ himself saith he will come. The angels say, 'This Jesus that ye see go up shall come again,' Acts i. 11. It is an article of our faith that he shall come. The Spirit of God in every Christian saith 'Come,' and that is not in vain. The desires of the Spirit of God must be fulfilled. Therefore he shall come. And the Spirit of God stirs up our spirits to say 'Come.' There are all kind of proofs and arguments

for it. It is an article of our faith. It is laid here for a ground, and therefore I will not enlarge myself in it, but come to the next point. Christ will appear, and 'We shall also appear with him in glory.'

We shall appear, and appear with him, and appear in glory with him. Christ himself his glory is in some sort hid now. For though he be king of the church, yet we see what enemies are in the church; and Satan ruffles in the church a great while, and the nearer he is to his end the more he rageth. So that Christ's glory seems to be hid. But Christ then shall appear, and his church shall appear with him in glory.

Quest. Why shall we appear with Christ and be glorious with him?

Ans. I answer, This is clear, partly because it is Christ's will; in John xvii., 'Father, I will that where I am they may he also.' It is Christ's last testament that we should be where he is and be glorious with him, and Christ's will must be fulfilled.

Again, Consider what we are to Christ, how near we are brought to him, and then this will be clear, that when Christ shall appear in glory, we must appear with him. For Christ is our husband, and we are his spouse. When Christ comes to be glorious, therefore, his spouse must he glorious. Now is but the time of contract, the time of the marriage solemnity shall be at the appearing of Christ. Therefore, 'when he shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory.' Christ, in his own person, distinct from his church, is now glorious as a head; but Christ mystical is not glorious, Christ mystical suffers. There are many members that are not yet called. Some are abased, and some are not brought to the fold. And Christ hath a care of his mystical body, as of his natural body; and as that is glorious in heaven, so he will bring all his members to be one glorious body. He gave his natural body to redeem his mystical body. Therefore, as he is glorious in that in heaven, so he will be glorious in his mystical body in every believing soul at the last, when he 'shall come to be glorified in his saints,' as the apostle saith, 2 Thess. i. 10. He is glorious in himself now, then he will be glorious in his spouse.

And then from the ground of predestination: Horn. viii. 29, 30, 'We are predestinate to be conformed to Christ, that he might be the first-born of many brethren.' Now, Christ being glorious, and we being predestinate before the world was to be like unto Christ; first, in abasement, to be abased for him that was abased for us, to suffer for him that suffered for us, and to be conformed to him in grace, there must be a time to be conformed to him

in glory. From the ground of election there must be a state of glory. Our glory must be revealed when Christ shall come and appear.

I will press no more reasons that we must be glorious at the second coming of Christ as well as himself.

Quest. Wherein stands this glory?

Ans. To clear this point a little—I will not he long in it,—because, indeed, this glory is such as 'eye hath not seen, nor car heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man,' 1 Cor. ii. 9. The apostles speak not much of it. They speak of it in negative terms, by denying imperfections. 'It is an inheritance incorruptible, immortal,' Ac., 1 Peter i. 4. And when it is resembled to earthly things, it is compared to a banquet, to a marriage, &c. But this glory it shall be in body, in soul, in the whole man.

In soul there shall be the knowledge of those mysteries of salvation that now we are ignorant of. Now we are in the grammar-school, but that shall he as the university. Then we shall know things more clearly. We shall see God face to face, and then our souls shall be raised to he capable of more knowledge and grace. Now the vessel of our soul is not capable, to know that that we shall then; they are not capable, as they shall be in heaven. St Paul himself was not capable; therefore when he was taken up into the third heavens, lest he should he proud of his revelations, he was fain to be abased. We are not capable, we cannot know the glory of heaven in a full measure now; but then, God shall enlarge the heart and sanctify it, that we shall have strong spirits, and holy understandings and affections to understand holy things; we shall know God face to face. There shall be a proportion between the glorious things in heaven and our soul; there shall be a heavenly soul for a heavenly place, whereas yet it is not so.

I forbear to shew the particulars of the glory of the body. The apostle Paul sets it down: 1 Cor. xv. 44, 'It shall be a spiritual body.' It shall be guided by the Spirit; and the body, it shall not then need meats and drinks, but God 'shall be all in all.' Now, our life at the best is fed and clothed by the creatures; then, all shall be taken out of God himself. God himself shall be all in all. The presence of God, and of Christ our Saviour, shall supply all that we have now other ways. Now comfort is conveyed from this creature and from that; but whatsoever comfort we have now dropped by the creatures we shall then have all in him, and in fulness, and for evermore. So we shall he glorious in soul and body.

And in our whole man the image of God and Christ shall he perfectly restored. We shall be like Christ, reserving the difference between the head and the members; reserving the difference of a natural Son and of sons adopted. He shall be more glorious than we. We shall be glorious as much as we are capable of. In all fulness of joy, and grace, and dominion over the creature, in freedom from ill and readiness to good, we shall be glorious sons of God. I need not to be long in unfolding these things.

Quest. When shall this be?

Ans. 'When he shall appear,' saith the apostle, 'we shall also appear with him in glory.' It is carried indefinitely, to stop curiosity. There is no time set down; but 'when he shall appear,' &c. In a word, when all the elect shall he gathered together. It is not meet that our bodies and souls should be glorified till all God's people be gathered together. As in a family they do not sit down till all the servants be come in, and then they sit down together, so in this great family of God, the saints in heaven and earth, there shall not be perfect glory till all be gathered and saved. And then what a blessed time will that be, when every one shall be glorious himself, and shall put down the sun in glory in his body and soul, and when there shall he such a world of them so glorious.

If every star he beautiful, how beautiful are all in their lustre! When so many saints shall he gathered together, they shall be far more glorious than the sun in his majesty; and this glory is reserved till all be gathered together. God said of the creatures severally they were good, but when he looked on them together they were exceeding good. So the several souls of Christians are glorious, but at the day of judgment, when all shall be gathered together, there shall be an exceeding glory. It is reserved, I say, for the gathering together of the saints; when Christ, who is the head, shall have gathered all by his word and ministry out of this sinful world— which are scattered here and there—then they shall come to perfect glory. Then there shall be perfect union between the body and soul; then there shall be a perfect union between us and all that are dead together; then there shall be a perfect union between us and Christ; then we shall have the perfect fruition of God, of angels, of all the blessed company in heaven. Oh what a blessed time will this be! and this shall be at the glorious appearing of Christ.

Christ shall appear in glory himself, as verily as he appeared in his first coming; and we shall appear with him in glory.

Why should we doubt of it? Is not that which is greater done already? Hath not God himself become man? Hath not God died, and God been abased in his first coming? Is not that more wonder than that a man should become like God in his second coming? Whether is greater, for God to become man, or for men to be raised out of their graves and become glorious? Certainly this is the lesser. Why should we doubt of it? Let us raise our hearts with this, that as verily as he came in abasement to work our salvation, so verily he shall come and raise us to glory; and this is a lesser work than the former.

But to come nearer, to make some further use of this, surely these are main points, and should he oft thought on. Oh that the hearts of Christians were exercised with them! Could we be dead either for grace or comfort, if we did oft think of this with application? Let us oft warm ourselves with these things; let us bring ourselves to the light; let us think of the blessed times to come: could we be unfruitful? This made Saint Paul adjure Timothy and the Thessalonians: 'I beseech you, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,' &c., 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2 Thes. ii. 1. I shall need no greater argument to press you, than as verily as Christ shall come in glory, and as you shall be gathered to him, so hear what I say. So Saint Paul chargeth Timothy: 1 Tim. vi. 13, 'I charge thee before Christ, who at his coming, &c., keep this commandment.' This will move a man's conscience, and carry him to duty, if nothing else will. Let us think seriously, Christ will come with thousands of his angels in glory and majesty, and all shall be glory then, there shall be nothing but glory: glorious in his company, glorious in himself, glorious in his enemies; He shall trample them under his feet by a glorious confusion; there shall be nothing but glory in heaven and earth then. And we shall come to the same glory. The spouse shall partake of the glory of her husband. Let us think of this, it will quicken and inspire all our courses with a spiritual kind of light to all actions; it will enliven and quicken them.

And it will put a kind of manner upon all our actions that they shall be acceptable to God. For how should we perform all that comes from us? All should be done in sincerity, and constantly, and abundantly, and cheerfully, readily, and willingly; for God requires these qualifications in what we do. Now, what stirs us up to do all in this manner, acceptably to God, but this consideration?

What stirs us up to do things sincerely to Christ? He will appear in glory; therefore let us do things that may stand with his judgment. It is no matter

what the reprobates of the world judge; let us do things so as we may stand before Christ at that day. A Christian studies to arraign himself before Christ, that he may do that that may approve him to him that shall be his judge ere long.

And so let us hold out; we shall receive a reward. What will make us constant but this? What makes a man sow his seed, that he scarcely can spare, but the hope of a harvest? What makes a man run, but the victory and the crown? So what makes a man work, but the hope of reward? Be constant, 'for in him ye shall receive the reward if ye faint not,' Gal. vi. 9.

And so for abounding in good works, 'your labour is not in vain in the Lord,' 1 Cor. xv. 58. What made Saint Paul press the abounding in good works? 'Finally, my brethren, be stedfast and unmoveable, alway abounding in the work of the Lord.' Why? 'for your labour is not in vain in the Lord.' Your bodies shall rise again ere long in glory; when Christ shall appear you shall appear, and be glorious with him. 'Therefore abound in the work of the Lord,' 1 Cor. xv. 58; 'sow to the Spirit,' Gal. vi. 8, and you shall reap glory. 'They that sow sparingly shall reap sparingly,' 2 Cor. ix. 6. What makes men abound in works of mercy and love, but this appearing of Christ? If their love be perfect, they have comfort in this appearing, and if they abound in mercy, Christ will appear in mercy to them.

And so for cheerfulness. That God also requires in every action. What enlargeth the heart of a man in God's work? What puts fire into his affections but this, that Christ will come and appear in glory ere long? That he will come and crown every good work; that we shall not lose a good word that hath been spoken in a good cause; not the least good action; not a cup of cold water; but all shall stand on our reckoning 'at that day when Christ shall come to be glorious in his saints.' This makes us do things sincerely, constantly, abundantly, and cheerfully.

I beseech you, consider from what ground these things come; for these are principles that should be grounds of faith. They are pregnant, and spread themselves through the whole course of a Christian's life, and therefore are worthy to be thought often on.

Again, Why doth God reveal these things beforehand, that we shall appear in glory in our body and soul, in our whole man? As it shows us our duty and the manner of it, so it is a ground of comfort in all estates. A Christian may think, Now my life is a hidden, secret life. I pass nuder

censures. It is thus in the world, and thus with me. Well, there will a time come, the time of resurrection, that will make amends for all—for this sickness of body and disquiet of mind, and all annoyance and adversity; and it is revealed beforehand for our comfort that there shall be such a time, that we may make use of it, that we may ground our patience upon it. When Saint Paul exhorts to patience, saith he, 'The Lord is at hand,' Phil. iv. 5; and Saint James saith, 'The Judge standeth at the door,' chap, v. 9. Let us be patient in infamies and sufferings; it will be otherwise ere long, Christ is at hand.

Again, That we might continually be breathing out thankfulness to God.

Our whole life should he spent in thankfulness to God. Even as the angels in heaven that stand in the presence of God, and the blessed spirits in heaven, they spend that vigour that is in them, they spend all that is in them in praising God, in thanks and laud to God, and sing, 'Glory, glory;' so beforehand knowing that ere long we shall appear with Christ, and appear in glory, let us thank him beforehand. As Saint Peter saith, 'Blessed be God, that hath begotten us again to an inheritance, immortal, undefiled, &e., reserved in heaven for us,' 1 Peter i. 8. Let us bless God beforehand, as if we were in heaven already. Certainly if we hope to be with those that shall sit in heavenly places in heaven to praise God, we will begin it on earth; for the life of heaven is begun on earth. We are kings now; we are priests now; we are conquerors now; we are new creatures now. We must praise God, and begin the employment of heaven now; for what they do perfectly, that we begin to do. In heaven we know there is no ill company; we will abstain from it now. There is no defilement of sin; we will conform ourselves to that estate we hope for. There is nothing but praising of God; as much as may be we will warm our hearts with the meditation of what God hath done, what he doth, and what he hath reserved for the time to come, with that we have in hope. The best things of a Christian especially, are in hope; for that which we have by Christ principally is not in this world; therefore considering that the best things that Christ died for are in hope, 'let us rejoice in hope,' and in rejoicing have our hearts enlarged with praising of God for that we hope for.

And be comforted in all the changes of this life, all the changes for the time to come, and in death itself, which is the last change. Are not all degrees to make way for that glorious appearing with Christ? for the soul at death goes to heaven, and the body shall come after. Why should we be loath to die, when death is nothing but a change from misery to happiness? a change from the danger of sinning, to an impossibility of sinning; from a vale of

misery to a place of happiness; from men to God; from sinful persons that trouble our peace and quiet to better company in heaven; from actions that are sinful to actions altogether free from sin. It is a glorious and blessed change every way. We shall have better company, better place, better employment, all glorious then, till the time come that all the elect he gathered together, and then body and soul shall he 'for ever with the Lord,' 1 Thess. iv. 17. Why then should we fear changes, when all changes shall end in that that is better? Is a labouring man loath to have his hire, or a weary man loath to have rest? Is a king loath to be crowned? Is a party contracted loath to have the marriage consummate? Why should we he loath to die? We should he ashamed of ourselves, that we have been so long in the school of Christ, and yet have not learned to unloose our affections from earth to better things; that we stand in fear of death, that makes way to the glory of the soul now and the eternal glory of body and soul after.

In a word, we are exhorted, in the beginning of the chapter, to have our minds in heaven, where Christ is; and we are exhorted, after the text, to mortify our earthly members; two necessary' duties, to have our conversation in heaven, before we be there, and to mortify our earthly members; to die in our affections to earthly things, before we die indeed. Would we have strength put into our souls to perform both these? Let us oft meditate of the things that are between these verses. Let us consider that we are dead, so we should be more lively to God. Consider that our life is hid with Christ; that Christ shall appear ere long and we with him in glory.

We should raise our thoughts to be with Christ, and draw our souls up to heavenly things; for the more our affections are upwards, the less they will be below. Our affections are finite. The more we spend them on heavenly things, the less they will run on earthly. As a man in a trance, his thoughts are taken up with one matter, that he is dead to other things, so the soul which is taken up with the glory to come, and with Christ, it is dead to earthly things; only it takes them for necessary use, as having use of them in our travail; but it useth the world as if it used it not. And this issues from this principle, that we shall ere long appear with Christ in glory. There is no man but will drown himself too much with the things of the world, that hath not this to raise up his soul, 'I shall appear ere long with Christ in glory,' and then these things will be consumed.

The last point is, how these depend one upon another, that because Christ shall appear in glory, therefore we.

I will touch it a little, because it is a point of faith that helps our judgment a little. It is a ground of divinity, that whatsoever is in us that are members, it is in our head first; for God is first, and then Christ mediator, and then we. Whatsoever is good in us, or shall he to us, it is in Christ first. He is justified from our sins, for he was our surety from sin. He was abased for them first; therefore he shall appear then without sin to glory. Our sin was but imputed to Christ; he became our surety for sin and he must be abased; therefore we cannot be glorious here, because of our corruptions. Christ was surety for our sins in his first coming. Now his resurrection showed that he had satisfied for our sins. The second time he shall appear in glory. Why are we justified from our sins? Because Christ, our surety, was acquitted.

We ascend gloriously to heaven. Where is the ground of it? He ascended first, and we ascend for him and in him.

We sit in heavenly places. Why? Because he is in heaven beforehand; as the husband takes up a place for his wife. Why doth she go into the country and take it up after? Because her husband hath gone before and taken it. Our ascension riseth from his, and our sitting at the right hand of God from his.

And so at the day of judgment, our being glorious, it comes from his. He then shall appear in glory, as the head and husband of his church, and shall shine upon all his members. He, as the sun, shall cast a lustre and beauty and glory upon all that are his; and then they shall reflect that glory they have from him upon him again, and he upon them again. So he shall be glorious in them and they in him; but the ground of all is, he is first in glory. He shall appear in glory, and then we in him.

I speak this the rather, because I would have humble consciences to make use of it in times of desertion, when God seems to be a God that hides himself, when they find no life nor comfort. Yet if they have but grace to believe, they may comfort themselves in this. Well, I have it but from Christ, and he is perfect in glory. He is ascended, and I shall ascend and rise, and be glorious, because he is so. Put case now I feel no such matter. It is no matter. I live by faith in Christ, that hath all in fulness; and what he hath done for me, he will do in me, if I believe in him.

Let a troubled soul comfort itself with this. It is as impossible that he should be damned that believes in Christ, as that Christ should be damned, because he, believing in Christ, is one with him, and as verily as Christ is in

heaven, he shall be there; for Christ rose for all his. The little finger lives the same fife as the hand or the foot doth. So a weak Christian that hath little grace, he lives by the same faith in Christ that is in glory, as well as they that are stronger. Let us strive and fight, with this encouragement, as St Paul saith, 'fight the good fight of faith,' 1 Tim. vi. 12. Oh, but shall we be always fighting and striving? No, saith he; lay hold of eternal life, and then we may well fight against doubts and despair. Let us therefore labour to fight, so that we may lay hold on eternal life, which Christ keeps for us, and keeps us for it; and ere long we shall partake of that we hope for.

The Spiritual Jubilee

To the Reader

Christian Reader—The word of God is given us as a most precious treasure, and that not for ourselves only, but for our children after us, and therefore is called Israel's inheritance: Deut. xxxiii. 4, 'Moses commanded us a law, even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob.' All the wealth in the world is but as dirt and trash in comparison of the word to the people of God. 'Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of mine heart,' saith David, Ps. cxix. 111. And therefore as they rejoice in their own enjoying of it, so they do what they may to assure it to their children when they are dead, that it may be entailed upon them and their posterity after them; yea, so they do also with the knowledge of divine truths which they have found in the word; which is not indeed found out by men all at one time, but by degrees, as gold is found in mines, as men come to search farther and farther, and dig deeper and deeper for it. It was not, they know, imparted to them for their own use only, but for the benefit of others. 'The manifestation of the Spirit is given to profit withal,' 1 Cor. xii. 7; and therefore as it comes to them from heaven they hand it to others, that so it may be continued in the church, 'the ground and pillar of truth,' 1 Tim. iii. 10, for the good of those that shall live in future times.

This was, I hope, the chief aim of those that have published these sermons of that worthy light of our church, Dr Sibbes. And surely we have great cause in this regard thankfully to acknowledge their care and pains, who both took them so exactly from his mouth as he delivered them, and then kept them so charily as 'a precious thing committed to their trust,' 2 Tim. i. 14, and have now published them for the common good of all that will make use of them. For by this means what was delivered to a few may now build up many to farther degrees of knowledge and grace, even all the land over, and they that never saw his face maybe made sharers in those his labours, which only a few were so happy as to hear.

Being myself one amongst others that have found the advantage hereof, I was not so hardly won as otherwise I should have been, to commend these 'Beams of Divine Light' to the respect of others. Divers truths of greatest consequence are exactly handled in the several sermons here presented to you, as concerning the misery of our natural estate, and the bliss and

happiness of those that are quickened by Christ; concerning the necessity of the word, our spiritual food, and the zealous violence of the faithful in pressing after it; concerning the divers both joys and sorrows, complaints and triumphs of God's children here, when they are black though comely, Cant. i. 5; and concerning their happiness in death, and glory after it, and many other, whereof these few are only a taste.

The study of the Scriptures made the author a man of God, 'perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works and as became a faithful steward of the manifold grace of God, he endeavoured 'to teach the whole counsel of God,' and to store men with the knowledge of God's will, 'in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.' I desire that both thou and I, and all God's people, may so read these his labours, that it may further our growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whose grace I commend thee, being Thine in him,

Arthur Jackson.
Wood Street, November 6. 1638.

The Spiritual Jubilee

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and of death.—Rom. VIII. 2.

There are four things especially that trouble the peace of a Christian, and indeed of any man, in this world.

The first is, sin, with the guilt of it, binding them over to the wrath of God, and the expectation of misery, which is a heavy bondage.

The second is, besides the guilt of sin, the remainders of corruption, with the conflict that accompanies them while we live in this world; and that conflict must needs be tedious.

The third is, the miseries of this life that accompany always both the guilt and remainders of sin in this world. We are condemned to a great deal of trouble here, and this doth much exercise and perplex God's children. And then the finishing up of all, death and damnation.

The thought of these things doth much disquiet and disturb the peace of a Christian's soul.

Now, in this Epistle we have comfort against all these. First, for the guilt of sin, that binds us over to eternal judgment and the wrath of God; we are freed by the obedience of Christ, the second Adam, as is excellently shewed in the fifth chapter.

And for the remainders of corruption that we struggle with in this world, we are assisted against that by the Spirit of Christ. For as by the obedience of Christ we are freed from the guilt, so by the Spirit of Christ we are helped and assisted against the remainders of our corruptions.

For the third, the miseries of this life, we have victory in Christ: 'In him we are more than conquerors,' as you have it in this chapter, Rom. viii. 37. They can do us no harm. Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.' We have many singular comforts in this chapter against all the troubles that can befall us, and this is one that triumphs over all: 'All things shall work for the best to them that love God.' What should I speak of hurt from anything that befalls us, when all shall work for the best, by the over-ruling of him that commands all? ver. 28.

And for death itself: 'Neither life nor death shall be able to separate us from the love of God.' And for damnation which accompanies death: 'It is God that justifieth, who shall condemn?' There are contrasting comforts in God's book, nay, in this epistle and in this chapter, to set against all that may any way trouble our peace. 'There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus,' saith the apostle; and then he goes on after to shew how, by the help of the Spirit, 'all things work for the best,' &c. In this very verse likewise, you have this comfort set down, of our freedom by Christ from any thing that may hurt us. 'For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and of death.'

The words are not absolute, as we see in the particle 'for;' for the law of the Spirit of life,' &c. They depend upon the first verse thus; as a reason why, however there be sin in God's children, yet there is no damnation to them. 'There is no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus.' He proves it thus. Those that are free from the law of sin and of death, which brings in condemnation, those undoubtedly are free from damnation. But those that are in Christ Jesus, they are freed from the law of sin and of death; therefore there is no condemnation to such. But how shall we know that we are in Christ Jesus? Those that have the Spirit, and are led by the Spirit of Christ, they are in Christ. 'The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath freed me from the law of sin and of death.' So I say, the words are especially a reason

of the former, 'There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus;' because by the 'Spirit of Christ they are freed from the law of sin, and of death;' and consequently, they are freed from damnation; for what brings in damnation but sin?

In the words, then, there is an opposition. There is law against law. 'The law of the Spirit of life in Christ,' and 'the law of sin and of death.' Now, where there are contrary laws, if there be contrary lords, as there must be, new lords will have new laws; especially if they be lords by conquest, they will alter the very fundamental laws that were before; as you know the old conquerors have done in this kingdom. Here is law against law, and lord against lord; Christ against sin and death. Here is a Lord by conquest over all other lords and laws. Therefore, here must needs be an alteration of laws upon it; the very fundamental laws must be altered. But to come more particularly to the words,

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath freed me from the law of sin and of death.'

The words are much vexed by expositors. I will rather speak my own judgment of them, and reconcile them, than dash one man's judgment against another; for that tends not to edification. 'The law of the Spirit of life,' &c. The meaning of the words is plain, if we compare it with other Scriptures.

'The law.' It is nothing but a commanding power; for so the word written the law, in the apostle's meaning, is but a power forcing and commanding. So the 'law of the Spirit of life' is the commanding and forcing power of the 'Spirit of life in Christ Jesus;' and so the 'law of sin,' it is either the tyrannical command and forcing power of sin, or else the condemning for sin afterwards, as we shall see hereafter. For we shall unfold the words better in the particulars.

First, then, here we have set down what estate we are in by nature: 'We are under the law of sin and of death.'

And then, here is our freedom and deliverance from that: 'We are made free from the law of sin and of death.'

And then the author of it, Christ Jesus: 'The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath freed me from the law of sin and of death.' In the words,

and those that go a little before, there are these three main fundamental points of religion:

The misery and bondage of man.

The deliverance of man.

And his duty.

Here you have his misery. He is under 'sin and death.'

Here is his deliverance. He is 'free from this by Christ.'

And for his duty; you have it in the last verse of the former chapter, speaking of his deliverance. 'Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' Then it follows, 'Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.' Thankfulness is due, not verbal thankfulness only. Indeed, the whole life of a Christian, after his deliverance, is a real thanksgiving. But that is not in my text.

To speak, therefore, of our estate by nature, and of our deliverance; our estate is, that we are under the law of sin and death.

'We are under the law of sin.'

Obs. We are under sin. What sin? We are under a threefold sin.

1. We are under the fast sin of our first father; for as Levi paid tithes in Abraham to Melchisedec, so we all sinned in the loins of Adam our first parent; and the guilt of that first sin lies upon us.

2. Secondly, There is another sin that is derived and springs from that first sin; which is the marring of the image of God, the privation of our nature. We call it original sin, whereby we are stripped of that good we had in our first creation, and have the contrary image, the image of Satan stamped upon us. So we are under the first sin, the guilt of it; and we are under the sin of nature, which we call original sin, because it is derived to us even from our birth and first original we had in Adam.

3. And then we are under actual sins, which are so many bonds to tie us fast under sin. We are dead by nature; but we are dead and rotten by actual

sins. We superadd to the guilt of our sin by our daily activities. We are blind by nature; but we are blinded indeed much more by our custom of life. Every sin doth, as it were, tie us faster to damnation, and keeps us more tightly under the bondage of sin. Every new sin takes away some part of the light of the understanding, and takes away some freedom of the will. It darkens the judgment more and more, and enthralls the will and affections; and binds a man more and more to the just sentence of God, that, as it is Prov. v. 22, 'the sinner is tied with the bonds of his own sins.' He is under the chains of an habituated wicked course of life, as well as of the sin of nature, which is the spring of all.

This is the miserable state of man; and these chains of his sins hold him over him to further chains. Even as the devil is reserved in chains; that is, in terrors of his conscience, which as chains bind him till he be in hell, the place he is destined to; so we being in the chains and bondage, vexed with our sins, we are at the same time in the chains of terrors of conscience, the beginnings of hell, and reserved to chains of damnation and death world without end. It is another manner of matter, our estate by nature, than it is usually taken for. If men had but a little supernatural light, to see what condition they are in, till they get out into Christ Jesus, they would not continue a minute in that cursed estate.

And we have deserved to be cast into this estate by reason that we left our subordination and dependence upon God, which, being creatures, we should have had. Therefore we turning from God to the creature, God punisheth our rebellion to him with rebellion in ourselves; because we withdrew our subjection from him, that therefore there should be in us a withdrawing of the subjection of sin and of the whole soul to God. So this captivity to and giving up to sin in us, it is penal and sinful; but as it comes from God, it is altogether judicial. Therefore we have it oft in the New Testament, in Rom. i. 21 and 2 Thes. ii. 10. The Gentiles, because they would not receive the truth that they might have had by the light of nature, 'God gave them up to their sins.' And then the Christians after the apostles' times, they set slight by the good word of God, the gospel. Therefore 'God gave them up to believe lies.' It was sin in them; but as God gave them up, it was justice. So this captivity and giving men up to their own lusts, it is justice; as it comes from God, it is a horrible judgment. It is worse than to be given up to the devil himself; for by being given up to our lusts we increase our damnation. To be given up to be tormented of the devil, it is not such a mischief as this spiritual captivity under sin. We are guilty ourselves of our

own thraldom. And this will increase both the shame and the punishment. The shame, that a man shall say in hell afterward, 'I have brought myself hither, I had means enough, prohibitions enough; I had sometimes chastisements of God, sometimes motions of his Spirit, sometimes one help from God, sometimes another; yet notwithstanding I thrust through all oppositions that God set between me and the execution of my lusts, and to hell-ward I would, and hither I have brought myself.' So that indeed the greatest part of hell-torments, the shame of them especially, it will be that men have brought themselves by their own wits and carnal lusts thither. And indeed all the wit a carnal man hath, that is not sanctified by God's Spirit, it is to work himself to misery, to be a drudge to his lusts; that sets all the parts he hath on work, not how he may serve God and be happy in another world, but how he may prowl and provide for his own carnal lusts. This is the estate of all men by nature. They are under sin, under the power of sin. The blind judgment leads the blind affections, and both 'fall into the ditch,' into hell, Luke vi. 89.

1. The fearfulness and odiousness of this condition, to be in prison and thraldom and bondage to all kind of sin, natural and actual, it will appear further by this, that being in subjection to our base lusts, by consequence we are under the bondage of Satan; for he hath power over death by sin, because he draws us to sin, and then accuseth us and torments us for sin. By sin we come to be under his bondage. So that we are under the fearful captivity of the devil while we are under the captivity of sin; for all the power that he hath over us it is by sin. He is but God's executioner for sin. First, God gives him power to draw us to sin, to punish one sin with another; and then he suffers him to accuse and to torment us afterward: What a fearful bondage is this, that being under sin we are under Satan! We are servants to our enemy, as God threatened his people that they should serve their enemies. But this is a greater judgment, to be slaves to this enemy. This is the condition of every sinner. To be a slave to a man's enemy, it is a judgment of judgments; yet notwithstanding this is the case of every man by nature; he is a servant to his enemy, to Satan and his own lusts. He is a right Ham, a 'servant of servants;' for Satan useth him as the Philistines did Samson: he puts out his eyes; he puts out his judgment, his wits; he besots him; and so he goes blind in Satan's blind work and business: he is in a maze all his life long, till at length he sink into hell. So this is the aggravation of a man's estate by nature, he is a slave to his enemy. You know blessed Zacharias saith, Luke i.74,75, 'That, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we might serve him without fear, in righteousness and holiness, all the days of our life.' There is no

wicked man, but he is manipulated by the devil. Oh that we would consider of it! We think we are led only by our own lusts and sins, as men; but until a man be in Christ, 'he is ruled by the command of the prince of the air,' Eph. ii. 2, and in 2 Tim. ii. 26, 'he is ruled by Satan, according to his will.' Even as a bird in a snare, it may move up and down, but it is still in the snare, and he that hath it there cares not: he knows he hath it safe, and he goes about to catch other birds; so when we are in our lusts and follow them, the devil hath us in his snare: he is secure of us, and goes about getting more and more still. The devil acts, and moves, and leads all carnal men.

But how chanceth it that they do not know and perceive it?

It is because he goeth with the stream of their own corruptions. Indeed, we must make some limitation of this. In some cases the devil doth not move carnal men. They are better than the devil would have them be for the good of the commonwealth and state; but yet take them as they stand in relation to religion, they may be devilish, secret, bitter, dark enemies to that. Though they may have strong heads for the good of the state, yet it is not from any intrinsic good in themselves; but God useth them and makes them do that. For the devil would have all wicked; he is an enemy to the very swine; therefore much more to the good of a state. Therefore there are many civil moral virtues, as we see in Ahithophel and Judas, which no question is more than the devil would have. He would not have civil men so good; he would not have them do that they do for the common good ofttimes. Yet the devil will be sure to be at one end of the good they do, to taint them, that their aim shall not be good. It shall not be to the glory of God; it shall not be in reference to salvation.

And so, as the good is temporal, they have a reward suitable to their desire; they care for no more. For they believe not heaven but in a general notion. It may be there is such things, it may be not. Therefore the good they do is some little petty obedience. And what do they desire? To be well esteemed and respected; to be venerable, and to have honourable opinions in the hearts of men, that men may stoop in their conceits to them as men of respect. This they deserve indeed, and this they have; God gives them that they would have. But as Christ tells the Pharisees, who did excellent good things, but it was to be 'seen of men,' he tells them 'they had their reward,' Mat. vi. 2. They had all they looked for, for they were atheists; they looked not for heaven. So a man may say of all that are out of the state of grace: though they do more than the devil would have them, and for divers degrees

of what they do they are not subject to the devil, yet he taints their actions one way or other in the end; he joins himself in the action first or last; he hath a hand in all their actions. So that, notwithstanding there be many good things, yet this hinders not a whit but that they may be under the power of the devil; for it is but in reference to civil government and state, which is but for a time. 'The fashion of this world passeth away,' 1 Cor. vii. 31. Here will be no magistrates to govern, nor no people to be governed ere long.

I speak it, because many men are ready to propound such and such, to imitate them in their courses; and to say, I will be no more religious than he; when, perhaps, all may be but formality and common graces for this world. God will honour some so much, to be instruments for common good here; but what is that to eternal salvation? He may be a slave to his lusts, and an enemy to the power of grace, for all that. Therefore, unless we see men wrought upon thoroughly, to be of the mind of Christ, to have the Spirit of Christ, to judge of things as Christ judgeth, to judge the service of God and doing his will to be the best things, and to 'go about doing good, Acts x. 38, and that with reference and obedience to God, all is nothing else. A man may be under the bondage of his corruptions, and so by them to Satan.

Again, When we are under our lusts and sins, it is about earthly things; we are in slavery to that which is worse than ourselves. Sin is the vilest thing in the world, and the things whereabout sin is occupied are the profits and pleasures and trifles of this world—mean petty things. It is a base slavery to consider whom we serve.

3. And to consider what it is that is in bondage, the immortal soul of man, that had the image of God stamped upon it; and in the soul of man, the most excellent part, the will, that is most free, yet being under sin, it is most bound. Our will was given us to cleave to God and the best things; to make choice of the best things, and to cleave to them undivided in life and death, and for ever; and so by cleaving to things better than ourselves, to advance ourselves to a higher condition. For when the soul of man that is under better things, that is under God and Christ, and doth cleave to God and Christ in his affections, and to the things of a better life, these be things bettering a man's condition, even raising the soul from its own present estate to a glorious condition; for we are as we love. Our wills and our affections do transform us. Therefore wicked men are called the world, because they love it; and holy men are called heavenly, because they are carried in their affections and wills to heavenly things. Our affections and wills do

denominate us, they give us the name; nay, that is too little, they do give us the reality, the state. When God so alters and changes our dispositions, that out of a sanctified judgment we make a right choice of things, and then cleave to them in our wills and affections constantly, this raiseth our nature to be higher than itself: 'He that cleaveth to the Lord is one spirit,' as the apostle saith, Acts x. 38. Indeed, our affections transform us anew. As it is with the fire, it transforms cold and gross bodies to be all fiery; so God and heavenly things work upon our hearts, they transform us to be like themselves.

Now, for this inward soul of man, which is so excellent a thing, fitted by God to cleave to better things, for communion with himself and everlasting happiness, for this to be a drudge to base pleasures and profits, to the windy empty things of this world, to vain titles and such like empty things, and to place its happiness in these things, it is a pitiful degeneration that so excellent a thing as the immortal soul of man, that shall never die, should join with those things that shall make him miserable, that it shall be better for a man that he had never been; as it is said of Judas, 'It had been better for that man that he had never been born,' Mat. xxvi:24.

iv. In the next place, consider that that follows this thraldom and baseness to our lusts. There is a double fruit of it. (1.) The one is uncertain. I mean, for our yielding to our base affections, what do we profit? 'The pleasures of sin for a season,' Heb. xi. 25; a little pleasure or profit, perhaps not that neither; but if we have it, it is a fading commodity, that goes away quickly. When they are gotten, what are they? Vanity. They promise more before we get them than they perform when we have them. But then (2.) There is another wages, that God injustice hath appointed for it, that is, damnation: 'The wages of sin is death,' Rom. vi. 28. It cries for wages. When we are under sin we can look for nothing but death, and therefore he joins them together here: 'the law of sin and of death,' an expectation of eternal misery. This a man hath that is wedded to himself, that hath not learned the first lesson in the gospel, to deny himself. He is a wretched slave to the devil in his best part and power; his lusts imprison his will and affections; his wit, that should devise how he should be happy for eternity, it is only a drudge to his base lusts. There are a company of men that are the shame and blemish of the gospel, that get their wits a-work only how to devise to satisfy their base lusts; and then the issue and conclusion of all this is eternal misery; and in the meantime, the expectation of misery in terrors of conscience. This is the estate of every man till he be translated by the Spirit of God to a better

condition in Christ, that he spends out his time in a base and miserable thraldom, worse than the thraldom of the Israelites in Egypt or in Babylon.

5. And it is so much the more fearful, because men are insensible of it, like inmates in an insane asylum, that make nothing of their chains, that laugh in their chains. A frantic man, when he is bound in chains, he laughs, when they that are about him weep at his misery. So you have men frolicking in sin. They will swear at liberty, and besot themselves at liberty, and corrupt their consciences, even for base trifles. They think they are in no bondage, and they do all wondrous cheerfully and well; whenas indeed the more cheerfully and readily any man performs the base service of sin, the more he is in bondage. Freedom is opposite to bondage. Notwithstanding, such is the nature of sin, that the more freely we do it the more we are bound; because the more freedom we have, the more we are entangled. We ran into guilt upon guilt, till after guilt comes execution, an eternal separation from the presence of God, and an adjudging to eternal torments for ever.

So that it is a false judgment that the world hath. They think great men happy men. Why? They do as they desire. Ay, they may do so, and ofttimes they take the liberty to do so. They will be under no laws. They are so far from obeying the law of God, that they are loath to be hampered with the laws of the state, or with any laws, but they will be above all. A miserable condition! Why? The more will a man hath in evil, the more miserable; for the more freely and with less opposition he tangleth himself. Let his place be never so great, the deeper he sinks in rebellion, and the deeper he sinks into guilt upon guilt; which will all come to a reckoning at the hour of death and day of judgment. So the men that we admire and envy most—out of credulity and lack of judgment—they are the most miserable creatures in the world, if they be out of Christ and have not grace. For they have nature let loose in them without restraint; and nature being under the captivity of sin, becomes out of measure sinful in such. The less a man is curbed either from laws above him or the law within him to check him, the more wretched man he is. For the deeper he goes in rebellion and sin, the deeper his torment shall be afterward.

Great persons have a great privilege. What privilege is that? They shall be greatly tormented. That is all the privilege that I know if they be wicked. Those that shake off all bonds, any earthly privilege and prerogative is so far from exempting them from misery, that it makes them more miserable; for unless they have grace to use those things that might be an advantage to

better things, they sink deeper and deeper into sin, and so into terrors of conscience first or last; and, by consequence, to damnation. Oh it is a fearful condition to be the greatest monarch in the world and not to be in Christ, and under the law of 'the Spirit of life in Christ'! They are the objects of pity more than any other kind of men to truly judicious souls, that know from God's truth, and by the light of the Spirit, what is to be judged of the state of men. You see then what kind of misery it is that natural men are under, being under the law of sin.

6. To declare it a little further, for men will hardly think it is such a bondage to be under sin. Therefore, I beseech you, do but consider how sin tyranniseth where it gets strength. See it in some instances. The covetous worldly man that is under the law of that lust, he hath the law of other lusts, but that is predominant—see how it tyranniseth. It takes away his rest; the use of God's blessings; the good things he bath given him to enjoy. It makes him a slave to the creature. We see it in carnal pleasure. Amnon, when he lusted after his sister Tamar, it took away his rest, 2 Sam. xiii. 2, seq. And how doth this degrading affection tyrannise in some men? It makes them forget their bodies so, that they overthrow their health and hasten death temporal. It hurts the natural man. It makes them forget their reputation; it makes them forget their souls; it makes them stink, by living in that carnal noisome sin. The judicious heathen were sensible of it, by the strength of natural judgment; yet sin where it is in any strength uncurbed, it so tyranniseth, that it makes men forget both health and life and reputation and estate in this world, that they come to nothing. What should I speak of forgetting life eternal and damnation? They have no faith to believe that. But such is the tyranny of sin, that it makes them forget things sensible; that by experience, after they see how dearly they have bought their base pleasures, with the loss of reputation, and health, and comfort; with the loss of the estate that God hath trusted them withal in this world.

Take a man that is under the degrading law of ambition, a proud person. See how it tyranniseth over him. It makes him forget blood and kindred, all the bonds of nature. He will kill his brethren to make his way; as you know in our own stories such tyrants. If there were not stories enough in this kind, daily experience shews it. Where the law of ambition and pride reigns, it makes the heart wherein this tyrant sets up his throne, to forget all bonds whatsoever, of nature and justice. You know whose speech it was, 'If the law must be violated, it must be for a kingdom' [Shakespeare]. But men will do it for far less. We see what men will do for a despicable place to command

others in this world, when they are conscious of their own evil courses, and commanding corruptions; and all to give way to the base affection of ambition. A touch is enough of these things, for experience witnesseth and goes along with me. All men that are not in Christ, they have some predominant sin; either some degrading sin, or some more refined sin and lust, that keeps them from Christ and salvation; and this tyranniseth over them.

And this is the nature of this tyrant sin. It hath such possession of a man till he be got out of it and be in Christ, that it takes away the perception of itself. It hinders the knowledge of itself; it puts out a man's eyes. For that whereby a man should judge of corruption, it is corrupt itself. 'The wisdom of a man is death, it is enmity to God,' Rom. viii. 7. The wit that he hath that should discern of his degrading courses, it tangles him more and more to his own lusts; so that wit and wisdom, the highest part of the soul, it is imprisoned by base affections; and that power that should discern corruption, it is set on work to satisfy corruption. What is the wit of a man that is not in Christ occupied about all his lifetime? It is nothing but a drudge and a slave, to devise means to satisfy his degrading lusts. Take a worldly man: he is exceeding witty to contrive worldly plots and business, though he be a dunce and a sot in matters that are spiritual. In his own tract and course, he hath a shrewd wit. Why? Because his lusts to the world, they whet his wit. So we see the best thing in man now is enthralled to sin, his very wisdom itself; therefore it is enmity to God.

Every man hath some Herodias (Matt. xiv. 3), some sin or other that he is in bondage to, till he be in Christ. He cannot in a like measure be given and enthralled to all sins. It is unnecessary; because one sin serves another. Many sins serve one great one. Corruption doth not run in all streams in one equality: but it runs violently in one way unchecked and uncontrolled and unhindered, in all men that are not in Christ, and subdues the soul to itself, that it can devise and plot for nothing, but to satisfy that base lust. This is the state of man by nature.

Obj. But some will say, it is not our state and condition. We are baptized, and receive the sacrament, and hear sermons, and read good books; and therefore we are not under sin.

Ans. But saith the apostle, 'His servants ye are to whom ye obey,' Rom. vi. 16. You may know the state of your service and subjection, by the course of your life. And as Christ saith to the Jews, John viii. 83, they bragged that

they were free. Alas! proud people! They were neither free for soul nor state; for they were under the Romans. They thought they were free because they were 'Abraham's children.' Were they not in captivity to the Egyptians, and under the Babylonians, and in present captivity under the Romans? Yet they forget themselves out of pride. 'If the Son make you free, ye are free indeed,' John viii. 86; but because they were in a sinful course, they were slaves of sin. So it is no matter what privileges men are under, that they receive the sacrament, and are baptized, and live in the church, &c. 'His servants ye are, whom ye obey.' If there be prevailing lusts that set up their throne and tyrannise in our hearts, and set our wits on work, to devise how to satisfy them more than to please God, it is no matter what privileges we have. It is no matter whose uniform we wear, but whom we serve. We may wear God's uniform, that shall be pulled over our heads afterward and we be left unclothed; that it shall appear that we are the devil's servants under the profession of Christ.

There is no man that is not in Christ, that denies his corrupt nature anything. If revenge bid him take revenge, he will if he can; if he do not, it is no thanks to him, but to the laws. If any sin rise in the heart, all the parts of the body, and powers of the soul, are ready weapons to this tyrant to keep a man in slavery. As if anger and wrath keep a man in bondage, you shall have it in his countenance; his hand will be ready to execute it; his feet will be ready to carry him to revenge. If it be a proud heart that a man is kept under, you shall have it in his looks and expressions outward. If it be the base affection of lust, you shall have adultery in the eye; an unchaste and uncircumcised ear and filthy rotten language. Men you see upon all occasions are ready to execute the commands of these tyrannical lusts, in some kind or other. Therefore never talk of thy freedom, when lusts are raised up within thee, either ascending from thine own corruption, or cast in by Satan, and so joining with thy heart. Presently thy tongue will speak wickedly, and thine eyes, and looks, and countenance, shew that there is a wicked heart within; and the whole man is ready to execute it, further than a man is curbed bylaw, or respect to his reputation or the like, which is no thanks to him. Yet a man cannot act the part of a civil man so well, but the corruption of his vile heart will betray itself in his looks or language. One time or other this tyrant will break forth. Therefore let us look to our hearts and courses; for if we be not in Christ, we are under the 'law of sin.'

'And of death.'

We are not only under the law of sin, but also 'of death.' Now, 1, there is a death in this world, the separation of the soul from the body. But that is not so much meant here. For when we are in Christ we are not free from this death. But there is, 2, a worse death, which is a separation of the soul from the favour and love of God, and from the sanctifying and comforting Spirit of God. When the Spirit of God doth not comfort and sanctify the soul, it is a death. For as the soul is the life of the body, the body hath but a communicated life from the union it hath with the soul. The soul hath a life of its own, when it is out of the body, but the body hath its life from the soul. So it is with the soul in this world.

1. When there is an estrangement of the soul from the Spirit of God and Christ, sanctifying, and comforting and cheering it, then there is a death of the soul. The soul can no more act anything that is savingly and holily good, than the body can be without the soul. And as the body without the soul is a noxious, stinking carcass, offensive in the eyes of its dearest friends, so the soul without the Spirit of Christ quickening and renewing it, and putting a comeliness and beauty upon it, it is odious. All the clothes and flowers you put upon a dead body cannot make it but a stinking carcass; so all the moral virtues, and all the honours in this world put upon a man out of Christ, it makes him not a spiritual living soul; he is but a loathsome corpse, a dead carcass, in the sight of God, and of all that have the Spirit of God. For he is under death. He is stark and stiff, unable to stir or move to any duty whatsoever. He hath no sense nor motion. Though such men live a common natural civil life, and walk up and down, yet they are dead men to God and to a better life. The world is full of dead men, that are dead while they are alive, as St Paul speaks of the 'widow that lives in pleasures,' 1 Tim. v. 6. A fearful estate, if we had spiritual eyes to see it and think of it.

2. But then after the death of the soul in this world, there is another degree of spiritual death; which is, when the soul leaves the body. Then the soul dies. For then it goes to hell. It is severed for ever from the comfortable and gracious presence of God, and likewise it lacks the comforts it had in this world.

3. And the third degree of it is, when body and soul shall be joined together; then there is an eternal separation of both from the presence of God, and an adjudging of them to eternal torments in hell. This is the state of all men that are not in Christ. They are dead in soul while they live; dead after the separation of the soul and body, and after to be adjudged to eternal

damnation, world without end. Life is a sweet thing, and we know death is terrible. When we would set out our hatefulness to anything, we often say, 'I hate it as death.' Do we love life, and do we hate death? We should labour then to be out of that condition that we are all in by nature, wherein we are under sin and death, in regard of spiritual life, I mean; for, for civil life, and government, and policy, men may have life and vigour enough, that are hypocrites. But I speak of a better life, an eternal life, that is not subject to death.

Now, mark the joining of both these together. We are under sin and death by nature. Where a man is under sin he is under death; for as the apostle saith, Rom. v. 12, 'Sin entered into the world, and by sin death.' They were neither of both God's creatures, neither sin nor death. But sin entered into the world by Satan, and death by sin. 'Oh, ye shall not die,' saith Satan. He was a liar alway from the beginning. So now he saith to men, you shall not die; you may do this and do well enough. But he is a liar and a murderer. When he solicits to sin he is a murderer. Let us take heed of solicitations to sin, from our own nature or from Satan. Mark how God hath linked sin and death, 'The wages of sin is death,' Rom. vi. 28. When we are tempted to sin, we think, I shall have this honour, or profit, or contentment, or preferment, and advancement in the world. Ay, but that that you get by sin, it is not so great as you look for, when you have it, if you get it at all. But afterwards comes death, the beginnings of eternal death, terrors of conscience, universally follow, if a man be himself, if he be not stupified. The more a man is a man, and enjoys the liberty of his judgment to judge of things, the more he sees the misery that is due after sin, with a fearful expectation of worse things to come. Sin and death are an adamantine chain and link that none can sever. Who shall separate that which God in his justice hath put together? If sin go before, death will follow. If the conception go before, the birth will follow after; if the smoke go before, the fire will follow. There is not a more constant order in nature than this in God's appointment: first sin, and then death and damnation after.

Use. Therefore when we are tempted to sin let us reason with ourselves, 'There is death in the pot,' 2 Kings iv. 40. Let us discern death in it. It will follow. And if a man after repent of it, it will be more sharp repentance and grievous than the sin was pleasant; that a man shall have little joy of his sin, if he do repent. If he do not repent, what a fearful estate is a man in, after he hath sinned! Sin and death go together. No human power can sever them; for take the greatest monarch in the world, when he hath sinned, conscience is

above him as great as he is, for conscience is next under God. It awes and terrifies him, and keeps his sleep from him; as we see of late in our bloody neighbour country, after that great massacre, he could not sleep without music and the like. All that they have and enjoy in the world, all their greatness, it will not satisfy and stop the mouth of conscience; but when they sin, they feel the wrath of God arresting, and they are as it were shut up in prison, under the terrors of an accusing conscience, till they come to eternal imprisonment in the chains of hell and damnation. This is the estate of the greatest man in the world that is not in Christ. They are not so happy as we think they are. They are imprisoned in their own hearts, though they walk at never so much liberty abroad, and do what they wish; for sin and death goes together, and before eternal death comes, the expectation and terrors of it seize on them for the present. So that whatsoever our first birth be, though it be noble and great, yet by it we are bond-slaves under sin and death, unless our second birth, our new birth, make amends for sin, for the baseness of our first birth. This prerogative, our spiritual nobleness, is such an estate wherein we are not born, but are born again to it, 'to an inheritance immortal,' &c., 1 Peter i.4. But by nature we are all bondmen, though we be born never so nobly. Therefore let us never brag of our birth, as the Jews did, that they were the children of Abraham. No, saith Christ, you are of your father the devil, John viii. 44. Let none stand upon the gentry and nobility of their birth, unless they be taken out of the condition they are in by nature, to be in a better condition in Christ; for we see all men naturally are under the law of sin and death.

These things are slighted, because we enjoy 'the pleasures of sin for a season,' Heb. xi. 25. Men think to be enthralled to sin, it is pleasant thraldom, they are golden fetters; for I shall have the pleasures of sin all my lifetime, &c.; and for death, I will set a Roman spirit against death. Saith a Roman, What! is it such a matter to die? It is nothing to die: They set a good face on the matter. And this is the conceit of many men till they come to it. But, alas! To be in bondage to death, it is another matter, for behind death there is a gulf. A man may break the hedge well enough with a strong resolution to die; it is nothing to die if there were an end. But there is a gulf, there is damnation and destruction behind; there is eternal torment behind; to be adjudged from the presence of God for ever: to be separated from all good and all comfort, and to have society with the devil and his angels in hell, and that for ever and for ever. Thou mayest, perhaps, make slight of the service of sin, because thou hast the present allurements to delight thee, but thou shouldst regard death. Thou mayest neglect death, but then regard eternal

death. This word 'eternal' it is a heavy word, 'eternal' separation from all good; and eternal communion with the devil and his angels; and for the wrath of God to seize on thy soul eternally, world without end. Methinks men should not set light by that. Therefore considering that this is our estate by nature,—we are all slaves to sin and death,—let us labour to get out of this cursed estate by all means, which is by:

'The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.'

Now, I come to speak of our freedom: 'The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath freed me from the law of sin and death.' This is good news indeed, to hear of freedom: good news to the Israelites to hear of freedom out of Egypt, and for the Jews to hear of Cyrus's proclamation for their freedom out of Babylon. Freedom out of bondage is a sweet message. Here we have such a message of spiritual freedom, from other manner of enemies than those were. The year of jubilee, it was a year of consolation to servants that were kept in and were much vexed with their bondage. When the year of jubilee came they were all freed. Therefore there was great expectation of the year of jubilee. Here we have a spiritual jubilee: a manumission and freedom from the bondage we are in by nature. 'The Spirit of life in Christ makes us free from the law of sin and death.' There is life in Christ, opposite to death in us. There is a Spirit of life in Christ and a law of the Spirit of life in Christ, opposite to the law of sin and of death in us. So that this is our happiness while we live here (Oh, it is the blessedness of men to make use of it while they have time and space and grace to repent, and to cleave to Christ), that whatsoever ill we are under by nature, we may have full supply in Christ for all the breaches that came by the first Adam. There came the wrath of God, the corruption of our nature, terrors of conscience, death and damnation. All these followed the sin and breach of the first Adam. All these are made up in the second. He hath freed us from all the ill we received from the first Adam, and that we have added ourselves; for we make ourselves worse than we come from Adam by our voluntary and daily transgressions. But we are freed from all by the 'law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.'

How comes this freedom?

1. There can no freedom be without satisfaction to divine justice. For why are we under sin? God gives us up to sin. Why are we under death? God gives us up to death. Why are we under Satan's government? He is God's executioner, God's serjeant. He gives us up to him here because we offend him. Why are we under damnation and wrath? Because God is offended. All

our slavery comes originally from God. However it be sinful in regard of Satan that keeps us, yet the power whereby he keeps us is good, for he doth it from God. His will is always naught, but his power is always lawful. Therefore the power whereby the devil keeps us, if we look up to God under whom the power is, it is a lawful power; for God hath a hand in giving us up to sin: it is a judicial giving up, and then by lusts and sin, to Satan and death and damnation. So if we speak of freedom, we must not begin with the executioner: the wrath of God must be satisfied. God must be one with us, so as his justice must have contentment. Satisfaction must be with the glory of his justice, as well as of his mercy. His attributes must have full recompense. One must not be destroyed to satisfy another. He must so be merciful in freeing us as that content must be given to his justice, that it complain not of any loss. Now, reconciliation always supposeth recompense. It is founded upon it.

2. And satisfaction for sin, it must be in that nature that hath sinned. Now man of himself could not satisfy divine justice, being a finite person; therefore God the second person became man, that in our nature he might satisfy God's wrath for us, and so free us by giving payment to his divine justice. The death of Christ, God-man, is the price of our liberty and freedom.

But why doth the apostle speak here of 'a law of the Spirit of life in Christ' which frees us? But here is no mention of satisfaction by death.

Oh, but death is the foundation of all, as we shall see afterwards. To unfold the point, therefore, because it is a special point, and the words need unfolding.

Here it is said there is life in Christ.

'A Spirit of life,' and a law of the Spirit of life in Christ.

1. There is life in Christ, not only as God, for so indeed he is life. God his life is himself; for life is the being of a thing, and the actions and moving and vigour and operations of a thing answerable to that being. So the life of God is his being: 'As I live, saith the Lord;' that is, 'As I am God, I will not the death of a sinner,' Ezek. xviii. 82. Now, Christ hath life in him as God, as the Father hath. But that is not especially here meant.

2. There is life in Christ as God-man, as mediator. Now, this life is that life which is originally from the Godhead. Indeed, it is but the Godhead's quickening and giving life to the manhood in Christ; the Spirit quickening and sanctifying the manhood. And we have no comfort by the life of God, as it is in God's life alone severed; for, alas! What communion have we with God without a mediator? But our comfort is this, that God, who is the fountain of life, he became man, and having satisfied God's justice, he conveys life to us. He is our head; he hath life in himself as God, to impart spiritual life to all his members; so there is life in Christ as mediator.

And there is a Spirit of life. That life it is a working life, for spirit is an emphatical word. Spirit added to a thing increased the thing. Again, he saith, 'The law of the Spirit of life.' Law is a commanding thing. To shew that the life in Christ is a commanding life, it countermands all opposing laws whatsoever, of sin and death; and this law is a countermand to all other laws. 'The law of the Spirit of life 'frees us from all other laws. So here is life, the Spirit of life, and the law of the Spirit of life—all words of strong signification.

But for the clear understanding of this sweet and consoling point, first, consider how the law of the Spirit of life is in Christ, what it doth in him, and then how it is derivatively in us.

First of all, We must know this for a foundation, whatsoever is done to us is done to Christ first; and whatsoever we have, Christ hath it first. Therefore life is first in Christ, and then in us; resurrection first in Christ, and, then in us; sonship first in Christ, and then in us; justification from our sins first in Christ—he is freed from our sins—and then in us; ascension first in Christ, and then in us; glory in heaven first in Christ, and then in us. We have nothing in us, but it is derived from Christ. Therefore, this being laid as a ground, we must consider how the Spirit of life works in Christ, what it doth in Christ, and then what it doth as it is in us; for whatsoever Christ hath, it is not only for himself, but for us.

What doth it in Christ?

1. The Spirit of life in Christ, first of all, it did quicken and sanctify his human nature. That nature that Christ pleased to take upon him it stopped sin, it made a stop of original sin, in sanctifying that blessed substance out of which his body was made. For the foundation of his obedience actual, that it was so holy, it was hence that his nature was purified by the Holy Ghost in

the womb of the virgin. The foundation that his death and sufferings was satisfactory and acceptable, it was that his holy nature was sanctified by the Spirit of God. So the first work of the Spirit of life in the Son of God, it was to sanctify and quicken that blessed human body that he took upon him.

2. And the Spirit of life that quickened and sanctified our nature in Christ did likewise ennoble our nature; for even as a common woman is ennobled when she is taken in marriage with a great man,—she hath his dignity accounted hers—so our nature, by the Spirit being sanctified, is knit into the union of person with Christ, that our nature and the second person make one Christ. So our nature by the Spirit is ennobled by this union. And:

3. Also enriched it with all grace that our nature is capable of; for the nature of Christ had this double prerogative above ours: first of all, that blessed mass of flesh, it was knit to be one person with God; and then, that nature was enriched and ennobled with all graces above ours. And this the Spirit of life did to Christ himself, to his human nature that he took upon him, that he might be a public person. For God, the second person, took not upon him any man's particular person, of Peter, or Paul; or John, for then there should have been distinct persons, one person should have died, and another rise; but he took our nature into his person. So that the same person that did die was God, though he died in our nature, that he might be a public person. So we must consider Christ sanctifying our nature, that he might fit and sanctify all our persons. But did the Spirit of life do nothing else but sanctify and enrich the human nature of Christ with grace?

4. Yes. For the Spirit of life in Christ did sanctify him for his sacrifice, as he saith, John xvii. 19, in that blessed prayer, 'I sanctify myself for them.' It prepared him for his death, and made him a fit sacrifice. When he entered upon his calling, he had more of the Spirit: the Spirit of life, as it were, was increased. For it is no heresy to think, that the gifts of Christ, for the manifestation of them, were increased. For in every state he was in, he was perfect; and when he set upon his office; and was baptized, he was made more full of the Holy Ghost: as it were, there was a fuller manifestation than before, when he did not set upon his office openly.

5. In his death, what did the Spirit of life then? It supported him in his very death; for there was an union of the Spirit. When there was a separation of his soul and body, there was not a separation of the union. That which gave dignity, and strength, and value, and worth to his death, it was the Spirit. Though there was a suspending of the comfort a while, yet there was no

separation of the union. But I speak no more of that, being not especially meant here.

6. But especially in his resurrection (which we are now to think of by reason of the day, and it is not amiss to take all occasions), especially then, the Spirit of life that had sanctified Christ, and quickened him, and enriched his nature, and supported him, and done all, that Spirit of life quickened the dead body of Christ. 'And he was mightily declared to be the Son of God by the Spirit of sanctification, by his resurrection from the dead,' Rom. i.4. The Spirit of life raised him from the dead, and put an end to all that misery that he had undergone before for our sakes. For until his resurrection, there was, as it were, some conflict with some enemies of Christ, either with Satan, or the world, or with death itself. He lay under death three days. Until Christ's body was raised, our enemies were not overcome. God's wrath was not fully satisfied. It was not declared to be satisfied at least. For he being our surety, till he came out of the grave, we could not know that our sins were satisfied for. But now, when the Spirit of life in Christ comes, and quickens that body of his in the grave, and so doth justify us, as it is, Rom. iv. 25, 'He died for our sins, and rose again for our justification:' that is, by the Spirit of life in Christ quickening his dead body, he declared that we are fully discharged from our sins, because he was fully discharged from our sins; being our surety, he shewed by his resurrection that he was fully discharged from all that he took upon him. When a man comes out of prison that is a surety, his very coming out of prison shews that he hath a full discharge of all the debt he undertook to pay. So the Spirit of life, raising Christ's body the third day, manifestly declared that the debt he took on him was fully discharged. And so as he died for sin, to satisfy God's justice for them, so he rose again for our justification, to shew that he had a full discharge for all.

Now, since the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath quickened his body, the soul may make a bold demand to God, as it is in 1 Pet. iii. 16. It may make that demand, Rom. viii. 83, 'Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is Christ that died, nay rather, that is risen again,' and ascended into heaven, and makes intercession for us. 'Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's people? It is God that justifieth, who shall condemn?' Our sins? Christ hath taken our sins upon him, and satisfied divine justice for them; and by the Spirit of life hath quickened that dead body of his, that was surety for us himself. We may well say, 'Who shall lay anything to our charge?' He that is our surety is dead. Dead? Nay, risen again; nay, ascended, and sits at the right hand of God. Therefore now the conscience of any Christian may

make that interrogation and bold demand there. It may stand out any that dares to oppose the peace of his conscience, now that he may say, Who is it? It is God-man that died. It is Christ that died in our nature, and hath raised that nature of ours again, and is at the right hand of God. Who shall lay anything to our charge? The Spirit of life in Christ, quickening him, hath quickened us together with him; so that now we may boldly demand we are freed from our sins, because our Surety is freed from all.

All this was for our good. What Christ did, it was not for himself, but for us. And in his birth, and life, and death, and resurrection, we must consider him as a public person, and so go along with all that he did as a public person. Whatsoever may be terrible to us, we must look upon it first in Christ. If we look upon the corruption and defilement in our nature, look upon the pure nature of Christ. His nature was sanctified in his birth, and he is a public person: therefore this is for me; and though I be defiled in my own nature, and carry the remainders of corruption about me, yet the Spirit of life in Christ sanctified his nature, and there is more sanctity in him than there can be sin in me. When we look upon our sins, let us not so much look upon them in our consciences, as in our surety, Christ. When we look upon death, look not upon it in ourselves, in its own visage, but as it is in Christ, undergone and conquered: for the power of the Spirit of life in Christ overcame death, in himself first, and for us, and will overcome in us in time. When the wrath of God is on our consciences, look not upon it as it is in ourselves, but as undergone by Christ, and as Christ, by the Spirit of life now in him, is raised up, not from death alone, but from all terrors. 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' See Christ, by the Spirit of life, quickened from all; not only bare natural death, but from all enemies thou needest to fear. From the law: it is nailed to his cross; he now triumphs over it; and from sin: he was a sacrifice for it; and from the wrath of God: he hath satisfied it, or else he had not come out of his grave. So whatsoever is terrible, look on it in Christ first, and see a full discharge of all that may affright thy conscience, and trouble thy peace any way. See him in his death, dying for every man that will believe. Consider him in his resurrection as a public person, not rising himself alone, but for all us. Therefore in 1 Pet. i.8, there is an excellent place, 'Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath begotten us again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, to an inheritance immortal, undefiled,' &c.; and so go along with him to his ascension, and see ourselves 'sitting with him in heavenly places,' as St Paul speaks, Eph. ii. 6. Oh this is a sweet meditation of Christ! To see ourselves in him, in all the passages of his birth, and life, and death, and

resurrection, and ascension to glory in heaven; for all that he did was as a public person, as the second Adam. But now, before the Spirit of life in Christ come to free me, I and Christ must be one; there must be a union between me and Christ; I must be a member of Christ mystical. For as Christ quickened his own body, every joint when it was dead, because it was his body, so he quickens his mystical body, every member of it. But I must be a member first; I must not be myself severed from Christ. Christ by his death obtained all good, and by his resurrection he declared it; but there must be an application to me. Now this Spirit of life which is in Christ, which quickened him and raised him up, and all for my good, must apply this to me.

The grace of application it is faith. Therefore this must be wrought in the next place. How doth the law of the Spirit of life free me? Because first it freed Christ, therefore me. But that is not enough, except there be application. Therefore the law of the Spirit of life works faith in me, to knit me to Christ, to make me believe, that all that he hath done is mine; and the same power that raised Christ from the dead, works the power of faith and application. For we must not think that it is an easy thing for a carnal man to believe, to go out of himself, that it is salvation enough to have salvation, by the obedience of another man. No. Both in the Ephesians and Colossians, in divers places, it is St Paul's phrase, that the same power 'that raised Christ from the dead;' must raise our hearts, and work faith in them. For as the good things that faith lays hold on are wondrous good things, even above admiration almost; that poor flesh and blood, a piece of earth, should be an heir of heaven, a member of Christ; that it should be above angels in dignity. And just as these things are super-excellent things, even above admiration in a manner, so the grace that believes these things, is also astonishing and excellent, and admirable grace, that is faith. Therefore faith must be wrought by the law of the Spirit of Christ by the ministry of the gospel. This is the grace of application, when a man goes out of himself; when he sees himself first in bondage to his corruptions, to Satan, and to death; and then sees the excellent way that God hath wrought in Christ to bring him out of that cursed estate; then he hath faith wrought in him by the Spirit. And indeed the same power and Spirit that quickened Christ from the dead, must quicken our hearts to believe in Christ. It is a miracle to bring the heart of man to believe. We think it an easy matter to believe. Indeed, it is an easy matter to presume, to have a conceit, but for the soul in the time of temptation, and in the hour of death, for the guilty soul to go out of itself, and cast itself upon the mercy of God, who is justly offended, and to believe that the obedience of Christ is mine, as verily as if I had obeyed myself, here must be a strong

sanctified judgment and a mighty power to raise the soul, to cast itself so upon God's mercy in Christ. So that besides the obtaining salvation by Christ, there must be a grace to apply it; and this is what faith accomplishes.

Faith is said to do that that Christ doth, because faith lays hold upon Christ. What faith doth, Christ doth; and what Christ doth, faith doth. Therefore it hath the same actions applied and given to it that Christ hath. Faith is said to save us. You know it is Christ that saves us. But faith lays hold on Christ that saves us. Faith purgeth the heart, and overcomes the world. Christ by his Spirit doth all this. Because faith wrought by the Spirit is such a grace as lays hold on the power of Christ, it goes out of itself to Christ, therefore what Christ doth, faith is said to do. So then the law of the Spirit of life in Christ not only freed Christ himself by his resurrection, but likewise by the same power whereby he raised himself, he raiseth our hearts to believe what he hath done, both in his state of humiliation and exaltation, and makes all that Christ did ours.

The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, working faith in us, and by faith other graces, work together to free us from the law of sin and death. Christ doth it, and faith doth it, and grace, which issues from faith, doth it subordinately. Christ doth it by way of merit; and by his Spirit working faith in us, to lay hold upon whatsoever Christ hath done or suffered, as if we had done it ourselves. So it frees us from the law of sin and death, because it lays hold of the freedom wrought by Christ for us. But besides, and next to faith, there is a Spirit of sanctification, by which we are free from the commanding law of sin and death. But to clear all this, consider there is a freedom in this life, and in the life to come from sin and from death.

I. A freedom in this life, in calling, in justification, in sanctification; and in the life to come a freedom of glory.

1. There is a freedom in effectual calling, by the ministry of the gospel. The gospel being preached and unfolded, faith is wrought, whereby we know what Christ hath done for us; and we see a better condition in Christ than we are in by nature. Seeing by the Spirit of God the cursed estate we are in, we are convinced of sin in ourselves, and of the good that is in Christ; and hereupon we are called out of the thraldom we are in by nature, by the Spirit of Christ and the word of God, unfolding what our condition is; for man by nature having self-love in him, and that self-love being turned the right way, he begins to think, Ay, doth the word of God say I am a slave to sin and damnation? The word of God can judge better than myself; and then the

Spirit of God sets it on with conviction, that undoubtedly this is true. And together with the cursed kingdom and slavery that I am under, there is revealed a better estate in Christ; for the gospel tells us what we are in Christ; freed from hell and death, and heirs of heaven. Oh the happy estate of a Christian to be in Christ! The gospel, with the Spirit revealing this, a man is called out of the cursed estate he is in by nature to the fellowship of Christ by faith, which is wrought in this calling. So that now he comes to be a member of Christ by faith. So that whatsoever Christ hath, or is, or hath done or suffered, it is mine by reason of this union with him by faith, which is the grace of union that knits us to Christ, and the first grace of application. So there is the first degree of liberty and freedom wrought by the Spirit of God, together with the gospel in effectual calling.

2. The second is in justification. That faith and belief in Christ that was wrought in effectual calling, it frees me from the guilt of my sins. For when the gospel, in effectual calling, reveals that Christ is such a one, and that there is such an estate in Christ, and there is faith wrought in me, then that faith lays hold upon the obedience of Christ to be mine. For Christ in the gospel offers his obedience to be mine, as if I had done it in mine own person. Whatsoever Christ did or suffered is mine; for he is made of God to be 'wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption,' 1 Cor. i.30, to be all in all. The gospel sets him forth to be so. Now faith laying hold of Christ, to be made of God all in all, obedience, righteousness, &c., whatsoever is needful, hereupon this faith justifies me; hereupon I come to be free from the guilt of my sins, because my sins were laid upon Christ. Christ's death was the death of a surety. It was as if I had died myself, and more firm. Thus I come to be free in justification; for what my surety hath done I have done.

3. Again, There is a freedom in sanctification; that is, when a man believes that Christ is his, and that his sufferings are his, then the same Spirit that reveals this to be mine, it works a change and alteration in my nature, and frees me from the dominion of sin. The obedience of Christ frees me from the condemnation of sin, and the Spirit of sanctification frees me from the dominion of sin. This is the freedom of sanctification, which faith lays hold on. 'Whosoever hath not the Spirit of Christ is none of his,' Rom. viii. 9. Christ as a head communicates to me the Holy Spirit to sanctify my nature; and 'of his fulness we receive grace for grace,' John i.16. So the Spirit of sanctification in Christ frees me from the dominion of sin and death.

It is said here, that by Christ we have spiritual liberty and freedom, not from sin and death, but from the law of sin and of death. It is one thing to be freed from sin and death, and another thing to be freed from the law of them; for we are not indeed freed from sin and death, but from the law of sin and death, that is, from the condemning power of sin; that though sin be in us yet it doth not condemn us; and though we die, yet the sting is pulled out. Death is but a passage to a better life. So I say in justification, we are freed from the condemning power of sin; and in sanctification, from the commanding power of sin. When we are knit once to Christ, we have the obedience of Christ, ours in justification; and the holiness of Christ is derived to us, as from the head to the members in sanctification; and so we are freed from the law of sin.

To understand this a little better, the same Spirit that sanctified the natural body, the human nature of Christ, whereby he 'became bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh,' Eph. v. 30: the same Spirit doth sanctify the mystical body of Christ, that it may be 'bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh.' For before we come to heaven, Christ must not only 'be bone of our bone,' &c., that is, in his incarnation, but we must be 'bone of his bone,' &c.; that is, we must have natures like Christ, not only flesh and blood—for so a reprobate hath flesh and blood, as Christ hath—but we must have his Spirit altering and changing our nature: that instead of a proud, disobedient, rebellious nature, now it must be a holy and humble and meek nature, together with human frailty, for that we carry about with us. Then the Spirit of life derived from Christ makes us 'bone of his bone.' For indeed, in his human nature being 'bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh,' he made us 'bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh.' He became man that we might partake of the divine nature, being partakers of the divine Spirit. So that now the Spirit of life in Christ, when we are knit to him, is a Spirit of sanctification, altering our natures and working in our hearts a disposition like Christ's: that we judge as Christ judgeth, and choose as Christ chooseth, and aim at God's glory as Christ did; for there is 'the same mind in us that was in Christ,' Philip. ii. 5—in our proportion, growing still more and more to conformity with Christ, till we be in heaven, till 'Christ be all in all,' 1 Cor. xv. 28, when he will change our nature to be holy as his own.

II. Besides this liberty from sin and death in this life, there is a glorious liberty and freedom that we have by the Spirit of Christ when we are dead; for then the Spirit of life that raised Christ's dead body will raise our bodies; and that Spirit of Christ that raiseth his body and raiseth our souls in this

world from sin to believe in him, will raise our dead bodies. The same virtue and power that works in Christ works in his members. This is called 'the glorious liberty of the sons of God.' Then we shall be freed indeed, not only from the law of sin, but from sin itself; and not only from the law of death, but death itself; and we 'shall live for ever with the Lord,' 1 Thess. iv. 17. Christ then 'shall be all in all by his Spirit.' Christ will never leave us till he have brought us to that glorious freedom. We are freed already from sin and death. He hath 'set us in heavenly places together with himself' now, Eph. i.3. In faith we are there already: but then we shall be indeed. Thus you see how we come to have the law of the Spirit of life in Christ, to free us from the law of sin and death, and all the passages of it.

Use. You see here that there is law against law—the law of the Spirit of life in Christ against the law of sin and death. I beseech you, consider that God hath appointed law to countermand law; the Spirit of Christ to overcome sin in us, not only in justification but in sanctification. Oh let us therefore to our comfort think there is a law above this law. I have now cold, dead, base affections; but if I have the Spirit of Christ, he can quicken and enliven me. He will not only pardon my sin, but by the law of his Spirit direct, guide, and command me a contrary way to my lusts. And this is an art of spiritual prudence in heavenly things, whensoever we are beset with dangers, to set greater than that against it. The devil is an angel; but we have a guard of angels about us. The devil is a serpent; but we have a brazen serpent that cures all the stings of that serpent. We have principalities and powers against, but we have greater principalities and powers for us: the law of life against the law of sin and death. We have a law of our lusts tyrannizing over us and enthralling us. It is true. But then there is a law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, to overcome and subdue that law of our lusts, if so be that we use the prerogatives we have, if we use faith and go to God and Christ, in whom are all the treasures of grace. He is the treasury of the church: 'Of his fulness we receive grace for grace,' John i.16. Are we troubled with any corruptions? Go to the Spirit of liberty in Christ, and desire him to set us at liberty from the bondage and thraldom of our corruptions. And remember what Christ hath done for us, and where he is now, in heaven. Let us raise our thoughts that we may see ourselves in heaven already; that we maybe ashamed to defile our bodies and souls with the base drudgery of sin and Satan, that are sanctified in part in this world, and shall be glorified in heaven. Certainly faith would raise our souls so. We betray ourselves, when, being once in the state of grace, we are enthralled basely to any sin. 'For sin shall not have dominion over you, because you tare under grace,' saith the

apostle, Rom. vi. 14. Being under grace, if we do but use our reasoning and use faith and exercise the grace we have given us, we cannot be in thrall to corruptions. We shall have remainders to trouble us, but not to rule, and reign, and domineer. For sin never bears sway, but when we betray ourselves, and either believe not what Christ hath done for us, or else exercise not our faith. A Christian is never overtaken basely, but when he neglects his privileges and prerogatives, and doth not stir up the grace of God in him.

Learn this then, when we are troubled with anything, set law against law: set the law of the Spirit of life in Christ against all oppositions whatsoever; and let the temptation lie where it will.

1. Let it lie in justification, as when we are tempted by Satan to despair for sins, for great sins. Oh, but then consider, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ hath 'freed me from the law of sin and of death.' Christ was made sin, to free me from sin. Consider that Christ was God-man. He satisfied divine justice. 'The blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin,' 1 John i.7, 'though they be as red as crimson,' Isa. i.18. Thus set Christ against our sins in justification, when the guilt of them troubles our souls.

2. And so likewise, when we are set on by base lusts, set against them the power of Christ in sanctification. What am I now? A member of Christ; one that professeth myself to be an heir of heaven. There is a Spirit of life in Christ my head. There is a law of the Spirit of life in Christ; that is, there is a commanding power in his Spirit; and that Spirit of his is not only in the head, but in the members. If I go to him for grace, I may have grace, answerable to the grace that is in him, grace that will strengthen me with his power. 'Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might,' Eph. vi. 10, and in 'Christ I can do all things,' Philip. iv. 18, by his Spirit, though in myself I can do nothing.

3. And so in deadness and desolation of spirit, when the soul is cast down with discomfort, let us think with ourselves, the Spirit of life in Christ is a quickening Spirit. If I can believe in Christ, he hath freed me from the guilt of sin; and he hath by his Spirit given me some little enlargement from the dominion of my corruptions: why should I be cast down? I am an heir of heaven. Ere long Satan shall 'be trodden under my feet,' Luke x. 19. Ere long I shall be free from the spiritual combat and conflict with sin, that I am now engaged with. Therefore I will comfort myself; I will not be cast down overmuch.

4. In the hour of death, let us make use of this freedom of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. When the time comes that there must be a separation of soul and body, Oh let us think with our ourselves: Now I must die, yet Christ hath died; and I must die in conformity to my head; and here is my comfort—'The law of the Spirit of life hath freed me from the law of death.' It hath freed me from spiritual and eternal death. So that now through Christ death is become friendly to me. Death now is not the death of me, but death will be the death of my misery, the death of my sins; it will be the death of my corruptions. Death now will be the death of all that before troubled me. But death will be my birthday in regard of happiness. 'Better is the day of death than the day of birth,' Eccles. vii. 1. When a man comes into this life he comes into misery; but when he dies, he goes out of misery and comes to happiness. So that, indeed, we never live till we die; we never live eternally and happily till then. For then we are freed from all misery and sin. 'Blessed are they that die in the Lord; they rest from their labours,' Rev. xiv. 18. They rest from their labours of toil and misery; they rest from the labours of sin, from all labours whatsoever. 'Blessed are they that die in the Lord,' and of all times then blessed, more blessed than before. They rest from their labours, and then begins their happiness that shall never end. So you see what comfort a Christian's soul sprinkled with the blood of Christ may have, if it go to God in Christ, and beg of Christ to be set at liberty from all enemies, to serve God in holiness and righteousness.

I speak too poorly when I say, the law of the Spirit of life hath freed us from sin and death. This is not all. The Spirit of life not only frees us from ill, but advanceth us to the contrary good in every thing wherein this freedom is. For we are not only called out of misery, but to a kingdom. We are not only freed from sin, but entitled to heaven in justification; and in sanctification we are not only freed from corruption, but enabled by the Holy Spirit of liberty to run the ways of God's commandments, and make them voluntary; to serve God cheerfully, 'zealous of good works,' Titus ii. 14. We are not only freed from the command and condemnation of sin, and the rigour of the law, but we have contrary dispositions, ready and willing, and voluntary dispositions, wrought by the Spirit of Christ, to every thing that is good. And so we are not only free from death and misery (for so things without life are, they suffer no misery), but we are partakers of everlasting life and glory, the liberty of glory. God's benefits are complete; that is, not only privative, freeing us from ill, but positive, implying all good; because God will show himself a God: he will do good things as a God, fully. For the law of the Spirit of life not only frees us from the law of sin and of death, but 'writes

the law of God in our hearts.' He not only frees us from the law of death, but advanceth us to everlasting life, to the glorious life we have in heaven, 'to live for ever with the Lord,' 1 Thes. iv. 17. Oh happy condition of a Christian, if we could know our happiness!

Let us often meditate deeply of Christ, and of ourselves in him; let us see all our ill in him, and all our good in him: see death overcome, and sin overcome by his death, he being I made a curse for us,' Gal. iii. xiii. see the law overcome, he being 'made under the law for us,' Gal. iv. 4,5. When the wrath of God vexeth and terrifieth us, see it upon him. 'He sweat water and blood in the garden,' Luke xxii. 44. It made him cry out, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Mark xv. 34. See all that may trouble us in him, as our surety. And all the good we hope for, see it in Christ first. Whatsoever he hath in his natural body, it is for his mystical body; for he gave his natural body for his mystical. God in the world, to humble us, exerciseth us with troubles and calamities, as he did Christ. We must be conformable to our head. But consider, the poison and sting of all ills we need to fear is swallowed up and taken away by Christ. And, as I said, let us see all our good in him. We are sons in him, raised in him, blessed in him, 'set in heavenly places with him,' Eph. i.3, and shall be fellow-heirs and kings with him; for we are his members, his spouse. The wife shall enjoy the same condition as the husband; whatsoever he hath she shall have. What a comfortable estate is this We can fear no ill, nor lack any good. Whatsoever he hath, it is for us. He was born for us. He died for us. He is gone to heaven for us; for us and our good. He did and suffered all these things. We cannot exercise our thoughts too much in these meditations.

The Lord's supper is a sacrament of union and communion. Hence it hath its name; and by receiving the sacrament, our communion and union with Christ is strengthened. What a comfort then is it to think, if I have fellowship with Christ it is sealed by the sacrament! When I take the bread and wine, at the same time I have communion with the body and blood of Christ shed for my sins; and as Christ himself was freed from my sins imputed to him, and by his resurrection declared that he was freed, so surely shall I be freed from my sins. So that this communion, taking the bread and wine, it seals to us our communion and fellowship with Christ, and thereupon our freedom from sin and from the law, and sets us in a blessed and happy estate. We should labour therefore by all means to strengthen our union and communion with Christ; and amongst the rest, reverently and carefully attend upon this blessed ordinance of God, for the body of Christ

broken doth quicken us, because it is the body of the Son of God. 'My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed,' John vi. 55. And he calls his body broken the bread of life.' Why? Because it was the body of the Son of God, 'who is life,' John vi. 35. All life comes from God. Now, Christ taking our nature upon him, his death is a quickening death, and by reason of the union with the divine nature, now it is the body of God broken and the blood of God shed for us. There is our comfort; and he was declared to be so by his resurrection, that declared that he was God, and that he was freed from our sins. Powerful must that Saviour needs be that was so strong in his very death, when his very body was broken and his blood let out. Then he did work the foundation of all comfort, for then he satisfied the wrath of God. Christ was strongest when he was weakest. The resurrection was but a declaration of the worth of that he had done. Now, in the sacrament we have communion with Christ dying, especially as his body is broken and his blood shed, for that is the foundation of all comfort by his resurrection. And because the Spirit of life was in Christ, and did quicken his body while he was alive, and was a Spirit of life even when he died, and gave worth and excellency to his death, therefore, when we take the communion, we ought not to meditate merely of the death of Christ, as his blood was shed and his body broken, but of the death of such a person as had the Spirit of life in him, as was God and man. And so set the excellency of his person against all temptations whatsoever. Set the excellency of Christ so abased, his body broken and his blood shed, against all temptations. If it be the greatest, the wrath of God upon the conscience, yet when conscience thinks this, God, the party offended, gave his own Son to be incarnate, and the Spirit of life in him did quicken man's nature, and in that nature did die for satisfaction, now God will be satisfied by the death of such a surety as his own Son. So that the excellency of the person having the seal of God upon him, 'For him hath God the Father sealed,' John vi. 27, doth wondrously satisfy conscience in all temptations whatsoever: What need a man fear death, and damnation, and the miseries of this life, and Satan? What are all? If God be appeased and reconciled in Christ, then a man hath comfort, and may think of all other enemies as conquered enemies. Now, we cannot think of the death of Christ, who was a 'quickening Spirit,' but we must think of the death of an excellent person, that gave worth to his death, to be a satisfactory death for us. Therefore let us receive the communion with comfort, that as verily as Christ is mine, so his quickening Spirit is communicated to me, and whatsoever he hath is mine. If I have the field, I have the pearl in it; his obedience, his victory over death, his sonship, is mine; his sitting in heaven is for me; he sits there to rule me while I am on earth, and to take me up to himself when I am

dead. All is for me. When we have communion with Christ we have communion with all. Therefore 'the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus,' when I am one with him, it quickens me, and 'frees me from the law of sin and death.'

The Privileges of the Faithful

Also we know that all things work together for the best to them that love God, even to them that are called of his purpose.—Rom. VIII. 28.

There are three things especially that trouble the life of a Christian, or at least should trouble the same.

1. The first whereof is sin, with the guilt and punishment thereof.

2. The second is the corruption of nature, which still abides in him, even after his vocation and conversion to Christ.

3. The third is, the miseries and crosses of this life, which do follow and ensue both upon sin and the evil thereof, as also by reason of that corruption of nature still remaining in him, after his recovered estate in grace.

For the first, the guilt of sin, which doth bind men over to death and damnation, that is forgiven to all believers in Christ Jesus, the 'second Adam.'

The second, which is the corruption of nature, which cleaves so fast to us, that is daily mortified and crucified in the saints by the word and Spirit of God.

For the third, which is the grievous crosses and afflictions, which do accompany and follow the guilt of sin and the corruption of nature still remaining In God's children; however they are not taken away, yet they are made to have an excellent issue, 'for all things work together for the best unto them that love God.' So that these words of the apostle do afford us,

1. A ground of patience.

2. A ground of comfort.

In the former part of this chapter, the apostle had told us, 'that we know not how to pray as we ought, but that the Spirit itself doth teach us how to pray, and makes requests for us with sighs that cannot be expressed.' And therefore however our corruptions and miseries in this life are not quite taken away, yet the evil of those evils is removed, God teaching and directing

us by his Spirit to seek, by prayer unto him, for grace to profit by them. And this is the coherence of those words with the former.

The parts here to be handled may be these.

1. An excellent prerogative: 'All things work together for the best.'

2. Secondly, The persons to whom this prerogative belongs: 'To them that love God,' and 'whom he doth call.'

3. Thirdly, The main cause of this blessed prerogative.

Those that 'love God' have this privilege belonging to them, because they are 'effectually called' by his word, 'according to his purpose.' We know, saith the apostle, 'that all things work together for the best to these.' He doth not say, 'we hope,' or 'we conjecture,' but 'we know it assuredly.'

We have the Scriptures of God for it. David saith, that 'it was good for him that he was afflicted,' Ps. cxix. 67, for thereby he had learned to reform his ways; he knew by observation that all things would tend to his future happiness. For he had seen in the example of Job, that notwithstanding his sore afflictions, yet he had a blessed issue out of all. He knew this many ways. He knew it by faith, as also by experience, that every thing should further the saints' well-being.

We know, that is, we only know it, who are 'led and taught of God,' and none but we can be assured hereof, which excludes the wicked, who shall never know any such thing. But what is it that Paul is confident of here? Namely, 'that all things work together for the best to them that love God.'

And this may serve to be a prevention of a question, which weak Christians might move in their troubles, and say, 'Never was any more afflicted than I am.' Why, saith the apostle, be it so. Yet, nevertheless, all things whatsoever, all thy crosses, vexations, and trials, 'shall work together' and join issue. Though they be averse one to the other, and opposite to the good of God's children, as Herod and Pilate were, yet all things thus contrary notwithstanding shall work for the best unto them. There is,

1. A good of quality.

2. A good of estate.

Quest. Now therefore what kind of good is this the apostle meaneth?

Ans. He doth not here mean the natural or civil good estate of them that love God, but their spiritual condition in grace, and their glorious estate for the life to come; for the furthering whereof, whatsoever befalls them in this life shall help forward still.

And thus much for the words themselves.

Doct. The first point to be spoken of is, the excellent privilege of God's children, 'that all things shall work together for the best;' both good and evil shall turn to their happiness. The reason stands thus: 'All things shall work together for the best to them that love God.' Therefore all afflictions, crosses, and vexations whatsoever, that betide such persons, shall work together for their good; and for this cause all God's servants must learn patiently to bear, and cheerfully to undergo poverty or riches, honour or dishonour, in this world.

That all good things do work for the best to God's servants, is most apparent by daily proof and experience.

1. To begin with the first chief good of all, which is God the Father, who is goodness itself, and unspeakably comfortable to all his. Do not all God's attributes conduce to our eternal welfare? Is he not set forth in Scripture under the sweet name of a 'Father,' of a 'Shield and Buckler,' of a 'Tower of defence,' of an 'all-sufficient and almighty God,' 'just, wise, provident, merciful,' full of boundless compassion, and all to support his poor creatures from failing before him?

As he is our 'Father,' he is careful of us above the care of earthly parents to their children; as he is a 'Shield,' so he shelters us from all wrongs; as he is 'God almighty and all-sufficient,' so his power and bounty serve to sustain us in this world, and reserve us for ever safe in the world to come. His 'wisdom' makes us wise to prevent the politic plots of the devil or wicked men; his justice and providence, they serve to defend us in our right, to provide for us in all our wants, and prevent the evils of the ungodly intended against us; his power is ours, to keep us; his providence, to dispose all things for our advantage. Everything in God shall co-work to provide and foresee all good for us, and mercifully to impart and bestow whatsoever is behoveful upon us. So that God being our Father, we have right and title to his love, mercy,

power, justice, truth, faithfulness, providence, wisdom, and all-sufficiency: all which 'shall ever work together for the best to them that love his appearing.'

2. So for Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God. All his glorious titles and attributes serve likewise for the everlasting comfort of his poor saints on earth. He is called the 'husband of his church,' to cherish and maintain the same. His love unto his church is far above the love of any husband to his wife. He is called the 'Saviour of the world,' because he 'so loved the world, that he gave his life for it,' Gal. ii. 20, and hath promised, 'that whosoever believeth on him shall not perish,' 2 Peter iii. 9. He is called the 'Fountain of life,' the 'Well of life,' the 'Water of life,' the 'Bread of life,' the 'Way, the Truth and the Life,' because that in him is our life, and by him we are fed and nourished to eternal life. Here in him we obtain the life of grace, and in the world to come shall for ever enjoy the life of glory.

3. So likewise for the Holy Ghost. What heavenly attributes are ascribed to him in the Scriptures! He is called 'the Comforter' of God's servants; the Sealer of the redemption of God's children in their hearts. He teacheth the elect to call God Father; he 'beareth witness with their spirits that they are the sons and daughters of God;' he teacheth them 'to pray as they ought;' 'he tills them with peace that passeth all understanding,' and refreshes their spirits with such unspeakable joy as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard the like. He that is instructed by the Spirit knoweth the things of God, which a natural man is ignorant of. The Holy Ghost doth call to remembrance the doctrine of God taught unto his servants, and writes the same in their hearts; so that the operations of the blessed Spirit are all appropriated to them that 'love God,' and they alone have their right in them. The direction, comfort, teaching, and guiding of the Spirit of God do serve entirely and peculiarly to order and work all things together for the best to the godly.

4. Yea, the angels themselves are called 'messengers and ministering spirits,' appointed by God to attend and wait upon his servants. 'He gives his angels charge over these, to serve them in all their ways, and to pitch their tents round about them,' Ps. xxxiv. 7. Whensoever God pleaseth to call any of his out of this world, the angels are a safe conduct, to carry their souls into 'Abraham's bosom.' And at the 'last judgment,' the Lord shall send forth his angels 'to gather his elect,' Mat. xxiv. 81, from one end of the world to the other, that they may fully enjoy that which they have long waited for, even eternal bliss and glory.

5. Under the angels all other creatures are likewise made serviceable for his people's good. Princes in authority are called in Scripture 'nursing fathers and nursing mothers' unto the church of Christ, Isa. xlix. 23, the end of all magistracy being that we might live religiously and peaceably in all the ways of God.

O. Ministers also are styled in the word by the names of 'watchmen and seedsmen,' and 'spiritual fathers,' to beget men again to the kingdom of heaven. They are called 'God's husbandmen,' to manure and till his ground. They are called 'God's lights,' and 'the salt of the earth,' both to enlighten the church with the light of the glorious gospel whereof they are ministers, and to season them with such savoury and sweet instructions as may make them wise to salvation: this being the very end of all God's giving gifts to men, that they might build up the church of Christ here below.

7. So also the word of God is called the 'savour of life, and 'the power of God unto salvation.' It is 'the seed of God,' which being sown in the hearts of God's children, springeth up in them to everlasting happiness. God's word is a 'light and a lantern' to guide and direct us in all his ways. It is the sword of the Spirit, to arm us against sin and to maintain us in grace.

8. The sacraments likewise are the seals of life and pledges of our salvation in Christ; and excommunication, though it be rough, and the extremest censure of the church (and therefore ought to be undertaken upon weighty grounds), yet the end of it is, to save the souls of God's people, and to make them by repentance turn unto him.

9. So all outward gifts, as beauty, strength, riches, and honours, these are given by God to serve for the good of his children. As the beauty of Esther was an instrument of her preferment, whereby she became a preservation to God's children, and an overthrow of her and their enemies: [and as] Joseph's outward honours and wealth were made by God's disposing hand a means of the preservation and nourishment of the Israelites, in the time of their great extremity and famine; the like may be said of learning and other natural acquirements, all which do often tend to general and public advantages.

10. Yea, the outward gifts of God, which are bestowed upon reprobates, are still for the good of his; for they who had skill and knowledge to build Noah's ark, though they themselves were not saved therein, yet were they the means of Noah's preservation; and so it many times falleth out, that men of excellent parts and great abilities without grace, though themselves are not

profited thereby, yet God so useth them as their gifts much conduce to further and build up the church of Christ.

11. Ever outward favour of princes oft tend to God's servants' good. 'A just man,' as the heathens could say, 'is a common benefit.' And so a true Christian, whatsoever good he hath, it is communicable to all the faithful; and therefore St Paul saith of himself that 'he was a debtor to all men, both Jews and Gentiles,' Rom. i. 11; and that he 'became all things to all men, that he might win some,' 1 Cor. ix. 22.

But here the main question will be, and the difficulty arises, how all ill things can work together for the best to God's children. I shall therefore demonstrate,

1. The truth of this, how it can be so.

2. The reasons why it is so.

3. Observe a caution, that it be not abused.

4. Let us see the sweet and comfortable use of this doctrine.

That this may the better appear, we must know that all evil things are either—

1. Spiritual evil things.

2. Outward evil things.

And for spiritual evil things, they are either, first, sin; secondly, that which hath a reference to sin, as being evils following after sin.

1. The first sin of all, which hath gone over whole mankind, and is spread abroad in every one of us, this by God's mercy and our repentance proves to all believers a transcendent good; for the fall and sin of the first Adam caused the birth and death of the 'second Adam,' Christ Jesus; who, notwithstanding he was God, took upon him the nature of man, and hath made us by his coming far more happy than if we had never fallen. Neither would God have suffered Adam to have fallen but for his own further glory, in the manifestation of his justice and mercy, and for the greater felicity of his servants in Christ their mediator.

2. The next spiritual evil is the corruption of nature remaining in all mankind; howsoever broken and subdued in the Lord's dear ones. This worketh for the best to them after this manner.

(1.) First, It serveth to make us see and know we are kept by God; how that we are not the keepers of our own selves, 'but are kept by his power through faith unto salvation,' 1 Pet. i. 5. For were it not that God upholds and sustains us, our corruptions would soon overturn us; but the sight of corruption being sanctified to the soul, causeth us to ground our comfort out of ourselves in Christ, and no whit to rely on anything that is in us.

(2.) Our corruptions are also good to abase the pride of our natures, and let us see the naughtiness of our spirits, that we may be humbled before God.

(3.) And it is good we should have something within us to make us weary of the world; else, when we have run out our race, we be unwilling to depart hence. Now our bondage to this natural corruption serves exceedingly to make us mourn for our sinful disposition, and hunger after our God, to be joined with him; as we see in St Paul's example, Rom. vii. 24, where, finding the rebellion of his nature and the strife that was in him, the flesh lusting against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh, he cries out, saying, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?' and seeketh to God in Christ for mercy straight.

(4.) Sometimes God suffers corruption to break out of us, that we may know ourselves the better: and because corruption is weakened, not only by smothering, but many times by having a vent, whereupon grace stirs up in the soul a fresh hatred and revenge against it, and lets us see a necessity of having whole Christ, not only to pardon sin, but to purge and cleanse our defiled natures. But yet that which is ill itself must not be done for the good that comes by it by accident; this must be a comfort after our surprises, not an encouragement before.

(5.) It is our great consolation that our nature is perfect in Christ, who hath taken our nature upon him, and satisfied divine justice, not only for the sin of our lives, but for the sin of our natures, who will finish his own work in us, and never give over till by his Spirit he hath made our natures holy and pure as his own; till he hath taken away, not only the reign, but the very life and being of sin out of our hearts. To which end he leaves his Spirit and truth in the church to the end of the world, that the seed of the Spirit may subdue the seed of the serpent in us, and that the Spirit may be a never-

failing spring of all holy thoughts, desires, and endeavours in us, and dry up the contrary issue and spring of corrupt nature.

(6.) Lastly, It is good that corruption should still remain in us, that the glory of God may the more appear, whereas Satan, that great and strong enemy of mankind, shall he foiled and overturned by a weak and poor Christian, who is full of corruptions; and that through the strength of faith, though mixed with much distrust. For a Christian in the state of sin and corruption to overcome the great adversary of mankind, what a wonderment is it! It tendeth much to the shame and dishonour of that 'fiery dragon,' that weak and sinful man should he his conqueror. Oh how it confounds him, to think that 'a grain of mustard seed,' Mat. xiii. 31, should be stronger than the gates of hell; that it should be able to 'remove mountains of oppositions and temptations cast up by Satan and our rebellious hearts between God and us. Abimelech could not endure that it should be said 'a woman had slain him,' Judges ix. 53; and it must needs be a torment to Satan that a weak child, a decrepit old man, should by a spirit of faith put him to flight.

3. A third kind of spiritual ill of sin are the things that issue out of this cursed stock; and those are either inward or outward. For inward sins, they are either errors or doubtings, or pride or wrath, or such like.

1. And first, for doubtings of the truth. This makes God's servants often more resolute to seek and search out the same, and to stand afterwards more firm and courageous for it. For if we doubted not of things, we should not afterwards be put out of doubt, nor seek to be better grounded and instructed in them. The Corinthians doubted once of the resurrection, but were ever after better resolved in that doctrine, the benefit whereof hath much redounded to the church's good ever since. Thomas had the like wavering disposition, but this doubting more manifested the truth. Luther being a monk at the first, and not fully grounded in the doctrine of The gospel, did therefore suspect himself the more, and wished all men after him to read his writings warily. The doctrine of the Trinity hath formerly been much doubted of, and therefore hath been with the greater pains and study of worthy men then living in the church more evidently proved. And when the Pelagians grew into heresies, they were by St Augustine gainsaid, and very strongly withstood. So the doctrine of the Church of Rome, being branched into divers erroneous opinions, and broached to the great hurt and prejudice of Christians, hath occasioned the truth of God against them to be the more excellently cleared and made known. For when religion is oppugned, it is

time then 'to hold fast,' as the apostle St Jude saith, 'with both hands the word, and to fight for the faith', that so we may know both what to hold, and upon what ground we oppose heresy.

2. Now for inward sins, as anger, covetousness, distrust, and such like, these often prove advantageous to the saints. Their corruptions are a means of their humiliation. Paul and Barnabas having a breach between them, were so exasperated that they forsook each other's company, by which means it came to pass that the church was more instructed than before. And hence we may see what the best men are in themselves. If Luther had had no infirmities, how would men have attributed to him above measure? As we see, they were ready to sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas; which shows us that even the distempers and weaknesses of God's servants are disposed by divine providence to their eternal welfare.

3. Yea, God often suffereth his children to fall into some outward gross sins, that by means thereof they might he humbled and abased, and in the end be cured of that provoking sin of being proud in spirit.

4. The falling of God's children doth much deject them, and bring them upon their knees with shame. It makes them gentle and meek in the reprehension of their brethren; for having slipped out of the way themselves, and being by repentance recovered, they learn to 'restore others with the spirit of meekness,' as the apostle speaks, Gal. vi. 1. A man humbled by experience of sin in himself will soon relent at the fall of others. Those oftentimes prove the most excellent instruments in the church who have formerly been overtaken with some gross sin, by means whereof they have ever after been much abased in their own eyes.

We see David, Paul, and Peter fell grievously, but being afterwards raised again and finding comfort themselves, they were a great means of strengthening others; for he which teacheth out of his own experience and feeling, is the fittest and best teacher of all. So it was with Jonah: when by casting him into the sea God had humbled him, he was fit to preach repentance to Nineveh. This is a most certain truth, that never any of God's elect fell grievously, but he was the better all the days of his life for his fall. David having been thoroughly humbled for sin, when Shimei his subject cursed him to his face, how patiently did he bear the same, 2 Sam. xvi. 13, seq. So Peter having denied his Master, and afterwards recovering himself again, we see how zealous he was for his Lord Christ, and suffered death for him.

5. Furthermore, not only the sins of God's children, which they themselves commit, do work for their best, but also the sins of others of the saints with whom they converse and live, do much tend to their good and welfare. Do not the falls of David, Peter, Manasseh, and Paul comfort the distressed and despairing souls of such as languish and are ready to faint under the burden of their sins? And do not the registry of their sins in Scripture give hope to us that God will he merciful to our sins also? We may not think it is God's will to set upon perpetual record the sins of his servants for their shame, disgrace, and punishment, but for our comfort, who live and remain to the end of the world. And the faults of the saints have two excellent uses, whereof the one is for comfort, the other for instruction.

Use 1. The use in regard of comfort is this. God hath showed mercy to David, Paul, Peter, and others, sinning grievously against him, and repenting of the same. Therefore if I also shall sin and truly repent as they did, surely God is where he was, as full of mercy and readiness to forgive now as ever.

Use 2. The second use for instruction is this: If such excellent and eminent saints by sin have fallen grievously, how then much more are we poor weak souls subject to fall if we neglect watchfulness over ourselves! If a weak Christian, oft assaulted with temptations, should not see the falls and slips of God's worthier servants, he would be in a wonderful desperation, and cry out of himself, saying, Alas! what shall I do; never was any so assaulted and tempted, so cast down and overcome in temptations as I am; and therefore my case is more fearful and worse than ever was any. But when he considereth the grievous falls of God's special servants, how they have stepped aside foully and yet obtained mercy, by their examples he beginneth to be revived and receive inward comfort, whereby it is evident that all sins whatsoever of God's elect, as vile and as loathsome as they are, do by God's providence and our own serious repentance turn to their good, and the good of those with whom they live.

4. The next spiritual evil is that which followeth after sin committed, viz., God's desertion or forsaking of us, when he seems to hide his favour from men after they have sinned against him. When God manifests himself as an enemy to his people, this grieves them more than anything else in the world beside. We see David, how he calls upon God not to 'rebuke him in his wrath, nor forsake him in his displeasure,' Ps. vi. 1, where he sheweth how grievously he was afflicted with the anger of the Almighty.

But albeit that God doth seem sometimes to forsake his servants, it is not for their confusion, but for their consolation; for by this means they come to be poor in spirit, and wonderfully emptied of themselves. And it is very observable that when such as are thoroughly wounded and afflicted inwardly come to recover strength and peace again, they often prove the most comfortable Christians of all others, walking with more care to avoid offence all their lives after.

Christ Jesus himself, though he never sinned, but only stood as a surety in our room to pay the ransom of our debts, seemed to be forsaken of God his Father; and because he was thus humbled, therefore he was after most highly exalted above all, both in heaven and in earth. So Job seemed to be forsaken, and doth grievously bemoan his miseries; but this was not because he had sinned against God more grievously than others had done, but for the trial of his faith and patience, to give him experience of God's love to him in the cross, that he might cleave the closer to his Maker all his time after.

5. Another evil arising from the guiltiness of sin is anguish of mind and a wounded spirit, 'which,' saith Solomon, 'who can bear?' Prov. xviii. 14. But for all this, grief for sin is an happy grief, yea, a grief never to be grieved for. This wound in spirit breedeth afterwards a sound spirit. repentance is good, and faith in Christ is good. But what doth prepare us to these happy graces? Is it not a wounded spirit? Who would ever repent of his sins, and lay hold on Christ for remission of the same, if he were not pricked and pierced in the sense thereof. Christ professeth himself to be a physician, but to whom? 'To the lost sheep of Israel,' Mat. xv. 24. He promiseth ease and refreshment, but to whom? 'To them that are weary, and laden with the burden of their sins.' 'The Spirit of the Lord was upon him, that he might preach the gospel to the poor,' Isa. lxi. 2, and 'he was sent to heal the broken hearted, that he might preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, and set at liberty them that are bruised,' Luke iv. 18.

G. Again, Divers Christians do walk very heavily and uncomfortably, by reason of inward temptations, and blasphemous imaginations, which oft are suggested and enter into their minds; but these sins which so vex the souls of poor Christians, are a means of their humiliation, causing them to sue more earnestly to God for pardon. And these sinful corruptions do further serve for a testimony to themselves, that they are not under the power of Satan, but live in the kingdom of grace; for if they were captived to the devil, and under his government, then would he never molest and vex them, but suffer

them quietly to live and die in their sins; but because they are from under his rule and jurisdiction, therefore he perplexeth and troubleth them all he can. By which it is evident, that all sins, by God's mercy and our repentance, 'do work together for the best unto us.'

7. Yea, the circumstances of sin, as continuance therein, which much aggravates the sin; when such a one truly repents and is restored to Christ, it maketh him more zealous and watchful ever after; as we see in Paul, and the thief on the cross, who finding favour, acknowledgeth his worthiness of punishment, reprehendeth his fellow on the cross, and justifieth Christ to have done all things well; and so giving glory unto God, and crying for mercy, receiveth a comfortable promise of an heavenly kingdom, Luke xxiii. 43. All things are possible to God. We can never he so ill as he is powerful and good; God can bring contrary out of contrary. He hath promised to pour clean water upon us, Ezek. xxxvi. 25, which faith sues out, and remembers that Christ hath taken upon him to purge his spouse, and make her lit for himself.

8. Further, the very relapses and backslidings of God's servants into sin do not argue no repentance, but a weak repentance; and therefore when they are again rebuked and turned from sin, their relapses do make them set upon the service of God more strongly, and run more constantly in his ways. Where true grace is, sin loses strength by every new fall; for hence issues deeper humility, stronger hatred of evil, fresh indignation against ourselves, more experience of the deceitfulness of our hearts, and renewed resolutions till sin be brought under. Adam lost all by once sinning, but we are under a better covenant, a covenant of mercy, and are encouraged to go to God every day for the sins of that day.

For it is not with God as it is with men, who being offended will scarce be reconciled, but God offended still offereth mercy. He is not only ready to receive us when we return, but persuades and entreats us to come unto him; yea, after backsliding and false dealing with him, wherein he allows no mercy to be showed by man, yet he will take liberty to shew mercy himself, as in Jeremiah, 'If a man have an adulterous wife, and shall put her away, and she become another man's, he will not receive her any more to him.' But saith the Lord, 'Thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet turn again unto me,' Jer. iii. 1; 'for I am merciful, and my wrath shall not fall upon you: I will not always keep mine anger,' ver. 12. 'Though your sins he as crimson, they shall be white as snow, and though they be red like scarlet, they shall be as

white as wool,' Isa. i. 18; 'if ye will turn to me, and wash ye, and make ye clean, and cease to do evil, and learn to do well,' ver. 10, 17. So Rev. ii. 4, Christ speaking to the church of Ephesus, saith, 'She hath fallen from her first love;' but saith he, 'Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy first works, and I will receive thee to favour;' by which we see that the relapses of God's elect, as they do not finally hinder mercy from their souls, so notwithstanding the same, they are still encouraged to return to God, to renew their covenant by faith and repentance, and cleave more strongly to him.

8. As for outward evils, they are, first, evils of estate, as want and poverty, which oft falls out to be the portion of God's children, yet are they not any whit the worse hereby, but rather the better in their inner man; for the less they have in this world, the greater and larger happiness shall they partake of in another world. What they lose one way is supplied another. Whatsoever comfort we have in goods or friends below, it is all conveyed from God above, who still remains, though these be taken away. The saints see, that if to preserve the dearest thing in the world, they break with God, he can make it a dead contentment and a torment to them; whereas, if we care to preserve communion with God, we shall be sure to find in him, whatsoever we deny for him, honour, riches, pleasures, friends, all; so much the sweeter, by how much we have them more immediately from the spring-head. Our riches, and friends, and life itself, may soon depart. But God never loseth his right in us, nor we our interest in him. Every thing beneath teaches us, by the vanity and vexation we find in them, that our happiness is not there; they send us to God; they may make us worse, but better they cannot. Our nature is above them, and ordained for a greater good. They can but go along with us for a while, and their end swallows up all the comfort of their beginning.

Besides, none have that experience of God's goodness and faithfulness, as those that are in want and misery. God in his wisdom foreseeing what is best for his servants, knows that the more worldly wealth they do abound in, the less their estimation would be of heavenly things. He sees how apt the poor creature is to be carried away with present comfort, and to have his love drawn to the world from better contentments. The poorer they are in worldly riches, the more they seek to be rich in grace, in knowledge, faith, and repentance, which heavenly treasures incomparably surmount the most transcendent excellency which the creature can yield.

9. As for the evil of losing a good name, a thing oft befalling the children of God, to be slandered and evil spoken of, they upon every small disgrace take occasion to enter into themselves and try whether they be guilty of such hard imputations as are flung upon them.

And if upon a serious consideration he find himself disgraced for good things, he wears it as a crown and as a garland upon his head, 'rejoicing that he is accounted worthy to suffer for the Lord Jesus,' Acts v. 41, esteeming 'the rebukes of Christ greater treasure than the riches of Egypt,' Heb. xi. 26. A true believer resigns his good name, and all that he hath, to God. He is assured that no man can take away that from him which God will give him and keep for him. It is not in man's power to make others conceive what they please of us.

10. For the evils of body, such as sickness and diseases of all sorts, which daily attend our houses of clay, God by means hereof acquaints his children with their frail condition, and shows them what a little time they have to provide for eternity, thereby driving them to search their evidences, and to make all straight betwixt him and them. Outward weaknesses are oft a means to restrain men from inward evils. God usually sanctifies the pains and griefs of his servants to make them better. The time of sickness is a time of purging from that defilement we gathered in our health. We should not be cast down so much for any bodily distemper, as for sin, that procures and envenoms the same. That is a good sickness which tends to the health of the soul. Naaman, the Assyrian, if he had not had a leprosy in his body, had continued a leper, both in body and soul, all his days: his outward grievances made him inwardly sound. The very heathen could say, that we are then best in soul when we are weakest in body, for then we are most in heavenly resolutions and seeking after God. Yea, then it appears what good proficients we have been in time of health. Oh how happy were our conditions, if we were as good when we are well and in health, as we usually are when we are sick and ill.

11. Even death itself, which is the end of all, though it be fearful and irksome to nature, yet it is to God's servants a bed of down, casing them of all their miseries, and putting them in possession of an heavenly kingdom; therefore saith Solomon, 'The day of death is better than the day of birth,' Eccles. vii. 1. God will be the God of his, not only unto death, but in death. Death is the death of itself, and not of us. It is a disarmed and conquered enemy to all the faithful; for which cause St Paul desired to be dissolved and

to be with Christ, which is best of all, Philip, i. 23. Death, albeit it seems terrible and dreadful, yet the sting thereof being taken away by the death of Christ, it brings everlasting joy along with it, and is only as a groom porter to let us in to a stately palace. Whither tend all the troubles we meet with in this world, but only to fit us for a better condition hereafter, and to assure the soul that when earth can hold it no longer, heaven shall.

12. Yea, when friends forsake us, and are false unto us, 'God is a sure help in time of need,' Ps. xxxvii. 39. He is our refuge from one generation to another. Do we not see that in the decay of worldly comforts, God then manifests himself most comfortably to his people? Doth he not style himself 'the comforter of the comfortless, and the help of them that are in distress;' and do not 'with him the fatherless find mercy?' Ps. x. 14. If men were more fatherless, they would find more mercy at God's hands. As Christ makes us all to him, so should we make him 'all in all' to ourselves. If all comforts in the world were dead, we have them still in the living Lord. How many friends have we in him alone, who, rather than we shall want friends, can make our enemies our friends? Thus it appears that all miseries are a trial of us to God and to the world, what we are. They are a cure of sin past, and a preparation to endure further crosses. They have many excellent uses and ends, and all for the best to God's servants.

It is good we should be exercised with present crosses, to put us in mind of the evils we have done long ago, that so we may repent of them. Joseph's brethren, being afflicted and imprisoned, called to mind how hardly they had dealt with their brother' long before, Gen. xlii. 21. It should be our wisdom, while we remain here, to consider our warfaring condition; how we are daily environed with enemies, and therefore ought to stand' continually upon our guard against Satan and the powers of darkness, and as pilgrims and strangers go on in our journey to heaven: not starting at the barking of every dog, nor entangling ourselves in worldly things, whereby we should be stopped in our way.

It is for our best, not to be condemned with the world. Afflictions serve for this very end, to make us more prize God, and deny the creature with all its excellencies. Are our crosses great here? Let us not be daunted, but bear them patiently: our comfort shall be the greater afterwards. It is not only good for us that we should have crosses, but that they should be continued upon us, that we may the better know ourselves. If all were well with a man wounded, and the sore clean healed, the plaster would fall off itself. So, were

we thoroughly cured of our spiritual wants, and in a continual resistance of every evil way, these afflictions, which are the plasters of our souls, would soon cease and leave us.

13. Furthermore, Satan himself and all his instruments, when they most set themselves against God's people, and seek their overthrow, then are they working their chief good. The devil, when he thought to make an end of Christ by putting him to death, even then, by that very thing, was vanquished himself, and the church of God fully ransomed from hell and damnation. God suffers many heretics to be in the world; but why? Not that the truth should be held in darkness; but that it might thereby be more manifested and known. It is Satan's continual trade, to seek his rest in our disquiet. When he sees men will to heaven, and that they have good title to it, then he follows them with all temptations and discomforts that he can. He cannot endure that a creature of meaner rank than himself should enjoy a happiness beyond him; but our comfort is, that Christ was tempted, that he might succour all poor souls in the like case. We are kept by 'his power, through faith unto salvation,' 1 Pet. i. 5.

Now, the causes why all things do work together for the best to them that love God are these, viz.:—

1. It is God's decree.

2. It is God's manner of working.

3. It is God's blessed covenant.

4. It is the foundation of the covenant of Christ Jesus.

1. God's decree and purpose is, of bringing all his elect unto eternal salvation; and therefore all things in heaven and earth must conduce to bring his servants unto glory. The reason is this, God is infinitely wise and infinitely strong, provident, and good; therefore by his infinite wisdom, power, providence, and mercy he turneth all things to the best for his. Whatsoever is in heaven, earth, or hell, is ordered by God, neither is there anything without him; therefore nothing can hinder his decree. Satan himself, with all his instruments, yea, the worst of creatures, all must serve God's purpose, contrary to their natures, for the good of his children. The prophet saith, 'God hath commanded salvation, and he hath commanded deliverance to Jacob,' Ps. xliv. 4. When God hath determined to save any man, all things

must needs serve him that overrules all things. As it was said of Christ when he stilled the seas, 'Who is this, that the very wind and seas obey him?' Mat. viii. 27. God commanded the whale to serve at his heck to save Jonah, and it obeyed. All creatures in the earth are at his disposing, and serve to accomplish his pleasure.

2. The second cause why all works together for the best to believers, is the manner of God working in things, which is by contraries. He bringeth light out of darkness, glory out of shame, and life out of death. We fell by pride to hell and destruction, and must he restored by humiliation to life and salvation. Christ humbled himself, being God, to become man for us, and by his death restored us to life. When our sins had brought us to greatest extremities, even then were we nearest to eternal happiness. Therefore saith the apostle, 'When we are weak, then are we strong in the Lord,' 2 Cor. xii. 10. When we are abased, then are we readiest to be exalted; when we are poor, then are we most rich; and when we are dead, then do we live. For God worketh all by contraries. He lets men see his greatness and his goodness, that so they may admire his works and give more glory to him. He worketh without means, and above means, and against means. Out of misery he bringeth happiness, and by hell bringeth men to heaven; which, as it manifesteth God's glory to his creatures, so it serveth for the confusion of man's pride, that he may discern he is nothing in himself, but is all that he is in the Lord.

3. The third cause why all things work for the best to them that fear God is, God's covenant with his church: when once this gracious covenant is made, that 'he will he their God, and they shall be his people,' Lev. xxvi. 12; that he will 'be their Father and protector,' must not all things then needs serve for their good? Whenas God tells Abraham, 'I am thy God, all-sufficient; only walk before me, and be thou perfect,' Gen. xvii. 1, doth not this engage him to set his power and mercy, his wisdom and providence, all on work for the happy estate of Abraham? When once God by his promise is become our God, there is a covenant betwixt us and the creatures; yea, and the stones in the street, that nothing shall wrong us, but all conduce to our good. The angels are ours; their service is for our protection, safety, and welfare. Heaven and earth is ours, and all things in them for our behoof. Christ himself, and together with him, all things else are become ours; in him we are heirs of all. What a wondrous comfort is this, that God hath put himself over to be ours; whom to enjoy is to possess all things, and to want is misery inexpressible. Had we all the world without God, it would prove a

curse and no blessing to us; whereas if we have nothing and enjoy God, we have happiness itself for our portion. If we have no bettor portion here than those things, we are like to have hell for our portion hereafter. Let God be in any condition, though never so ill, yet it is comfortable. He is goodness itself. And, indeed, nothing is so much a Christian's as God is his; because by his being ours in covenant, all other things become ours, and therefore they cannot but co-operate for our good.

'When thou art in the fire and water, I am with thee,' saith God, Isa. xliii. 2. And 'Thou art my buckler, my glory, and shield; therefore I will not be afraid though ten thousand of people shall beset me round about,' saith David, Ps. xci. 7; for 'salvation belongeth unto the Lord.' And if God be on our side, who can be against us? 'If God justify us, who shall condemn us?' Rom. viii. 34. Can anything hurt us when he is become our loving Father? Neither 'death, nor life, nor things present, nor things to come, nor principalities, nor powers, nor anything whatsoever, can separate us from his love toward us,' ver. 35.

4. A fourth ground why all things fall out for the best to the saints is, the foundation of this covenant of God with his church, which is Christ Jesus, who by his blood hath purchased our peace. He being God became man, and is the sole author of all our comfort. Without Christ God is 'a consuming fire,' Heb. xii. 29; but in him, a most 'loving Father,' and 'ever well pleased.' God promiseth in Christ his Son 'to marry his people unto himself for ever; yea,' saith he, 'I will many thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in mercy, and everlasting compassion,' Isa. lxii. 5, and liv. 8. Now upon this blessed contract made in Christ to his church, what followeth? 'In that day,' saith the Lord, 'I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth: and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Israel: and I will have mercy upon her that was not pitied; and I will say unto them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God,' Hosea ii. 22, 23. Where we see what is the reason of all their happiness; even this, that God will marry them to himself. So that this marriage worketh all our bliss; our conjunction with Christ, and reconciliation through his death, is the cause of all our comfort; in him we have the adoption of sons. Hence it is that we are at peace with God, and have freedom from all harms. Christ in his greatest reproach and deepest humiliation had his greatest triumph and exaltation. In his death on the cross he vanquished death, and entered into eternal life. When Christ came into the world, and took upon him our nature, even then the greatest monarch in the

world, Augustus Caesar, was at his command; whom he so ordered as that by his causing all the world to be taxed, Christ was manifested to be born at 'Bethlehem in Jewry,' Luke ii. 1.

How cometh it to pass that death, which is fearful in itself, cannot hurt us? The reason is, 'Death is swallowed up in victory' by his death, 1 Cor. xv. 54. It is Christ that sanctifieth all crosses, afflictions, and disgraces to the saints' advantage. The evil of them all is taken away by him, and turned to his people's good. How cometh it to pass that the law cannot hurt us, which pronounceth a curse against every one that abideth not in all things written therein, to do them? The reason is, 'Christ was made a curse for us; he was made under the law, that he might redeem us who were under the law,' Gal. iii. 13; and thus is Christ a meritorious and deserving cause of procuring all good to us, and removing all ill from us.

He doth not only overcome evil for us, but also overcometh evil in us, and gives us his Spirit, which unites us to himself; whereby we have ground to expect good out of every ill, as knowing that whatsoever Christ wrought for the good of mankind, he did it for us in particular.

In outward favours grace makes us acknowledge all the blessings we have to be the free gifts of God, and invites us to return the glory to him.

God's servants take all occasions and opportunities of doing good, by those gifts and abilities wherewith they are endowed. When Esther was advanced to great honour, Mordecai told her that God had conferred that dignity upon her for his people's welfare, that she might be a means of their safety. Whereas, on the contrary, a proud heart, destitute of the Spirit of Christ, ascribes all to itself, waxeth more haughty, and grows worse and worse the more good he enjoys.

A gracious soul, upon the sight of the evil of sin in itself, is more deeply humbled before God, and with St Paul crieth out of his wretchedness, Horn. vii. 24. A heavenly-minded man being smitten for his wickedness, laboureth for subjection under the hand of the Almighty, and saith, 'I will patiently abide and endure thy correction, because thou, Lord, hast done it,' Ps. In. 9. When the gracious man is held under the cross, and suffereth bitter things, he saith, 'It is good for me that I am afflicted, for thereby I am taught to know thee,' Ps. cxix. 07. In all troubles that befall him, he professeth that 'it is good for him to cleave unto God.' And the less outward wealth he hath, the more he seeks for inward grace, making a holy use of all things.

Upon these instructions hence delivered, let us take a view of ourselves, and try whether we in our afflictions are such as cleave to God, and are drawn nearer to him thereby. Call to mind the crosses wherewith God hath exercised thee, and the blessings which at any time he hath bestowed upon thee, and see how in both thou hast been bettered; see what profitable use thou hast made thereof for thy soul's comfort.

Let us see how we have followed the providence of God in his dealing with us; for if we have an interest in his goodness, then will we be careful, as God turns all things for our good, so to follow the same, together with him, for the good of our souls.

Obj. Now, because things do not always conduce to the good of God's children, as outward peace and prosperity oftentimes make them worse, therefore some may object, how can this be true which here the apostle saith, 'that all things do work together for the best to them that love God?'

Ans. 1. The answer hereunto is, That for the most part the children of God do take the good of the blessings which God bestows on them, and avoid the snares of evil which accompany the same. Job saith, 'The things I feared are come upon me.' By which we see, that Job in the midst of all his prosperity did fear and was jealous over himself, Job iii. 25.

2. But a more plainer answer of the objection is, That if the good things of God, as peace, plenty, and prosperity, do fall out at the first to their ill, yet, nevertheless, they shall prove in the end, a great gain unto them; for whereas by occasion of these they formerly fell (having too high an estimation of the creature, and overprizing the same), they see now more into their nature, and learn to contemn them.

3. Again, The outward good things of this life shew the weakness of God's servants, and serve to try what is in them; and therefore we read of Ilezekiah, that God left him 'to try what was in him,' 2 Chron. xxxii. 31. The outward treasure which he had was a means to make known to himself and others the pride and vanity of his mind; the plenty and prosperity of the saints are greater triers of them than adversities and wants. For many that have comfortably gone through a low condition have yet foully failed in a full estate, their corruptions breaking forth to the view of others. Prosperity teaches men themselves. It tries their spirits, and lays them open to the world. Therefore it seemeth good to God to strip his servants of these outward things. They can acknowledge with patience his righteous dealing,

knowing that man's happiness consists not in abundance of these things, but that the blessing of God is riches enough.

Obj. But some may object, and say, I have been long afflicted, and have had many crosses upon me, and little good do I and by them; I am never the better, but rather the worse for all.

Ans. This may be true thou sayest, but stay a little and consider the event. Howsoever, by reason' of the bitterness and continuance of the cross, hitherto thou findest little good thereby, yet know that God is all this while but in hammering and working of thy unruly heart, thy good will follow afterwards. We see by experience, that sick persons, while they are in physic, are made sicker and sicker, but after that hath done working, then the party is far better than before. It is a folly to think that we should have physic and health both at once. It is impossible that a man should sow and reap both together. We must of necessity endure the working of God's physic. If trouble be lengthened, lengthen thy patience. When the sick humour is carried away and purged, then we shall enjoy desired health. God promiseth forgiveness of sin, but thou findest the burden of it daily on thee. Cheer up thyself; when the morning is darkest then comes day; after a fight victory will appear. God's time is best; therefore wait cheerfully.

Oft-times God's servants under his cross are so sore wrought upon that they have hardly leisure of making a good use of the same, being distracted and dejected for the present, so as that they burst out rather into further evil than before. But afterwards, when their afflictions are thoroughly digested, then they begin to find the fruit of patience, humiliation, and obedience, and are better for the same ever after; therefore wait contentedly God's leisure; thou shalt surely find a sweet calm after the storm is over. Though we find little benefit by afflictions for the present, yet let us not conclude all is naught with us; for temptations being bitter, will not suffer men in them to lift up their hearts straight. After the extremity and vexation thereof is laid, then ensueth the 'quiet fruit of righteousness,' Heb. xii. 11.

Obj. 1. But if all things, yea, sin itself, shall turn to the best to those that love God, what need we then care for the committing of sin?

Ans. The apostle St Paul was in his days troubled with the like question. Therefore, observe with what detestation he answers, saying, 'God forbid, the damnation of such men is just,' Horn. iii. 8. But to answer more fully and plainly for the satisfaction of weak Christians.

2. True it is, that all things, even the sins of God's servants, shall by God's mercy turn to their good; 3-et, nevertheless, the rule of God's word must ever be regarded, which is this, 'we may not do evil that good may come thereof.' That which is evil in itself must not he done, no, though for the doing thereof we might gain the greatest good, or avoid the greatest evil whatsoever; as if it were to win a world, we might not tell a lie, because it is a breach of God's law; Christ saith to the devil, 'It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God,' Mat. iv. 7. We may not therefore by sin tempt God, so to set his goodness in working good out of our wickedness.

If, therefore, upon this ground of doctrine (that all things shall turn to the good of God's children, yea, even their sins themselves), any of us shall commit wickedness, and displease his Majesty, to try what mercy and wisdom is in him, to draw good out of our evil; this is a provoking of God's goodness, and those who thus do, turn the truth of God's word into poison, and make even that their destruction which should build them up in grace and holiness.

If we sin through weakness and frailty of our flesh, and through strength of temptation, upon repentance we may find grace; but if presuming that God will turn all things to our good, we break his law, what else do we but first of all make God the cause of our evil; and secondly, vex and scandal the saints on earth; thirdly, we had the blessed angels in heaven; and, fourthly, rejoice the devils and damned spirits in hell, putting darts and deadly weapons into their hands to work our ruin and overthrow; nay, fifthly, we grieve the good Spirit of God, who continually putteth us in mind of better things, if we would hearken to him, and by whom we are sealed up unto the day of redemption; sixthly, we slacken grace in our hearts, and whereas we should grow forward in virtue and holiness, we weaken the power of godliness exceedingly in us; seventhly, all willing sins do abate our affiance in God, and the feeling of his favour towards us; yea, oftentimes by so sinning, many of his dear children have walked heavily without spiritual joy all the days of their lives; for howsoever in regard the Lord hath elected us, we shall never finally fall away and perish, yet we may want the sweet sense of his favour, and remain afflicted in spirit all our life long. And then we shall know that the grief and trouble which we here undergo to avoid sin and subdue it, will he nothing so much as the mischief and sorrow that sin once committed and yielded to will bring on the soul.

Yea, there is no child of God but by experience shall one day feel that howsoever God by his wisdom and mercy can turn every sin to our good, yet it will prove bitter as wormwood in the end; the pleasure will never answer the smart and vexation that attends it. The contrition and breaking of thy heart for thy sins committed, if thou be God's, will more disquiet and trouble thee than possibly it can be a trouble to resist and forsake sin.

Nay, oftentimes God doth punish the very want of reverence in his servants to him, as also their slackness and unfitness in good duties, so as they may easily discern he is offended with them for the same. As we may see by the example of the Corinthians, who coming unpreparedly to the Lord's supper, for this very cause were so punished, 'that some of them were sick, and some weak, and some were struck by death,' 1 Cor. xi. 80.

David's numbering of the people, and Hezekiah's showing of his treasures to the princes of Babel, howsoever by some they may be thought small sins, yet God scourged them for the same very sharply. And it is good that God's servants should a little know what it is to offend their Maker, for if they will be so negligent and careless in walking with him, it is lit they should reap the fruit of their own devices. It causeth much relapsing and backsliding from God, when men have never truly smarted for their sin. Having had knocks in our own ways, it established us in God's ways. For we love to wander from ourselves, and bite strangers at home, till God by one cross or other brings us to himself, and then we think of returning to him. Nay, it is better for them a thousand-fold, that God should so school them, than that they should be let alone, and so go on without controlment from sin to sin till they come to desperation.

Howsoever therefore that God can and will turn the sins of his servants to the best advantage, yet better it were for them they had never sinned at all. Do we not think that David wished he had never fallen into that sin of adultery? And would not Peter have been glad that he had never denied his Master? The sin of David cost him many a cry for pardon: 'Mercy, Lord, mercy;' 'against thee have I sinned, forgive me this heinous crime;' and it cost Peter many a bitter salt tear, too, howsoever both David and Peter, after their recovery by repentance, were the better for it to their dying day.

As for all such as persist in sin, that God may turn all things to their best, let them know that all things shall work together for their bane and utter destruction for ever, which I now come to shew.

1. First of all, God himself and his blessed angels are at enmity with them. And therefore,

2. All the creatures, both in heaven and earth, are against them. In Pharaoh's ten plagues we see the creatures were all ready to execute the pleasure of the Almighty against him. And the 'bears out of the forest' were armed by God to devour those scoffing children, 2 Kings ii. 24. This is one part of the burden under which the creatures of God do groan, that they serve God against wicked men, and are his armies to punish the rebellious world.

3. Even the good gifts of God are turned to the bane of the wicked. Absalom's glory, his goodly long locks, were his halter to hang him up by. Ahithophel's wit and policy brought him to that fearful end of being his own hangman. Hainan's honour, what good did it to him, but only brought him to greater shame? His greatness made him swell in pride, and his pride had a sudden fall. What became of Herod's high mind in taking to himself the glory of God? which when foolish people ascribed it to him, was he not presently smitten, so as the 'worms consumed him,' Acts xii. 23, and he died a loathsome death? What became of Dives his riches? Did not his abuse thereof plunge him deeper into hell? Wicked men, though they abound in this world, yet not being in covenant with God, they have nothing with a blessing. The wicked are but as traitors before God; and oft it is seen that great traitors, who are by the prince kept in prison, are nourished very liberally until their time of execution come. So it is with all graceless persons. However for the present they have great allowances, yet as traitors, in the conclusion, they shall have an bard account to make unto God for all those things they have sinfully enjoyed. And not only so, but they abuse the very truth of God, as shall appear in divers particulars.

(1.) First, For the comfortable doctrine of justification by faith alone: they pervert the same to their own destruction, saying, We are justified by faith only, what need we then care for doing of good works? Alas! they profit us nothing to our salvation. Therefore it is to no end to strive to do good.

(2.) Again, For the doctrine of Christian liberty. God having given us lawful recreations and plentiful use of his creatures, they turn all into licentiousness; and instead of moderate refreshment, they make a daily occupation of sports and games; instead of a lawful use of the creatures, they run into all excess of riot, in meat, drink, apparel, buildings, and delights.

(3.) And for the doctrine of morality, how do wicked men abuse it, saying, 'Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we shall die,' Luke xv. 23. That which should put them in mind of spending of their time well, increaseth their sin.

(4.) Whereas the long suffer my of God should lead men to repentance, the wicked by means of God's patience run more securely on in sin, 'treasuring up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and the declaration of God's just judgment,' Rom. ii. 5, which one day shall cease upon them. 'Because he doth not speedily execute his displeasure,' Eccles. viii. 11, therefore they grow worse and worse, those never considering the lamentable condition that sin brings them into; which did they thoroughly weigh, they would give the whole world if they were possessors of it, to have their spirits at freedom from this bondage and fear. God will take a course that his grace shall not be turned into wantonness. First or last, thou shalt find, whoever thou art, at what rate thou buyest the pleasure of sin. Those that have enjoyed long the sweet of sin may expect the bitterest sorrow and heart-breaking for it.

Nay, the greater good things they have, the greater evil they receive thereby by abuse of the same.

5. The more they are illuminated by the word, their hearts become more rebellious against it; and the greater authority, wealth, and health they enjoy, the more mischief they do with them. Those heavenly doctrines which should build up a good heart unto holiness, do they abuse to bring their souls deeper into wickedness; showing themselves like to their father the devil, whoso children they indeed are. God hath said, 'He would give his angels charge over thee,' Ps. xci. 11, which is a most comfortable place to a good heart. But how doth Satan abuse this to Christ? That he should fling himself headlong from the pinnacle of the temple; and as the devil, so every wicked man, by all his instructions of the word, takes occasion to tempt God the more; turning both grace itself, and the doctrine of grace, into wantonness.

Are there not many that hear the word and know God's mind, who yet profit nothing to amendment of life? Were it not better for these never to enjoy such means of heavenly wisdom, than now having the light still to live in darkness. Their knowledge only makes their damnation the greater if they continue in sin. What a lamentable condition is that man in, whose knowledge is only sufficient to damn his own soul! But let us see further how all evil things work together for the worst to ungodly persons.

(1.) And to begin with spiritual ill things, as heresies and errors. They serve but to ensnare the wicked; for instead of making them cautious and diligent to search out the truth, they are carried away 'with every wind of doctrine.'

So for the ill of good men, their falls and sins. The wicked of the world reap no benefit thereby, but encourage and hearten themselves the more in a sinful way, rejoicing thereat and making it their daily talk; neither do their own daily sinnings any whit better them, but are as so many punishments of their former transgressions: God in his justice suffering them still to run on to the fulfilling of the measure of their iniquities.

(2.) And for outward evils in this life, those that do turn to a good man's happiness fall out continually to their destruction. Pharaoh's ten plagues, which might have humbled his soul, made him but worse and worse. Therefore saith God, 'Why should I smite you any more?' for even since I punished you 'ye revolted still,' Isa. i. 5. The wicked are like to the smith's anvil, which by often beating is made harder and harder. So the more they are corrected, the stubborner and stiller in sin they grow. Their crosses are laid upon them from an angry God, and are forerunners of his eternal wrath, which shall seize upon their souls in hell, where the more they are tormented the more they shall blaspheme, and the more they shall blaspheme the more they shall be tormented without cessation.

Causes. The cause of all this evil upon the wicked is, first, God's infinite justice, which will not be unsatisfied; secondly, their own rile hearts, which, like a sick man having an ill stomach, digests nothing, but turns all to poison. Therefore saith the apostle, 'To the unclean all things are unclean,' Titus i. 15. As poison some plants put into a fertile place do envenom the ground whereunto they are removed; so the same crosses that turn unto a good man's welfare prove a bad man's ruin, by reason of the corruption within him. Another cause is, the devil's malicious working by it. He makes wicked men abuse all their parts, both inward and outward, to God's dishonour and their own confusion, endeavouring to conform them to himself. None hath greater knowledge and understanding in the word of God than the devil. Yet he turns all his knowledge unto the sin against the Holy Ghost. But yet the devil cannot force men to wickedness. It is their own sinful hearts which betray them into his hands.

Use 1. Whence we learn that all wicked men, in the midst of their happiness, are most unhappy, because they turn the sweetest blessings into

bitter poison; for all the gifts of God, without his special gift of using them well, are turned into a curse; as Balaam had good parts, but they not being sanctified proved his bane.

Use 2. We see further, that outward prosperity is no mark of the true church. Abundance of temporal blessings is no sign that we are in God's favour; neither are learning and knowledge evidences of spiritual grace. For the devil hath greater understanding and parts than any man. How-be it, sight of sin preserves us from falling into it; and such as shut their eyes against the light, plunge themselves into the deeper misery.

Ohs. 1. Now to proceed to further instructions. Do all things work together for the best to God's servants? Then hence we may learn the certainty of the salvation of God's elect. I take my reason from the text itself after this manner. That which nothing can hinder, that is certain; but the salvation of God's children cannot be hindered; therefore the salvation of God's children is most certain. If anything do or can hinder the saints' recovery or perseverance, it is sin; but to such as are united unto Christ by faith, sin is so far from hindering their happiness, that by God's over-ruling providence it turns to their best good.

Obs. 2. The second thing which we may ground hero for the information of our judgment is this: That as we know the providence of God is the cause why all things work together for the best to his children, so we should eye this very particular providence in all that we enjoy, turning the same to our good. There is a working hand of God in everything towards us, as we may see in the examples of Job, Joseph, and David, with other of his servants, whose present sorrow and humiliation was but a means of their future glory and exaltation. There is nothing so bad, but he can draw good out of it when any evil is intended. God either puts bars and lets to the execution of it against us; or else limiteth and boundeth the same, both in regard of time and measure. The God of spirits hath an influence into the spirits of all men, and knows how to take them off from doing us harm. All the strength of the creature rests in the great Creator of all things, who if he denies concourse, the arm of their power soon withereth. It cannot but bring strong consolation to the soul, to know that in all variety of changes, and intercourse of good and bad things, our loving God hath a disposing hand. So as all blessings and crosses, all ordinances and graces, nay, our very falls, yea, Satan himself, with all his instruments, being over-mastered and ruled by God, have this injunction upon them, to further God's good intendment to

us, and in no wise hurt us, which should move us to see his disposing hand in all that befalls us. We owe God this respect, to observe his providence in the particular passages of our lives; considering he is our Sovereign, and his will is the rule, and we are to be accountable to him as our Judge. We should question our hearts for questioning his care in the least kind. So long as God sits at the stern and rules all, we may be sure no evil shall betide us that he can hinder.

Obs. 3. Thirdly, Hence we may learn, that there is not two, but one sovereign Head over the whole world, which is plainly proved by this text of Scripture. For 'all things work together for the best to them that love God and things which in themselves are contraries agree together to procure their good. Therefore all things whatsoever are overruled by the solo power of the Almighty. The devil himself, although he he called 'the god of this world,' yet he is at Christ's beck, and could not enter into a few swine without leave first obtained. He raiseth up hideous storms and tempests against the saints, but perisheth himself in the waves at last. Persecutions and perils may follow us, but they are all limited in the doing of hurt, which plainly demonstrates that there is but one main worker and wise disposer of all things.

Obs. 4. Further, Hence observe, that there is nothing in the world that to God's servants is absolutely evil; because nothing is so ill but some good may be raised out of it; not as it is an evil, but as it is governed and mastered by a supremo cause. Sin is of all evils the greatest; and yet sinful actions may produce gracious effects, through God's ordering and guiding the same.

Obs. 5. Again observe, that a child of God is truly happy in the midst of all misery. To prove this, I reason thus. In what estate soever the child of God is, it shall turn to his good; therefore no affliction can make him truly miserable. The proof of this the apostle sets down in his own example: 'He was poor, yet made many rich; he sorrowed, yet always rejoiced; he had nothing, yet possessed all things; he was chastened, and yet not killed,' 2 Cor. vi. 10. God's children, although to the world they may seem to be miserable, yet having communion and fellowship with him, they are always happy. The very worst day of God's child is better than the very best day of the wicked. The worst day of St Paul was better to him than the best day of Nero was to him; for the wicked, in the midst of their happiness, are accursed; whereas the godly, in the midst of their miseries, are blessed.

This doctrine is a ground of understanding divers other places of Scripture, as Ps. xci. 3, the Lord promiseth that he will 'deliver his from the

snare of the hunter, and from the noisome pestilence and yet ofttimes his dear servants are in the hands of the wicked, and taken away by the stroke of his judgments, this truth nevertheless remaining firm, that 'all worketh together for their best.' So God teacheth us in his word that he doth make a league between his servants and the creatures. But all such expressions of his love we must bring to this text, and then they are true, else they may seem to he false. 'The plague shall not come near thy dwelling-place,' Ps. xci. 10, but only so far forth as it is for thy benefit. The good prophet was torn in pieces by a lion, 1 Kings xiii. 24; and sundry holy men have received hurt by wild beasts, whose eternal welfare were furthered thereby. Therefore this phrase of Scripture, that 'the creatures are in league,' is to be understood, not that they have put off their hostile nature, but that they have the same issue as those that are at peace with us.

Here likewise is a direction for us how to pray for earthly blessings, and the removal of temporal judgments. Oftentimes worldly honours and riches are snares unto God's children, and temporal chastisements, which we so earnestly pray against, work much good unto us. And therefore it falleth out that when we pray against temporal calamities, we pray against our own good.

Being therefore afflicted, we should desire not absolutely that God would remove our troubles, but that he would work his own good pleasure upon us thereby. Our prayers for temporal blessings and removal of temporal crosses must always be conditional; for what good will it be for us to come out of the fire worse than we were when we went into it? If, therefore, God in his wisdom see it good for us to have affliction, we should not desire him absolutely to remove the same till it have done us good. And then, 'Lord, deal with us as seems best in thine own eyes.'

As for such as affect neither God nor goodness, let them know that if all things work for the best to the saints, then they may forbear their successless endeavours which they daily enterprise against them. In going about to hurt the godly they do them most good, for God will benefit them by their malice. Their wicked practices shall not only be made frustrate, but dangerous to themselves. After the chastisement of his servants for their good, God will cast the rod into the fire. Men may know whether they are 'vessels of mercy' or no by the use they are put to. The basest of people are fit enough to be executioners. It is a miserable wisdom when men are wise to work their own ruin. Do not many spin a fine thread and weave a fair web, when by their

turnings and devices they turn themselves into hell? Whatever we get by sin for the present, it will one day prove the heaviest business that ever we undertook.

God is the only monarch of the world, and makes all things and persons whatsoever serviceable to his own end and his church's good. He is higher, than the highest. Satan with all his instruments are but slaves to the Almighty, executioners of his will. Can we think that God's children, who are so near and dear to him, shall always be trampled upon by the powers of darkness. No, certainly. He is interested in all their quarrels, and takes their injuries as done to himself. When we can be more subtile than the devil, or more strong than God, we may think to thrive against them. He is a 'wall of fire' round about his church, not only to defend and preserve it, but to consume all the adversaries thereof. God doth great matters for his servants; he rebukes kings and princes, and ruinates empires for their sakes. For the bringing home back again of the Jews, he translated the Babylonish empire to the Persians; and therefore the wicked must take heed of attempting anything against God's church: because the harm thereof will redound upon their own heads. God delights to take the oppressed party's part, and serves himself of all his enemies for his people's good. They practise against the righteous, and he 'laughs them to scorn.' Wicked men cannot do God's children a greater pleasure than to oppose them; for by this means they help exceedingly to advance them.

Satan and all his instruments, what get they by their cruelty to the saints? They do but increase their own torment, and do them the more good. But this is both against their knowledge and wills. Therefore if they be loath to do them any good, let them take heed how they attempt any evil against them.

Use 1. And here let all such be admonished how they provoke God's children to cry in their prayers against them. For it is better for the wicked that they had all the creatures in heaven and earth against them than the poor saints; for a few of these will more prejudice them than all the world besides.

Come we now to the grounds of practice hence to be observed.

Use 2. Again, doth God order all 'for the best' to them that love him?

Let us not then except against any evil that shall befall us; for this our present cross shall turn to our future comfort. It is the saints' happiness, that

their best is in working still, till they be complete in heaven. But the wicked and men of the world, their worst is always in contriving. Their life is bad, their death is worse; and after death it is worst of all with them. God himself, and all under him, work continually for the good of his children. Their best is last. Their light groweth on clearer and clearer 'as the light, until the noonday,' Prov. iv. 18. But the worldly grow worse and worse every moment. To them that fear God, sin and sorrow, their very worst, is by God's mercies best for them; whereas all the best of the wicked by abuse turns to their worst.

Use 3. Observe here the excellency of the saints' comfort, above all other comforts whatsoever. The nature of it is this: it must be stronger than the grievance of which it is a cordial. And the reason of spiritual comfort must be more forcible than any carnal reason can be to undermine it. Now what stronger consolation can a man have than to be assured that all things, without exception, shall work together for his good;? But this is not all. What a sweet refreshment is it when the soul can say, God will either stop me from falling into sin, outwardly by afflictions; or else subdue my corruptions inwardly by his Spirit, that I shall not be overthrown by them. He will never suffer me to rot in my sins, but when I do fall, will raise me up again. It hears up a Christian's heart, that rather than we shall continue in an evil way, God will send some Nathan or other to rouse us out of our security.

Therefore to all thy comforts add this, that God will not only save thee at last, but turn all things to the best whilst thou art here. This is the highest strain of consolation. It is far stronger to refresh and quicken us than any grievance can be to afflict us. It maketh evil things, in comparison, to seem good; as, 'Moses counted the rebukes of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt,' Heb. ix. 26. He made more choice of 'affliction' than he did of the world's glory. If God be with us, who can be against us. If he be our shepherd, we are sure to lack nothing. There is such a force of comfort in salvation, that we will rather choose outward evils than to enjoy outward good things. Moses, by faith, seeing that outward affliction and shame were knit to salvation, chose these, and refused dignity and ease.

How ought this to stay the soul under all its heavy pressures! Why should not I be patient in sickness, in poverty, in disgraces; or why should I despair at the hour of death? Am I not under the hand of my God, working my good out of every evil? It is the subtilty of our arch-enemy to drive us to a stand, that we may doubt of our conditions, and say with Gideon, 'If the

Lord be with me, and that I am his child, why is it thus with me?' Judges vi. 13. How is it that all this sorrow and misery hath befallen me, and lieth so heavy upon my soul? But our comfort here is, that God who turneth all things to our best is stronger than Satan.

Use 4. Again, Considering all things conduce unto our goods, though in appearance never so opposite, this comfort ariseth, that if God do so work this or that, then I must believe against belief; I must stand firm against contraries, my faith must answer his manner of working, and believe that God can bring me to honour by shame, and to heaven by hell-gates. For if it be his course of dealing, first to cast down and then to lift up, by disgrace to bring his servants to glory, then in all my extremities I must rest upon God, who is never nearer unto his, to succour them, than when he seems to be furthest off. When he means to give victory he suffers us to be foiled first, and when he intends to justify a poor sinner he will condemn him first. Let us therefore hope against hope, and desire God in our distresses to open our eyes that we may see our consolations.

Hagar had a well by her when she was ready to perish for thirst, and yet she saw it not; and Elisha's man had angels to defend him when the Aramites compassed him about, but perceived not the same. So 'the angel of the Lord continually pitcheth his tent about the godly,' though they are not aware of it; yea, God is then nearest to us when we are in most straits. Cordials are kept for faintings. When Christ went to cast the devil out of a child, he then most raged and tare him. So likewise Satan and wicked men most rage when they are nearest to their end and destruction. In thy greatest danger, never rest on thy friends, but on the Lord, who never standeth nearer and firmer to us than when we are most perplexed and know not what to do. A distressed soul seeth oft no comfort in outward things, and therefore retireth unto God, in whom it finds whatsoever may make it happy. 'Our strength may fail, and our heart may fail,' Ps. xxiv., but God is our portion for ever. When we are weak, then we are strong; and when we are most cast down in ourselves, we are nearest to God's helping hand. This carriage of the Almighty ought to establish our faith.

In all cases of extremity we should have a double eye: one to look upon our grievances and troubles, and another to look upon the issue and event of them. Why do men in time of dangerous sickness take bitter physic, which is almost death unto them? Why do they then undergo such things as they loathe at other times? Is it not because they rest upon the skill of the

physician? And shall we then in our distresses distrust God for our souls, when we will trust a weak and mortal man with our bodies? If conceit be so strong in earthly things, as indeed it is, then faith is much stronger, when it grounds itself upon the truth of the word. When God exorcises us with poverty or other afflictions, this should teach us submission to his providence in any condition, saying, Lord, do with me what thou wilt, only let this poor soul be precious in thine eyes! Thou hast promised that howsoever these afflictions lie heavy upon me, yet in the end, all shall turn out to my good; therefore dispose of thy servant at thine own pleasure; I resign all to thee!

Here is the rejoicing of a Christian, which makes him cheerfully pass through any affliction; he knows that good is intended in all that befalls him. With what alacrity did Joseph say unto his brethren, 'Ye sold me hither, but God hath turned it to the best, that I should preserve and nourish you all, and save much people alive, who otherwise were like to have perished with famine,' Gen. xlv. 5. This made Job so patiently to say, 'The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh; blessed be the name of the Lord,' Job i. 21.

This is the ground of all true contestation. I have learned, saith St Paul, 'in all estates to be content: to be rich and to be poor, to abound and to be in want,' Philip, iv. 11; and why so? Whatsoever his estate and condition was, God turned it to the best. Shall any man dare to mislike of God's allowance? Doth not he know better what is good for us than we can possibly imagine what is good for ourselves?

This likewise should teach us not to take offence at the reproach and disgrace which is cast upon God's children; for 'mark the righteous,' saith David, 'and behold the upright: the end of that man is peace,' Ps. xxxvii. 37. The issue of their trouble is ever quietness. Take not one piece of a Christian man's life by itself, but take it altogether, and then thou shalt see the truth of this doctrine. To see Joseph in the dungeon and in his irons, we haply may be offended, and call God's providence in question; but beholding him in his honour and advancement, we cannot but conclude him a happy man. So if we look on Job sitting with sores on the dunghill, there is matter of offence; but to see him restored again, and blessed with a greater estate than he had before, this is matter of praising God. If we consider of Christ abased, and hanging upon a cross, so there will be scandal; but look on him exalted to glory, far above all dignities and powers, and then the scandal is soon taken away. Let us therefore lay one thing to another when we eye God's people,

and we shall see a blessing under their greatest curse. Those things which are contrived by man's wit may argue great folly if one part he not annexed to the other. Therefore look to the whole work towards his servants, and then thou shalt never be offended at their condition.

Use 5. This also is a ground of Christian boldness in holy courses, when a man is fully resolved, that come what will come, God will turn all to his good. It encourages him cheerfully to go through any difficulty. What is the reason of the fearfulness and dastardliness of most men, but only this, that if we do this or that duty, or abstain not from this or that good action, then this cross and this displeasure by such and such a person will be brought upon me. The wise man saith, that 'the fear of man bringeth a snare, but he that trusteth in the Lord shall be exalted,' Prov. xxix. 25. Lot us not, regarding the fear of man, neglect our duty to God, for he can turn the hearts of the kings on the earth to seek the welfare of his poorest creature, and make thy very enemies to be thy friends. He that for sinister ends will offend his Maker, may well be excluded to the 'gods whom they have served,' Judges x. 14. Go to the great men, whose persons you have obeyed for advantage, to your riches, to your pleasures, which you have loved more than God or goodness: you would not lose a base custom, a superfluity for me; therefore I will not own you now. Such men are more impudent than the devil himself, that will claim acquaintance with God at last, when they have carried themselves as his enemies all their days. God wants not means to maintain his, without being beholden to the devil. He hath all help hid in himself, and will then shew it when it shall make most for his own glory. He deserves not to live under the protection of a king, that will displease him for fear of a subject. The three children in Daniel said, 'Know, O king, that our God can deliver us out of thy hands; but if he will not, yet, nevertheless, we will not fall down and worship thine image,' Dan. iii. 5, seq. 'The righteous are bold as a lion,' saith the wise man, Prov. xxviii. 1; 'the Lord is his strong tower,' Ps. lxi. 3. What need we fear any creature, when we have him on our side who hath both men and devils at his back?

Use 6. And if God turn all things whatsoever to our good, should not we through the whole carriage of our lives chiefly aim at his honour? God writes our names in his book, he numbers our hairs, and bottles up our tears. He hath a special care of us. Every good deed we do he writeth down to eternity; yea, if we give but 'a cup of cold water in his name,' Mat. x. 42, he taketh notice of it; and shall not we then take special occasion to magnify him in all things? We pray daily, 'Hallowed be thy name,' therefore ought

accordingly to observe God's dealing with us. How is it possible that we should give him the glory of his mercies, if we never observe them?

A wicked man considers, This makes for my advantage and this for my profit, this tends to my ease and wealth, &c.; studying how to make friends, and please persons in place above him, not respecting God's honour and glory in the least kind; whereas the sincere Christian looks on all things as they tend to his best happiness, and therefore forecast thus, If I do this or that good, then I shall grow in grace and wisdom and knowledge; but if I neglect it, and be careless of well doing, I shall hurt and wound my soul, and break the peace of my conscience. By this company and good acquaintance I shall be furthered in holiness, become wiser and better in heavenly understanding; if I fall, they may raise me tip, and help maintain a gracious frame within me. Where true holiness is, the soul is sensible of all advantages and disadvantages of good. An indifferency for any company or employment shows a dead heart.

This is a main difference to distinguish a child of God from a profane wretch that only lives to himself. His heart is taken up wholly with the world and matters below, whereas the godly are all for thriving in grace and increase of godliness. The wicked man considers of things as they serve to satisfy his lust; and if we have better thoughts at any time, it is but for a start. But a godly man's aims are always holy, and the strength of his soul is put forth that way. He values himself as he stands in relation to God and a better life; and esteems all other things more or less as they further or hinder his spiritual growth, and bring peace and sorrow at the last unto him.

2. But I hasten to the second part of the text, the persons to whom this privilege belongs; that is, 'to them that love God.' And why to them that love God? Because the apostle speaketh of afflictions; and we know that the grace which is most conversant in the saints' sufferings is patience, which floweth from love.

Also, for that of all other graces is the first and sweetest. It is the first; for whom we love we are sorry to offend; and hate whatsoever is contrary to that we affect. We rejoice in that we love, and grieve in the absence thereof.

It is the commanding affection of all others, and setteth the whole man sweetly a-work to attain its desire. Love makes us forward and zealous Christians. All the inward worship of God is in the affections; as, Thou shalt

rejoice in no God but me, and fear no God but me. All the commandments of God are brought by Christ to this duty.

Again, Love hath a special part in this privilege of bringing all things to work for our good. For when we love God, we will make the best use of everything which we suffer or do, if we love God and eye his glory therein. Love makes any burden easy. It makes us studious of pleasing the party loved; as we say in the proverb, 'Love me, and do with me what you will.' Love is full of inventions. It studies complacency, and sets the soul a-work to honour God in all things.

In that the apostle saith, 'to them that love God,' and not to the children or servants of God, we may observe, that Christianity is not a bare title, but it requireth some qualification. Therefore the Scriptures, when they describe a saint on earth, do not usually say, 'the child of God,' but they set him forth by some holy affections or actions wrought in him; as such as love God, or fear God, and 'walk in his ways;' hereby showing that religion is not a matter of compliment, but a real and holy endeavour to please the Lord; and although the Scriptures do name but some one particular affection, yet it is all one as if they had named all; for where one is in truth, there all follows.

Again, In that the apostle here ascribes privileges to those only that are thus qualified, we must take heed in applying the promises of God and these sweet consolations, that we be such persons to whom of right they do belong; 'for all things work for the best,' not to every one, but to such as 'love God.' We must not therefore preach comfort to all, but must first labour to make men capable of it. To this end,

1. First, We will shew the nature of this love.

2. Secondly, The exercises of it, and directions unto it.

3. Thirdly, Some incitements to this holy affection.

1. The ground of love is a considering of God as our own God in the covenant of grace, and an acknowledging of ourselves to be his peculiar children in Christ Jesus; when we can say as the spouse in the Canticles, 'I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine,' ii. 16. This is a loving of God, not as the God of nature only, but as ours peculiar by grace. This union of love, which knits us to Christ, implieth another union by faith first, which is a cleaving to God as my God, and to Christ as my Christ; whence issues a

second conjunction or cleaving to him in love, as my Saviour, my husband, and my head.

To come to the nature of this grace, and then to the working of it. The nature of love is seen in four things:

1. In admiring of some secret good in the thing beloved, which stirs up the soul to make out for it.

2. In a studiousness of the contentment of the person beloved.

3. In a desire of union and fellowship with the person we affect. 4. In a resting and solacing of ourselves in the thing we love.

By these let us examine ourselves whether we have the true love of God or no. For it concerns us much to have this grace. It will distinguish us from all others, who fear him not.

1. First, Our love to Christ cometh (1.) From the high esteem of the good things we see in him. But how shall we know whether that we have this admiring of the good things we see in God and in his word and children? We shall know it by our choice; and our choice follows our judgment. Would we know whether our judgment be good? See what do we choose, especially when things of the world and God come together. And here we want not examples to guide us. The question was, Whether that Moses should still choose to live in Pharaoh's court and be accounted his son-in-law, or else depart and suffer adversity with God's children. Now Moses, by sound judgment, had an high esteem of the excellency and privileges of the saints; and therefore chose rather to endure afflictions 'than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season,' Heb. xi. 25. Let us then see whether we can be contented to part with our preferment or pleasure for God or no. And whether we do esteem the rebukes of Christ greater riches than the treasures of the world: whether we can lay down our lives and liberties at Christ's feet, and gladly want all, so we may enjoy him. If it be so with us, our estate is good.

(2.) Again, Let us see whether We have a right prizing of the good things in God. Do we delight to speak much and often of Christ and the benefits we receive by him? How was St Paul's heart enlarged, and his tongue full of heavenly eloquence, in setting forth the 'unspeakable mercies of God,' which we have by Christ Jesus our Lord. If 'God be on our side, who can be against us?' saith he; 'What shall separate us from the love of Christ;' 'shall

tribulation, shall anguish and affliction? I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor any other thing can do it,' Rom. viii. 38.

(3.) Another sign to know whether we have a secret admiration of the good things we see in God is this, if we do undervalue all things else for Christ. Worldly men are ever admiring of the things below, accounting such men happy and blessed that abound most therein. Therefore there is nothing that doth more truly try a man than this. The soul that sees a vanity in the things beneath, and can rejoice in God only as his true riches, is in a good condition. Where there is a true judgment of God and religion, the soul of that man will never stoop to the creature; the soul so rejoiceth in God, as that it will not yield itself to any other. Adam and Eve, in their innocency, were both naked and were not ashamed. One reason might be, because their thoughts were taken up with higher matters. In heaven we shall not be ashamed of things we now are ashamed of. A Christian soul is so ravished with the enjoying of God, that it mindeth almost nothing but him.

2. The second branch in love is a desire to do all things, (1.) to the content of the party beloved. Our love to God will frame us to the obedience of his will. Obedience is the proof of love: 'If ye love me,' saith Christ, 'keep my commandments,' John xv. 10. If we love God, we will pray for the enlarging of his kingdom. Where love is kindled in any heart, there is a care to be approved of him whom we so love. This makes our obedience general to all God's commandments, in all places and all things whatsoever. It makes us give our inwards to God, serving him with the soul and spirit.

Those therefore that nourish unclean hearts within them, and think it enough to abstain from the outward act of evil, love not the Lord sincerely. The devil himself will do outward things as readily as you; he will confess Christ to be the Son of God, and say, 'Why art thou come to torment me before my time?' Matt. viii. 29. So that if thou dost outwardly only confess God, what dost thou more than the devil? In outward duties, without sincerity, there is no love. You will pray; the devil will do as much. The devil hath a bad end in good actions. So there are many that come to church, and make show of religion, to cloak their evil courses. But such poor wretches, however they are pleased with shadows, are little better than Satan himself.

(2.) Again, If we be desirous to content him whom we love, then will we suffer anything for his sake. Therefore the apostles went away 'rejoicing, and accounted it their glory that they were esteemed worthy to suffer hardship for Christ,' Acts v. 41. And David, for 'dancing before the ark,' being by

Michal mocked, saith, 'I will yet be more vile for my God,' 2 Sam. vi. 22. He cared not for any reproach that could happen to him in a good way. Yea, this will make us 'zealous in his truth.' He that hath no zeal hath no love. If our hearts rise not when God is dishonoured, what love have we to him? Is God's glory and the church's welfare dear to us? It is a sign we love him. But can we see those things go backward and have no zeal, nor be anything affected therewith, surely then we have no love.

3. Again, if we have a true love to God, then (1.) Have we a desire of union and communion with him. We will be much in meditating of him, in speaking to him and conferring with him. Those therefore that go on from day to day, without private speeches with God, or solacing of their souls in him, what affection have they to him? Love is communicative; and what desire of communion can that soul have that lives a stranger to his Maker? Can we say we love one with whom we never confer or speak to any purpose?

(2.) Again, If we love a man, we will advise with him, especially in matters of moment. So if we love God we will take counsel of him in his word, for the guidance of our lives and establishing our consciences. If we advise not with God, it is a sign that we either think he doth not regard us, or else that we count him not worthy to be counselled by.

(8.) Another sign is, to examine what desire we have to be dissolved, and to be with Christ. Do we love his appearing to judgment? and are we now fit for his coming? Surely then it is a plain sign that our love is fixed and sot upon him; so much as we do fail of this desire, so much we fail in love to Christ. What was the reason that the people under the law were so much afraid at the appearing of an angel unto them? Was it not this, that they were not fitted and prepared for God? A man may be a good Christian, and yet not at all times willing to die; for as eyes that are sore cannot always endure the light, so a soul galled with sin desires not to hear of the day of judgment: yet ought we to thirst after it.

(4.) Another sign of this grace is our eager and hungry desire after God, when with David we can say, 'O God, my heart panteth after thee, as the hart panteth after the brooks of waters,' Ps. xlii. 1, when a soul is never at rest till he enjoys his Maker, but cries out still, 'O when shall I appear in his presence!' it is a good sign, vr. 2.

4. The last branch or property is, resting and quieting ourselves in the love of God above all things whatsoever, saying with David, 'Whom have I in heaven or in earth besides thee? or what do I esteem in comparison of thee?' Ps. lxxiii. 25; let me enjoy but 'the light of thy countenance, audit suffices me,' Ps. iv. 6. Demand therefore of thine own heart, what the things are that trouble thee most? and what is the cause of thy sorrow and disquietments? whether it be for losses or crosses outwardly, or for want of God's love and the sense and feeling of his favour inwardly? They which grieve chiefly for outward evils are most carried in their affections that ways; but if in the confluence of all worldly blessings, we can grieve for our spiritual wants, it is a comfortable evidence. When a man reckons not his happiness to stand in the possession of the creature, but in the fruition of the Creator, and desires his favour above anything, it is a gracious sign.

David had an abundance, yea, he had a kingdom, yet nothing would satisfy him but the mercies of God. And when he was in want, what course did he take, but 'still comforted himself in the Lord his God,' Ps. li. 1, seq. That which a man sorroweth most for when he wanteth it, that he rejoiceth most in when he hath it. Can we in our crosses rejoice that God is ours? This is an excellent sign, and plainly discovers, that we place our contentment more in him than in anything else. Can we delight more in the solace of his favour than in outward prosperity? It is a heavenly testimony of a renewed condition. When David was in his greatest distresses, what desires had he then most in him? Why, he longed after the house of God. When the people were ready to stone him, wherein did he trust, but in 'the Lord his strong tower'? Ps. lxi. 3.

In the last place, Would we know whether we can rest in God or no? Let us

(1.) Examine ourselves then what endeavours we make every day to cleanse our souls from sin, that so God may take pleasure in us, and we again may delight in him.

(2.) Let us see how we restrain our affections from running riot after the world and sinful pleasures. And (3.) How we set our joy upon God, and frame ourselves to do his "ill. I beseech you, let us deal faithfully with our own souls in this particular. And if we find (4.) That our hearts tell us, as Peter's told him, 'Lord, thou knowest that I love thee,' John xvi. 30; I desire, O Lord, to please thee above all things; I have set mine heart upon thee, and I joy in thee and in thy love more than in all things else in the world; if thus, I

say, we can in the integrity of our spirits appeal to God, who only knows and searches our ways, and say, 'Truly, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee,' it is a certain and infallible sign unto us that we are his, and all things shall work for the best unto us.

But take we heed how we deceive ourselves in these things. By love we are Christians; therefore labour for sincerity of affection. A reprobate or a castaway may go far in these four signs of love. He may admire and wonder at the good things of God; but he doth it not from anything within him, but from the outward beholding of them. He can admire and talk of them, but yet such men are without any relish or sweet taste of the thing they speak of. So likewise an hypocrite may desire to please God in many things, but not in all things; as we see in Herod, he heard John Baptist willingly, and obeyed in some things, but not in all. He could not be crossed in his beloved sin which abode in him; that must not be touched. Then farewell God, and farewell Christ and all.

So a castaway may desire to be in heaven, as being a place good for him; and he may have some little 'taste of those joys above,' as is mentioned in the Hebrews, vi. 4, 5; but he hath no relish of them from the love of God, but only from the love of himself. And his desire is not such as will draw him on to the use of means for spiritual growth and progress thereunto, as we see in Balaam; he had a desire 'to die the death of the righteous,' Num. xxiii. 10, but this could not make him leave his covetous disposition, and find a contentment in God alone.

A reprobate may be content with religion and with God's ways, so long as peace doth accompany the same (as now in this our country, Christ cometh amongst us with plenty and prosperity, therefore Christ is a good Christ), but if the gospel and religion should be professed with persecution and danger and disgrace, it would soon appear where men's contentments were. There is a resting not in the truth, because it is truth, but in regard of the good things which follow it. If we desire to approve ourselves to God, let us examine ourselves about this affection, and every branch of it. The deceit is both common and deadly; and the profession of religion in many Christians is not for religion itself, but for by-ends and sinister respects. To which end consider further those particulars.

Where there is true love, there will be a desire of union to the beloved object; so where the love of God is, there will be a desire of the accomplishment of the marriage between God and the soul. 'He that loves a

harlot,' saith the wise man, 'is one with her,' 1 Cor. vi. 16. So he that affects the Lord, desires to be one with him; therefore men have their names from what they love. If they love the world, they are celled 'worldlings;' if they love Christ, they are called Christians. How canst thou say that thou lovest the Lord, and dost not desire his presence in his ordinances? Can we say we love such a man, when we care not for his company? God observes not so much what we do, as from what affection our duties proceed.

Again, If we love, there will be a desire to give content to the party beloved. This appears even in carnal self-love; for take a man that loves himself, he makes himself his utmost aim and end in all his actions. But when once God hath plucked this fleshly love out of our souls, then our affections will be carried to Christ only. This made the prophet David say, 'I love the Lord dearly,' Ps. xviii. 1. 'He is my rock, my fortress, my deliverer,'

Ps. lxxi. 8. A Christian hath his contentment in God alone; he finds an all-sufficiency in the Almighty, and therefore makes him his resting-place. In all his troubles he will make God his deliverer, and find more true comfort in him than in all the things of the world besides. Therefore, if God should take all other things from us, yet if he leave us himself, a Christian is well contented, because he knows his best being is in God.

Quest. But how shall I know whether I do esteem rightly of God or no?

Ans. If we highly esteem any thing, whether it be of this or a better life, we will be often speaking of them. It is a sign men undervalue heavenly truths when they discourse little about them. They much set light by God that have him not in all their thoughts.

Again, What we esteem of, we will choose above other things. It appears we have a precious esteem of God when we choose him, and him alone, for our portion; as David, when he said, 'One thing have I desired of the Lord, that I may dwell in his courts for ever,' Ps. xxvii. 4. Where God is truly loved, there will be a fall of all earthly things in that man's estimation. So he may gain Christ, he counts all else but dross and dung.

Lastly, If thou lovest God, thou wilt be afraid to offend him, and careful to please him in all things. God delights not in a proud and haughty spirit, but in an humble and meek soul. These then should he thy delight. God is wonderful well pleased with faith; for it is that which binds him to perform his promise; therefore seek it earnestly. Whatsoever God approves, a

Christian should take pleasure in. Every grace is an ornament to a Christian; and God delights to see his own graces in us. Isaac, before he took Rebekah to wife, sent her jewels to adorn her; so Christ sends rich jewels to his children, even the graces of his Holy Spirit, to make us love him, and fit us the more for him. Those that live in sins against conscience, think we that these love God? No, certainly. If they did, they would love that which he loves, and hate that which he hates. What a pitiful thing is it to see men glorying in that which is their shame; in swearing and profaneness, and yet for all this say they love God! Is it possible that the love of God and the love of sin should ever stand together?

Proceed we now to some reasons and directions for the attaining of this grace.

1. And first, Let us not rest in an inferior degree of this affection, but rise up therein, and labour that it may have full assent. There are degrees of assent, as when we love God because we love ourselves. A natural man may do so, but this is not enough; for if we love God for ourselves, we make ourselves our god. Where the heart is truly set upon God, it delights in him only for himself, and takes comfort in no condition further than he sees God in it. He never affected Christ in truth that is more taken with the benefits and privileges that come by him than with the excellency of his person. What friend will be content that a man should only love him because he doth him good? We must love ourselves and all other things in and for God. Moses and Paul rejoiced to honour the Lord, though themselves were accursed and deprived of happiness; and if we could so love Christ as not to desire heaven itself if Christ were not there, this were truly to affect him; for indeed if Christ were not there, heaven should not be heaven unto us. We must love our happiness no further than we can have with it God's leave and liking.

2. Again, We shall know our love to God, whether it be sincere or no, by our abstaining from sin. If we avoid evil for fear of punishment or hope of reward only, our love is unsound; but when we so love God that we will not do anything contrary to his Spirit, it is a special sign. Such a man, if there were no hell to punish him, nor place of bliss to receive him, yet would not break with God upon any terms.

For the means to attain this love, we must, in the first place, labour for an humble and empty soul. 'Blessed are the poor in spirit,' saith Christ, for such only apprehend their misery without Christ and their need of him, which occasions an holy rejoicing in the Lord, and unfeigned love to him.

What is the reason that some are so ravished with the favours of the Almighty? Is it not for that they were so formerly stung with the sight and feeling of their sins? The more loving Christian ever the more humble Christian. Mark it when you will, and you shall find this disposition manifest in every true convert. They are daily humbling themselves for the least offence.

A second direction is, to taste of the love of God in Christ. When the beams of his favour once shine into our hearts, we cannot but reflect upon him again. 'We love him,' saith the apostle, 'because he loved us first,' 1 John iv. 10. Mary therefore 'loved much,' because she had the experience of God's love 'in forgiving her many sins,' Luke vii. 47. When a broken humble soul truly savoureth the goodness of the Lord, it cannot but be inflamed with desire after him. A Christian, after he hath had a taste of the love of God, hath another manner of judgment of justification than before. 'Taste and see,' saith David, 'how good and gracious the Lord is,' Ps. xxxiv. 8. A man that relishes the sweetness of a thing can better judge of it than he which never tasted it.

A third direction is, to see what motives and reasons we have from the love of God in Christ to exercise our understandings this way. We know heat cometh from light, and there is a sympathy between the brain and the heart. The brain must make a report to the heart before that can be inflamed with affection; therefore seriously search into the grounds of thy affection.

(1.) The first ground is, goodness in God. God is goodness itself, in whom all goodness is involved. If, therefore, we love other things for the goodness which we see in them, why do we not love God, in whom is all goodness? All other things are but sparks of that fire, and drops of that sea. Seest thou any good in the creature; remember there is much more in the Creator. Leave, therefore, the streams, and go to the well-head of comfort.

(2) Another reason of love is our affinity with God our Father and friend, who is unto us in all degrees of nearness, both our head and our husband. Were not the Son ours, what fellowship could we have with the Father? Having such a Mediator with God, that is 'bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh,' why should we fear to go unto him? He hath taken upon him these comfortable relations of shepherd and brother, to possess us of his acquaintance with our infirmities and readiness to relieve us. For shall others by his grace fulfil what he calls them unto, and not he that out of his love, hath taken upon him these relations, so thoroughly founded upon his

Father's assignment and his own voluntary undertaking? How doth the tender mother sympathize in the anguish of her child, notwithstanding all its froward averseness? And shall we think there is more bowels in ourselves than in God? Can there be more sweetness in the stream than in the spring? If the well of consolation be always open, and the fountain of living water be never shut up, let us teach our hearts to suck and draw comfort from these rivers of refreshing. What a shame is it that men should hunger at such a feast!

Consider, likewise, the benefits which we have bestowed upon us, and the end why God vouchsafes us so much favour.

Benefits win love even from brute creatures. Therefore we are worse than beasts, if we love not God for his benefits. 'The ox knows his owner, and the ass his master's crib,' Isa. i. 3. What are we indeed but an heap of God's benefits? All our faculties of soul and body are the blessings of God. Whatsoever we have or hope to have is from him. Our breath, life, and being subsists in God, who hath promised that 'heaven and earth, men and devils, crosses and blessings, sin and death,' all shall be turned by his over-ruling power to our good.

(3) Consider what now we are, and what a happy condition God hath made us capable of hereafter. Is it a small matter that we should be regarded above the angels that fell? and that he who knew no sin should be made sin for us, nay, become a curse to free us from the curse? It was strange that the 'three children,' being cast into the hot fiery furnace, should not burn. So likewise it is a wonder that Christians, being in the midst of the flame of God's love, should be so cold and dead-hearted. It is not only the guilt of sin that we are freed from, but the unsupportable vengeance of the Almighty due for the same. And is this a small matter?

(4.) If we regard the manner of bestowing his benefits, it will much advance God's goodness towards us, and raise up our spirits to love him again. Doth not he love us first of all, and prevent us with his favours? Is not his love full and overflowing, so as he never leaves us until he make an end? Where he freeth a man from danger, he settleth him in a good estate, never ceasing till he possess him of glory; as it is 2 Tim. iv. 17, 'The Lord hath freed me out of the mouth of the lion, and he will preserve me to his everlasting kingdom.' He delivers us from spiritual evil, and gives us spiritual good. The meditation of these things will warm our hearts.

(5.) The next means is, to join fear with our love to God. Whom we love thoroughly, we will do nothing that shall displease. The fear of God, whom we love, will cause us to make conscience of the least sin against him; for there is no sin, be it never so little, but it will weaken our affection to goodness. When we venture upon anything against conscience, is there not a decay of our love to God and of our sense of his favour towards us? Surely sin is the only make-bait in our souls, and weakener of all our comforts. Those, therefore, are the lovingest souls towards God that are most conscientious in their ways. Careless Christians have not that feeling of God's love which humble fruitful Christians have, neither do they live or die with that comfort as these do.

We are the spouse of Christ, and he is jealous of our love. Our betrothed husband cannot abide that we should set our affections upon strangers. Take heed, therefore, of adulterous and false affections. The more we love earthly things, the less we shall esteem of heavenly; and as our affection towards the creature increaseth, so our heat towards Christ abateth.

(6.) The next direction to stir up our love to God is, to exercise the same daily. For true love is not an abstractive affection, but an affection in practice; and we know everything doth increase by exercise. Exercise it, therefore, in fighting against the love of the world and all self-love; for as there are contrary commands, so there are contrary desires in a Christian. As there is the old man and the new man, the flesh and the spirit, so there are contrary affections, one setting itself against another in him.

When we see a poor Christian, the love of God will say unto us, Now shew thy love unto Christ in succouring one of his members. No, saith flesh and blood, charity begins at home; thou mayest want, thyself, another day.

In doing good likewise we should say, Here is now an occasion offered me of honouring God, and I will embrace it. Oh but, saith self-love, there is time enough hereafter; hereby you may run into poverty and disgrace; be not too forward. Therefore there must be a perpetual denial of ourselves against our whole twisted nature. Those that are Christians know experimentally what belongs to these things. But take a carnal man or woman, and they are led altogether by their sensual lusts as brute beasts. Whatsoever ease and self-love wills, that sways their hearts any ways. And indeed the most sincere Christian hath the motions of these carnal and worldly respects; but his love unto God constrains him to deny all, and listen to what Christ whispereth in his heart.

Consider we a little what may stir us up to exercise ourselves herein. Love, it is the light of our life; love we must, something; and he lives not that loves not. Seeing then we cannot but love, and that the misplacing of our affection is the cause of all sin and misery, what can we do better than attend to directions how to love as we should?

To come therefore to the four things before mentioned, being the branches of love. First, We must admire God above all things. And can we admire anything with wisdom but God alone? It is commonly said that we cannot be wise and love together, for that this affection is blind, except it be in God. Again, Is there anything more comfortable than that we give content to God? Is any service comparable to the service of a prince? We must serve the Lord only, and others in and for him, or else all we do is naught. All other services are bondage; this a perfect freedom. Again, Is there anything more worthy our souls than to be united to God? Can we have a greater happiness than to be made one with Christ? By loving a thing we come to be like to it. Is there anything that may or ought to challenge our love but Christ? Is it not a base thing to unite our souls, which are the best things under heaven, to earthly contentments, than which we shall one day find nothing to be worse? The love of God planted in our hearts maketh Christ and us one. As a pearl in a ring makes the ring more precious and valuable, so the soul united unto Christ cometh to be more gracious and heavenly. The more excellent the soul is, the more loving it will be to God. The holiest saints have ever burned with most affection to Christ, as Moses and Paul. Can anything satisfy us more than God? Know we not that all things here shall perish? Therefore when we place our love and joy in the world, do we not lose them too? We shall leave behind us the things of this life; our sins only we carry away, which cleave fast unto us and stain our consciences world without end. What might more content us than the love of God, which will endure for ever and accompany us to heaven, when all other loves perish?

Consider that every thing thou dost without love is dead and empty. Love is the life of all actions; as we say of a gift, the love of the giver is better than the gift itself; not only our performance is nothing without love, but we ourselves are nothing without it. Every acceptable service we do must proceed from this heavenly flame: 'Though we speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not love, we are like to a sounding brass and tinkling cymbal,' 1 Cor. xiii. 1. Have we not much to do and suffer in this life? And what is it that makes us constant in duty, and carries us through so

many oppositions as we meet withal—is it not love? Doth not love sweeten our hearts, and take away every difficulty in our way to heaven? Whilst we live here, we must of necessity suffer ill things and go on in well-doing; neither of which can be performed without love. This rules our whole lives. Beg therefore of God to quicken thee in all cheerful and willing obedience: pray that the Sun of righteousness would enlighten thy heart. We cannot serve God without God, nor have any holy affection, except by his Spirit he work the same in us.

The Christian's End

The First Sermon

None of us liveth to himself, and none of us dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.—Rom. XIV. 7, 8.

The scope of the chapter in the former part of it, is to discover to the Romans, and in them to us all, how to carry ourselves to others in matters of indifference. As there is difference of things in the world—some good, some ill, and some of a middle nature—so there are different affections in men. About these things of a middle nature some are strong, and they are prone to despise the weaker, for they know their liberty; some more weak, and they are prone to censure and complain of them that be strong, as all weakness is full of impatience. Thus it was with the Romans. The strong despised the weaker, as ignorant; the weaker censured, and in their hearts condemned, the strong, as too adventurous.

The apostle sheweth here an excellent peaceable spirit, hating contention as an evil thing in a church. In a family, when children fall together by the cars, the father taketh up the quarrel, by beating them both. So in a church, while people fall a-contending and breaking the bonds of love, God taketh them in hand. And therefore the apostle taketh them off from this danger by despising one another, and presseth it by a reason in the fourth verse, drawn,

First, From their relations, 'Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?'

Secondly, From their aims. They do it both out of religious respects. 'He that eateth, eateth to the Lord; he that eateth not, eateth not to the Lord; he that regardeth not a day, regardeth it not to the Lord; he that doth it, doth it to the Lord.' And therefore if both have a religious respect, censure may be forborne.

There is that force in a good aim, that in some actions of as indifferent nature they may be done, or not be done; and God may bear with both, though he allow not of either's carelessness in searching out the truth. Till the time of growth, God beareth with them, so their aims be gracious, their

fault being simple ignorance, not malicious pertinency. When St Paul saw the hypocritical aims of the Galatians in things of indifferent natures, he would not yield a whit to them. But the defect of the Romans was in their knowledge, not in their wills; they did it with respect to the Lord. And therefore as in Acts xiii. 18, God is said ἐτροποφόρειν (an excellent word), to bear with their manners in the wilderness, dispensing with many things, as putting away of wives, &c.; not that he liked that course, but he would set up a meek kind of government, not taking advantage to cast them off. So he dealt with the Romans. Row, shall God he merciful and indulgent, and man severe?

1. In the text you have a general reason why they that did it, or did it not, did or did it not 'to the Lord.' 'For none liveth to himself, or dieth to himself; but whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.'

2. In this reason here is, first, a general negative: 'None of us liveth to himself, none of us dieth to himself'—a figurative speech and rhetorical expression, beginning and ending alike. Secondly, There is a general affirmative; when he hath taken them off from themselves, he assigneth them to a true Lord: 'Whether we live, we live to the Lord; whether we die, we die to the Lord.' And this is sot down with a disjunction: we neither live to ourselves, nor die to ourselves.

3. And, thirdly, a general ground that wrappeth up all: 'Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.' And therefore in reason we should live to him and die to him.

4. Fourthly, There is the ground of all, in that that followeth: 'For to this end Christ died and rose again, that he might be Lord of life and death.' So here is reason upon reason, and ground upon ground.

Conclusion. The sum of all is, we cannot certainly conclude of life or death. For we live but for a while; and when we have acted our part upon the stage we die, and go to another world. Of life and death we can make no reckoning. As soon as we begin to live, we begin to die. For some part of our life is taken away daily; as it is with a sum, the more you take away, the less remaineth. But certain it is, living and dying, 'we are the Lord's.' We ought therefore to have a conjunctive consideration. I now live, yet that is not my comfort; but sure I am, 'whether I live or die, I am the Lord's.'

He riseth from a general to a particular, which may teach us this point of wisdom.

First, That to have good general truths is an excellent point of wisdom, for they have application into all particulars. A comprehension of principles is the ground of prudence for direction in particular cases. There is no art but hath some general maxims, as in law, in physic, and in the mathematics, there he canons or principles, call them what you will, that have influence into all particulars. So religion hath general rules, which should he deposited in memory at all times; that on all occasions we may see how particulars spring from and agree to the generals. Therefore we should labour to treasure up in our memory good principles, for men work in all things according to their principles. If they have good principles, or general truths, they work answerably. And the reason of any error in a Christian's life is from false principles.

Men of a bad conscience, whose synteresis (being the part of the soul that preserveth principles) is corrupt, they think they do God good service in killing of men, from an abominable principle, John xvi. 2. As in popery, which is grounded upon false principles, making men's traditions a rule of faith.

Therefore it is good to have general true grounds. Mark how the Scripture is frequent this way. What an excellent general rule is that of Christ. 'Seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all other things shall be cast upon you," Mat. vi. 33. Carry that along, and what a light doth it give into all our actions. What need we by indirect courses seek to be great in the world, if we take Christ's method?

Again, Our Saviour Christ in his ordinary speech delivered it as a general rule, 'It is better to give than to receive,' Acts xx. 35, which containeth a direction to men to be public and liberal. St Paul's ordinary course was so: 'Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men,' &c., 2 Cor. v. 11. What an influence hath this into our conversations, 'That I must do, as I must give account at the day of judgment.' And so what use made he of the glorious state to come, in that house 'and building of God not made with hands, not seen, but apprehended only by faith,' 2 Cor. v. 1. It enabled him to do and suffer all things that became a Christian to do and suffer. If a man have that principle and mindeth it, 'that all things work together for the best to them that love God,' Rom. viii. 28, what can discourage him? He knoweth in the issue all shall be for the best, and God will not fail him nor forsake

him in his way, 'but giveth his angels charge over him,' Ps. xci. 11. So Christ's direction. One thing is necessary, how may it rectify us when we trouble ourselves about many impertinences? If these generalists were always present upon solicitations to sin or discomfort, 'It shall go well with the righteous, and it shall not go well with the wicked; if we take good courses it shall be well, if ill courses sin will be bitter;' it would be a marvellous help and advantage in all particulars of our lives.

The second general observation is this, that as we must yet good principles laid up in store upon all occasion, so we must specially have gracious aims. Men are as their aims are. Noble spirits have noble aims. Christians are of an higher rank than ordinary men, and therefore they have higher aims. Religion giveth command to all other particulars, and prescribeth to them a general end. It taketh a man off from a false end, and pitcheth him upon a true end. It taketh him from himself, the great idol that man naturally setteth up above God and above Christ, and above heaven and happiness, and telleth him that the true end of all is to live to Christ; and that on good grounds, 'for we are his,' and his by good title: 'he died for us, that he might be Lord both of quick and dead,' Acts x. 42. As in state policy, those that are governors in a state they prescribe ends of trades, and reduce them to a serviceableness of state—if they find anything hurtful, they look to it as it stands in reference to the common good—so religion considereth of all particulars as they have reference to Christ and the main end, taking us off from false ends, and prescribing the last and best end, and directing all particulars to that end. But we shall see this better in the unfolding of the words.

The first thing he begins in the general is, to take us off from false ends: 'None of us liveth to himself.'

(1.) First, To live to ourselves is not altogether to be taken in a civil sense. A man liveth to himself when he liveth privately or retiredly: Bene vixit, qui bene latuit. So a man may do in some things, especially in times of persecution; but this ordinarily is not good. A man is a creature for communion; and God hath fitted him for communion by speech and other endowments, that there may be preserved a communion of saints. But because a retired life is sometimes good, it is not here mainly aimed at.

(2.) Again, secondly, we live to ourselves when we mind ourselves altogether, and not one another; when we have more respect to ourselves, than to God or to our Christian brother. And this is even contrary to nature.

We see in nature, that a particular nature will in some cases yield to a general, and thwart itself. The fire is a light body, and in the natural motion of it mounteth upward; yet this body will go downwards to preserve whole the universal nature from a vacuum, from emptiness, that the fulness and solidity in nature may not be disturbed. And we see heavy bodies go upward for the same end. As a man will venture the hand to save his head, and to save his body, so it should he in society and government; particular men should venture themselves for the prince or state, for the head or for the body.

(3.) But in a more large and religious sense. To live to a man's self is to make himself his last end, his terminus reductions, to reduce all to himself, and make religion and everything serviceable to himself. When a man will serve himself of God for base ends, because his service will advance him; as the Shechemites were circumcised for Dinah, Gen xxxiv. 1, seq.

And to die to ourselves is much like it.

(1.) A man dieth to himself, when he regardeth himself in death, and is regarded much of nobody else. Persons that have an absolute being of themselves, that have no kindred, not much acquaintance, or have been little fruitful in their lives, die to themselves in a civil sense; that is, no man mourneth for them, saying, 'Ah, my brother,' 1 Kings xiii. 30. They were of little use in their lives, and so little missed in their deaths.

And usually they that live thus to themselves, they die to themselves, little regarded, little lamented. Only this oftentimes, they do most good when they die; as we say of swine, 'They are never good till dead.'

(2.) But this is meant in a theological higher sense. No Christian 'dieth to himself;' that is, dieth unregarded of God and of good men. As he liveth not to himself but to Christ, so he dieth not to himself: 'Precious to the Lord is the death of all his saints,' Ps. cxvi. 15. He is not despotos without lord and master; but 'whether he liveth or dieth, he is the Lord's.' So much for the negative part, which we see may be taken both actively and passively.

But this clause will be better understood by adding the other. 'Whether we live, we live to the Lord; or whether we die, we die to the Lord.'

Quest. What is it to live to the Lord?

Ans. First, To acknowledge the Lord in all our ways to be our Lord, to whom we owe ourselves.

And secondly, Thereupon to resign ourselves to the Lord in our whole carriage, so as to obey him, to give up ourselves to be disposed of him, and directed by him as he pleaseth.

And then, thirdly, to refer all things to his glory as our last end, and to endeavour that God and Christ may be known and magnified in the world. When we labour to practise what we pray for, according to that first petition, Hallowed be thy name, his religion and truth, and whatsoever else is God's, may be advanced, set high, published, and enlarged; that he may be known and worshipped; that he may be to us what he is in himself, the great God, 'Lord of quick and dead.' So by our giving respect to him suitable to our knowledge of him.

Fourthly and lastly, He that liveth to the Lord comforteth himself in this, that the Lord taketh notice of him in everything. For it is a phrase importing a direction to a duty; and likewise to confirm and comfort us in this, that we do our duty. We do not serve a dead master, but one that taketh notice of us 'living and dying.'

(1.) So 'to die to the Lord' is to acknowledge Christ 'to be the Lord of life' and the 'Lord of death,' of death as well as of life. 'He hath the keys of hell and of death,' Rev. i. 18, and the disposing of both. Therefore we must resign up ourselves to him in death.

(2.) And then study to honour him by death in any kind, yea, by martyrdom, if he shall call us to seal the truth of religion with blood.

(3.) And then to acknowledge him to be owner of us, and one that will receive us dying, as he took notice of us living. And so the words are a privilege as well as a duty. As it is sealed up in the last words, 'whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.' Thus I have unfolded the text.

He first promiseth the general negative: 'No man liveth to himself, no man dieth to himself.' You must apply this to Christians only, that are true professors and members of Christ. For other men, that are not in Christ, and have not the Spirit of Christ, 'they live to themselves, and die to themselves,' and aim at themselves in all things; and therefore they are not the Lord's. Therefore it is a fearful condition to live and die to ourselves.

Yet you have some kind of men, not only in their particular persons, but in their callings, are all for themselves. But why should I call it calling; for there is no calling but it is for public good. As an usurer, for whose good is he? Let all sink or swim, what careth he? So times hold, and months and years continue, he will have his returns. And such are they that live in a course of oppression, that live by the ruin and spoil of others.

But there is a more subtle living to a man's self, as all men do that have not the Spirit of Christ; they live within that circle, self. The devil keepeth them that they go not out of it; so that self doth run through all their actions, their civil actions, yea, their religious actions, which are all tainted with self-respects.

Ever since the fall it is so. Man withdraweth himself from God's government, and setteth up himself instead of God, and thought to have a secured happiness from God, in eating the forbidden fruit, and therefore would not depend upon God to be happy. He saw another way to be like God. God hath highest place in our heart by order of creation, and according to the degrees of excellency in things should our esteem of them be, 'everything being beautiful in his place,' Eccles. iii. 11. But where God is put down,—as he is in all men till they be in Christ,—something self-love sets up in the heart above God. Hence cometh the necessity of this method of taking us off from ourselves before we can live to Christ; because self-love is an impediment and block in the way between us and Christ, heaven and happiness. And therefore Christ begins the gospel with self-denial: 'Whosoever wall be my disciple, let him take up his cross and follow me,' Mat. xvi. 24.

Now there be four degrees of self.

There is, 1. Natural self. 2. Civil self. 3. Sinful self. 4. Religious self.

(1.) First, Natural self is the state we are in as men.

(2.) Secondly, Civil, as we are poor, or rich, or honourable, according to our several places in the common-wealth.

(3.) Thirdly, Sinful self is, as we are carried to sinful lusts and the creature.

(4.) Fourthly, Religious self is our condition in Christ, when we are engrafted into him and made new creatures.

'Now we must not live to ourselves.'

1. First, Not to our natural self. We must not live only to live. For as all other creatures are to serve us, so we are to serve something else that is better. For that that is not of itself, cannot be for itself. Now we have not beings from ourselves, but from God. He giveth us beings, and a being in that rank of creatures wherein we are. Therefore our natural self must be to a higher end. A man is not the end of things. There is another end than he, and that is God, who is of himself, and hath made all other things for himself, and therefore riches, and honours, and the like.

2. We should not live to our civil self. Nature teacheth us that, having spirits, we are not for anything meaner than ourselves. We do not live hero to be rich, to be great, to command others; for these things do not answer the soul of man.

[1.] First, Nothing that hath an end can he a chief end. That that hath finem consummatum cannot be finis consummans. That that hath an end consuming itself, cannot be an end perfecting itself. We have a journey beyond all things, and that cannot be our end that leaveth us in the way. Riches and honour are determined in death. Let our preferments be never so great, though to the monarchy of the whole world, yet we have a being beyond them. They have consumptions in themselves.

[2.] And then they be inferior. No truth in them can fill up the understanding; no good in them can fill up the will. But the understanding can pierce through them. And the will, in relishing and tasting the good of them, can look on them as cast commodities. It can quickly suck out all the sweet that is in them. Therefore they cannot be a man's end, because he hath larger parts than they can fill.

[3.] That that must be a man's end must he larger than the sold; and that wherein he can rest, it must be some universal good, fit for all turns and purposes. Now there is nothing in the world that hath more than a particular service, for men's particular service, for men's particular ends. Honour can do something, but not all things. Riches cannot command health, they cannot cure a fit of an ague; they be for a particular good only. They can command many things, but not all things. Men consider what they can do,

and therefore desire them. But they consider not what they cannot do, and therefore they rest in them. That which is a man's last end must be a satisfying, general, universal good, an immortal good, of equal continuance with him, as nothing in the world is.

[4.] It must be such a good as he cannot offend or he defiled withal, such as he cannot misuse. And what is there in the world, but Christ and the best things, but a man is prone to defile himself in? Knowledge is the best thing, but that worketh like leaven, it swells: as the apostle saith, 'Knowledge puffeth up,' 1 Cor. viii. 1. Therefore we must live to no worldly thing.

3. And much less must we live to sinful self. Some things are to be denied in way of competition and in opposition, but some things are to be denied absolutely. Absolutely a man must not own, or live to a base lust, pride, or sensuality. He oweth nothing to these but mortification. 'We are not debtors to the flesh,' saith the apostle, Rom. viii. 12. Therefore when a proud vindictive motion ariseth, say, I owe no suit or service to the flesh. What should these do in a heart dedicated to God, consecrated to Christ? I am not mine own, much less Satan's, or lusts'; which be objects of mortification, but no way worthy of my service. Absolute denial is required here.

Of other things, a denial is required only as they stand in competition with Christ. In that case a man must sacrifice Isaac, not only his sinful self, but natural self also, his life and bodily liberty, the dearest thing in the world, and whatsoever is sweet, for Christ.

He having taken us off from ourselves, assigneth us to a true Lord. 'We live to the Lord, and die to the Lord.' It had not been enough to say, 'We ought not to live to ourselves, or die to ourselves,' if he had not told whom we must live to, and die to. For naturally man will never leave anything, though but an apparent good, till he knoweth something better. A man will not part with a bad master till he hath a better service. Therefore he sheweth where to bestow ourselves; namely, upon Christ, who hath care of us both in life and death.

4. This is to be laid down for a ground; had we not a better being in Christ than in ourselves, he would never take us from ourselves, for God never biddeth us to our loss. We have a better condition in Christ than we can have in the world. It is our gain and advantage to live and die to Christ; though it be to the loss of natural self, of civil self, and whatsoever else, yet it is our advantage. It is mercatorium, not a loss, but a trading. We have a better

for worse. No man ever parted with anything for religion, or a public good, but God made it up in a better kind. Though God should not make it up in this world, in the same kind, yet in religion there be all things better than in the world. If we lose honour here, we have honour from God. If we lose riches, we have them made up in grace here, in glory hereafter. If we lose liberty, we have it in the enlargement of a good conscience. If we lose friends, we get a God for a friend, who can make our enemies friends. If we lose life, we are put into possession of eternal life, and therefore we need not stand at the bargain. We have a better being in Christ than in ourselves. Water is not lost when it emptieth itself into the sea, for there it is in its proper element. A Christian is not lost when he loseth himself in his God, in his Saviour; for in him he hath a better being than in himself. He is brought nearer the fountain: 'I desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is the best of all,' saith the apostle, Philip, i. 23. Religion is a most excellent condition; for as he 'that saveth his life shall lose it, so he that loseth his life shall save it,' Mat. x. 39.

All our comforts have a better being in Christ than in ourselves; and therefore we should labour to have communion with him, and to strengthen our faith in Christ, and be in love with our happy condition in him, which yieldeth comfort in life and death. And all by virtue of the death of Christ, and the resurrection of Christ. As he saith afterward, 'Christ both died and rose again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.'

The resurrection of Christ is the consummation of all. 'If Christ had not risen again,' where had our comfort been? But the very thought of it, that we are engrafted in one who hath not only purchased us by his death—'for we are the price of his blood;' but to make it clear that it is so, is now in heaven as our head, having overcome death, and intending to bring all his body where he is, as it was his will 'that where he is, we should be also,' John xvii. 24—is a glorious thought. The glory of Christian religion is in the resurrection of Christ; and to consider that we that are creeping here on earth shall be members of him that is glorious in heaven, 'Lord of heaven and earth,' who not only 'died for us, but is risen again,' and will make us all, both in body and soul, conformable to his glorious self, as the apostle saith to the Philippians, Philip, iii. 10, cannot but infuse life and vigour into all our actions, estates, and conditions, be they never so mean, and have a wonderful influence into the whole life of a Christian.

The Second Sermon

None of us liveth to himself, and none of us dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.—Rom. XIV. 7, 8.

1. First, The general scope of the apostle is, to take us off from our false ends: 'None of us liveth to himself,' &c.

2. Secondly, To assign us to the true object, to whom we ought to dedicate ourselves, that is, 'to the Lord.'

3. Thirdly, The ground of all, 'Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.'

4. And then, fourthly, the spring of all: 'Christ both died and rose again, that he might be Lord both of quick and dead.'

There is a concatenation and knitting together of divine truths, they following one another by a necessity of consequence. As from the body of the sun, there is a natural issue of beams; and as in plants derivation from the root into the branch; so there is from Christ into all truths. Grant him to be the second Adam, and grant him Lord of the living and of the dead, and it will follow, we ought to live to him. If we grant we ought to live to Christ, then we must grant we ought not to live to ourselves. For we ought to live to Christ. Why to Christ? Because he is Lord both of life and death. Why is he Lord? Because he hath purchased it by his blood. How do we know he hath purchased it by his death satisfactorily? Because he is risen again, and sitteth at the right hand of God to make all good for us. Things are best to us when they are digested and made our own by the presence of good principles. But here is the mischief: Sin is ready, and good principles are not engrafted into us; but if divine truths were as near as corruption is, then we could withstand and repel all temptations.

As travellers have the end of their journey in their thoughts habitually, though not actually—for every step they take is in virtue of their end—so we should consider that we are all travellers in the way to heaven, and every step of our life should be to that end.

The ignorance of this maketh the life of most men to be but a digression from the main, as if they were brought into the world only to satisfy base lusts, and to seek themselves, to serve Satan and sin, the professed enemies

of God, which are not only digressions, but motives to hell and eternal destruction. What a pitiful thing is it, that creatures should come into the world and live, some twenty, some forty, some more years, and go out of the world again, not knowing wherefore they lived.

Good reason it is we should live to Christ, acknowledge him in all our ways, live answerable to our knowledge, resign up ourselves to his government, and seek his glory in all things; that we may make Christ known in the world; that all that see us may see Christ in us, and perceive our love to him 'that hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.' 1 Peter ii. 9.

And also to acknowledge him to be Lord of our life; and in death to resign ourselves to him 'as a faithful Creator knowing that he taketh care of us in life and death.

1. For we are not our own: 'We are bought with a price,' as the apostle saith, 1 Cor. vi. 20.

2. Again, Ourselves are our greatest enemies. There is no such flatterer as the bosom flatterer. That enemy self, that we have in our bosoms, betrayeth us to Satan, else all the devils in hell could not hurt us. Self is our own enemy and God's enemy. Nay, enemy is too easy, too good a word: the best thing in us is enmity itself against God.

3. By woful experiments we find that which hath brought all the misery that the world ever felt hath been self-will. Men will be turned upside down, rather than their wills shall be crossed. But doth not this provoke God? Shall a piece of earth strive against him? and will not he break it to powder? Surely God will set us a mark to shoot at, and will triumph and get himself victory and glory over those creatures that will have their wills. Hell is fit for such. God will be sure to have his will of them. When the creature shall set his will against God's will, when an earthen pot shall set itself against a mace of brass, which will have the worst, think you?

4. If we live to ourselves, we lie open to Satan. But, on the contrary part, a man that liveth to God is fit for any gracious motions, whatsoever they be. He is fit for God and a blessed communion of saints.

5. Man is a reasonable creature, made for God, And if you grant there is a God, you must grant that man is to do service to that God. God is the creditor and man the debtor, and of necessity there must be an obligation.

Now, to shew the nature of this living to Christ.

(1.) First, It imports a vital operation, an exercise that proceeds from life. Now, as natural life springeth from union of the body with the soul, so the union of the soul with Christ bringeth into the soul true principles of an holy and spiritual life. For Christ and the soul cannot touch one another, but presently he infuseth a living principle. All artificial motions proceed from something without. And such are the self-seeking Christians that do only act a part in religion; but those that truly live to God and Christ, they have an inward instinct that inclines them to holiness.

(2.) Secondly, There is entireness in a Christian course, so that he liveth to none but Christ. Life is not only taken for the space of his being in the world, but for the improving of all the furtherances of our life to Christ. As to bestow ourselves upon him, in all the civil relations we have in the world, by being obedient to him and to others in him and for him; and in whatsoever callings we are, not only in our natural life, but also in our civil life, to go on in a constant tenor all the whole course of our lives aiming at Christ; not to set ourselves in our callings to get riches—for those shall be cast in by the way—God alloweth us riches, but not to be our ends, but that we may serve him and honour him. There is no time to sin, but a time for everything else.

(3.) Thirdly, In our living to Christ there must be evenness and uniformity. We must not live to Christ for a fit, but constantly; not to do now and then a good action, but to make it our course, our trade, to live to Christ entirely, constantly, uniformly.

(4.) Fourthly, And then living to the Lord implieth, that all Christians' counsel and advice is how to live to Christ. Heaven is always before him, because his way is to God and to Christ. Other men will rage and swell, though they know well enough they are out of the way, when they be put in mind of it. But a gracious man is glad to have any Scripture opened that may give him more light, either by a discovery of a sin or duty, because he now knoweth an enemy and friend, which before he knew not, and hath learned a duty which before he was ignorant of; for it is his scope and endeavour to set himself in the way of living to Christ.

(5.) Fifthly, He that liveth to Christ hath likewise this quality, he is not carried on his course by false winds; he doth not sail by a false compass. Though the world encourageth or discourageth him, all is one, he regardeth it not. His care is wholly taken up in the service of his God. And with Joshua, think the world what it will, 'he and his house will serve the Lord,' Josh. xxiv. 15; and with holy David will resolve to be yet 'more vilo for God's glory,' 2 Sam. vi. 22. And though he getteth disgrace in the world, he regardeth it not, but is willing to suffer it, so that his God may be honoured, knowing he shall not be a loser by the bargain.

Other men, if so be they are disgraced, they are so shallow in religion, that they are quickly taken off, because the truth hath no root in them, like the bad and naughty ground. And not only so, but they will speak contrary to the truths in their consciences; but, alas! one day they shall know that God accounteth them as his enemies.

(6.) Sixthly, Again, a true Christian will live to the church of Christ. For we are members of Christ. We ought to labour for the advancement of the truth of his religion, the kingdom of Christ; and to be of the same spirit with good Nehemiah, 'that all may be well with us, when the church of God prospereth,' ii. 20, and groweth up in the world, getting victory over all her enemies.

Now carnal men live not at all to Christ; they care not whether religion sinketh or swimmeth. Tell them of heavenly matters, Tush, they are not for them. But God doth hate such persons; for as they regard not to serve God, or to own Christ in their lives, so he will not own them at their deaths. As in prosperity they are not on his side, neither will own his part, which one day will prove the best, so in times of trouble they cannot expect or look for any favour or mercy from him.

And to add one thing more, though it must he our chief aim to look to Christ, yet God allows us to look also to our own salvation, how to be saved and happy in another world. God hath joined these two together, as one chief end and good. The one, that he might be glorified; the other, that we might be happy: and both these are attained by honouring and serving him. And this is no self-love; for we cannot seek our salvation but in honouring God and yielding the means that he hath sanctified for us, which is to cast ourselves on him for our salvation in his way. Thus our happiness and God's chief end agree together. As when there be two lines about a centre, one drawn within the other, a third line cannot be drawn from the utmost line to

the centre without cutting the line within, because it is included within the other, so our salvation and happiness is within the glory of God, and we live to Christ, not only in serving him, but in seeking our own souls; and what a sweetness is this in God, that in seeking our own good we should glorify him.

This likewise teacheth us to live to Christ in a way of humility and self-denial. God will not deny to teach the humble and lowly soul his ways. And thus a gracious man is fit for all the counsels of God, as a carnal heart is fit for all the services of the devil. Therefore let us dedicate ourselves and services to God, for happy are they that can lose themselves in God, and be swallowed up in the love of Christ. Certainly, there is never better finding of ourselves, than when we are thus lost. And therefore I beseech you, whatsoever our corruptions have been heretofore; let us now know it is heavenly wisdom to seek Christ's glory in the use of the blessed means sanctified for that end.

Surely we have all been baptized; and what is our baptism, but the renouncing of the world, the flesh, and the devil? Our life is for nothing but to live unto God. And having entered into covenant in baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, that we intend seriously to lead a new life, we must not trifle with God; he will not be dallied with. It is not only sufficient that we have spent our precious time amiss, but more than sufficient. For time will come, if we belong to Christ, in which we shall lament for spending our time in the pursuit of our own vanities.

For if we live according to our own lusts, we are but rebels under God's livery; we are but traitors fighting under his banner. And how can we give account at the day of judgment of our lives, that have been nothing else but a constant service for Christ's enemies under the colour of religion? This would seriously be thought upon.

Therefore, as we know a great deal, and are beholding to God for living in times and places where there is abundance of the truth revealed, so we ought to make it our life and course to honour him, to be vigorous in his service, and to stir up the grace of God in us; to awaken ourselves and to live to Christ, and to put this quire to our souls, Whom do I serve? myself or Christ? him or his enemies?

Out of the text you may see that a Christian will learn how to carry himself, not only to himself, but to Christ. His carriage to himself is to live as

a Christian exercised in his duty and calling. His carriage to Christ is to live to him and die to him. And for this end he taketh this course, to search out himself what is unsound and corrupt in him; and when he hath found himself, then he abhorreth himself, and judgeth himself. And having found out corruption in his heart, he not only loatheth it, but crucifieth it; and this is the course that a Christian taketh with himself in the searching and discovery of his sins.

And this being done, he setteth up Christ in the place of self, which ruleth in all men till they be Christians indeed, either byway of admission or covenant. But when grace hath once taken place in the heart, then the soul begins to live to Christ, and that conscionably, entirely, and uniformly; consulting with all things how to help and further that life. Other men consult how they may keep their honours and reputations in the world. But a Christian having other aims, deviseth not only ways to live to Christ, but how to be better more and more, how to got into Christ, and how to grow up in him, knowing that by living to Christ here he shall live with him for ever hereafter. This is the course of a true Christian, that looketh to have benefit by Christ.

The Third Sermon

None of us liveth to himself, and none of us dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.—Rom. XIV. 7, 8.

We have heard from the apostle's general negative, that self must be removed out of the way, before we can live or die to Christ. Self, indeed, will come in everything till the Spirit of Christ be all in all in us. It is like Esau, that came first out of the womb. It will appear first in all consultations. And therefore it is the method of our blessed Saviour;

Whosoever will be my disciple, let him deny himself, and take up my cross,' Mat. xvi. 21. And it will be easy so to do when we have denied ourselves.

From the apostle's general affirmative, we have showed that to live to the Lord is to acknowledge ourselves to be his, and him to be ours and answerably to do him service, to resign up ourselves to him, to seek his glory, and honour, and credit in all things, and to be well persuaded that he will stick to us. So that it is a comfort as well as a duty.

To die to the Lord is to be willing to give up ourselves to him when the time cometh, and to submit to him for the manner of our death, whether he will call us home to himself by a quiet or troublesome death, by a bloody or dry death, with confidence that he will receive our souls.

That we may be directed to pitch upon a right end, we may know by the principles of nature a man is not for himself; and from the order that God hath placed him in, all things below are for him, but he is for something above himself. He is not of himself, and therefore not to himself. God only is of himself, by himself, and to himself. Everything under God is of God, and by God, and therefore to God. As Saint Augustine saith, 'Thou hast made us for thee, and our hearts rest not till we come to thee;' as the rivers never rest till they discharge themselves into the ocean.

And being not his own end, it is his wisdom and understanding to look principally to that which is his last and best and main end, which is God, and union and communion with God in Christ, who is God in our nature, God-man, the best of all, and therefore it is fit he should be the last. He communicateth all good to them that be his, and preserveth all the good he communicateth. He is for ever with them, and cannot fail to do them good, as long as he fails not to be good. He is the original cause, and the communicating cause, and the maintaining cause of all good.

Now it is the nature of the utmost and furthest end to stir up to every action leading to that end; for every deliberate rational action that is done with advertisement and observation, and is not an action of fancy or common nature, must fall under the consideration of an end, or else we cannot give account for it, as we must for every word, desire, and thought.

Now the end stirreth us up to all means leading to that end, either immediately as they are the services of God properly, or else remotely. As things that help reason and furtherances thereunto, as the apostle willeth 'that whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do,' 1 Cor. x. 31, all should be done to the glory of God, because these maintain us in health and strength, and that health and strength enable us to God's service. And in this sense every action a Christian doth is a service of God; for the end doth advance it and raise it above itself, and make it spiritual: as recreation to cheer him to diligence in his calling, the serving of his brother, and the like. Some actions are holy in the stuff and matter of them, others are such for the end to which they are directed. For the meanest action becomes holy, if an holy end be put upon it.

And therefore the actions of the second table are the service of God as well as the first, as they do all agree in the end. No man violateth a magistrate in the second table, but he wrongeth God in the first. No man stealeth, or committeth adultery, or disgraceth his neighbour by false witness, which is prohibited in the second, but it is for want of fear of God commanded in the first.

Duties of the second rightly performed are in virtue of the commandments of the first, when they are done not only from human and lower grounds, as things good in themselves, but also because God and Christ have commanded them; and that is included in the general words of 'living to the Lord;' for to live is comprehensive, and includeth all our actions, from the beginning to the end and closing up of our days. Whatsoever actions fall within the term of life ought to be referred to God as the last end.

1. The reason is, Christ hath redeemed our persons, and our times, and all that we are, or have, or can do; all our ability, our whole posse, is Christ's, and not our own. I must be filled up with actions suitable to Christ, therefore if I could do a thousand times more than I do, it were all due to him. Myself, my time, my advantages, my calling, and all, are his.

2. Again, As the end stirs up to actions of all kinds, so it prescribeth a measure to those actions, to do them, so far as shall be advantageous to that end. As he that hath a race to run will measure his diet suitable to that end, so he that hath an aim 'to live to Christ' will use all things here as may serve that turn. He will use the world as if he used it not, will buy as if he possessed not, will marry as if he married not. Not that he will be slight or superficial in these things; but he will do them no further than may be advantageous to the enjoying of Christ here, as comfortably as he can, and for ever hereafter.

Indeed, no man can set measures to his desire of happiness, that being a vast ocean; his main end cannot be desired too much. For as it is his good and happiness, it is larger than himself, yea, his thoughts and desires are too short to reach it. But though a man desires not health too much, yet he may desire too much physic. The measure must be in our pursuit of inferior things, because therein we are apt to exceed. And that advantage a Christian hath in setting a right end. He will not be drowned in the world, nor live to recreations, but to a farther aim, and which prescribes a measure and duration to all things else.

3. The end likewise maketh everything that tendeth to the end lovely. It maketh the cross lovely, for by it we grow better, and get more in large communion with Christ. Welcome is poverty, or disgrace, or whatsoever that maketh a man live more to Christ, and die to himself. Men call for physic, though in itself distasteful, as it is in order to health; an end which we desire without end. So it is the disposition of a gracious soul, if Christ bestow himself on him, communicate his gracious Spirit, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of the image of God. Let God lay upon us what he will, yet it will appear lovely.

4. It prescribeth likewise a right order to every duty. For as the end sets one thing above another, so a wise man that Looketh to his best end will do the main work first, and other things in the second place, according to our Saviour's counsel, 'Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all other things shall be cast upon you,' Mat. vi. 33. Some indeed love to be all in by-works, and in the mean time neglect and slight the main. But our care should be so to use the world that we may not lose Christ, or communion with him in better things; so to look to things temporal, as that we lose not things eternal. For as things are in themselves, so they should be to us. Now as some thing is better than another, so we should conceive of them, and affect them as better than another, and labour to do them before another, as deserving the first place. And that is the reason the saints have so prized and entertained communion with God and Christ. 'One thing I desire,' saith the prophet; that is, 'to dwell in the house of the Lord for ever,' Ps. xxvii. 4. And 'one thing is necessary,' saith Christ, Luke x. 41. Other things be necessary in their order, but to have communion with God is the main thing necessary.

Use. Let us therefore often consider of the end of our life in this world, and take shame to ourselves that we have let so much water run besides the mill, that we have let so much precious time, and strength, and dear advantages be lost. Too much strength hath been spent in the service of sin and our base lusts, which we can give no account of. How many scandalous blasphemous words are many guilty of, which help only to advantage their destruction, if God be not merciful.

Now a little to shew the guise of the world, and the difference of it from the actions of God's children, for these words employ a restraint to God's people as well as an extension.

Obj. The Christian's whole life is only to Christ; but what is the life of a man out of Christ?

Ans. His first aims being corrupt, 'God is not in all his thoughts,' as the psalmist speaks, Ps. x. 4, neither to have communion with him here in grace, nor in glory hereafter. Therefore whatsoever good he doth, a false end poisoneth it. If a man, misunderstanding of a thing, be from a false principle, he misunderstands it grossly. As, if an house be built upon a weak foundation, such is all the fabric, though otherwise never so costly; if the principles be naught, the conclusions drawn from thence must needs be naught also. As in physic, if the first concoction be naught, the second can never be good. So if a man's ends are naught, if he seek himself, or doth things only from foreign motives, out of terror of conscience, or for vain glory, or to be seen of men, his corrupt aim spoileth all his actions; yea, he reduceth religion to himself, because he will enjoy his pleasures the better. He will act some part of religion, lest conscience should bark and clamour against him. This self will moderate religion, and restrain it to such a measure as may stand with his lusts and sinful customs.

If he loveth others, it is in order to himself, because he hath use of them, as they comply with him in wicked courses, and so help to bear him out the better.

And if any man stands in the ways of his ends of honour or riches, he removeth them by disgrace, though it amounteth to slandering; as undermining and rising by others' ruins, because self, his idol and main end, must not be crossed. He desireth to be somebody in the flesh. All things must be measured by that, yea, religion, and acquaintance, and all; and whatsoever stands in the way, it crieth down with them, but however it killeth them in the esteem of others, that they themselves might be thought something; and thus all is turned clean contrary upside down.

But a gracious man's end and aim is to get out of himself and his corrupt nature, and to order all his actions in reference to that, and all his acquaintance and communion with others as may help his communion with God. And whatsoever is an impediment to that he laboureth to remove.

But to give you some directions how to live, not to ourselves, but to live and die to the Lord.

First, We must have a spiritual life from him, for life is but the issue of life.

We must live by faith, from union with Christ by faith, and then live to Christ.

And again, we must do it constantly and uniformly. No part of our lives must be alienated from Christ; all must be done in order to him; even our recreations must have some good aims in them.

Motives. Now do but consider we are his. We are not our own, but his, and therefore we ought to live to him, bringing in all our strength, all our advantages, our callings. That we may do service to him in our places, we are redeemed even from ourselves. A world of people think they be redeemed to live as they list. But because God is merciful, and Christ a Saviour, may you therefore live like libertines? No. You are redeemed from yourselves, not to yourselves.

And to former rules delivered let me add, that this living to Christ (though naturally we count it bondage, because it is the acknowledging of a superior) is the most perfect liberty, Deo servire, est regnarc. For he that serveth that which is better and larger than himself, that hath more good and ability than himself, he doth advance himself by his service, and freeth himself from the service of all inferiors. For the more dependent any man is on Christ in his service and in expectation of reward from him, the more independent is he upon the world. And indeed who is free in his thoughts and desires from base engagements to the creature, but he that sets up Christ highest in his soul, and suffers him to prescribe rules to him in his life? Which is freer in the world than they that have hearts freed from overmuch love of earthly things, overmuch fear of earthly things, overmuch delight in earthly things? He useth them as helps to the main, but is not engaged or enthralled to any. Quanto subjectior, tanto liberior. The more subject the more free, is St Augustine's rule. And it is undoubtedly so. You shall find by experience that the soul is never at a more gracious liberty, than when Christ is all in all. We see it in the example of Zaccheus. When once he believed in Christ, presently, 'Half my goods I give to the poor,' Luke xix. 8. St Paul, that was all for the world and vain-glory, can say now, 'My life is not dear to me, so I may finish my course with joy,' Acts xx. 24. 'In comparison of Christ, all is dung,' Philip, iii. 8. When Moses had seen God that was invisible, he was freed from all base dependence on the favour of Pharaoh; nay, he esteemed the reproaches of Christ better than all the riches of Egypt,' Heb. xi. 28. And

that makes men's stomachs inwardly to rise against Christians, because they be not men to serve times and turns. They will not prostitute their consciences and religion for any man's pleasure; whereas other men, though naturally never so stout and strong in parts, yet having base aims, and hearts fastened to the world, will debase their very natures, and when their end cometh in competition with honesty, they love it more than goodness. As Christ telleth the Pharisees, 'You cannot believe, that seek honour one of another,' John v. 44.

This is it that maketh a Christian better than his neighbour, because he hath a better aim. All other men have narrow spirits, whose hearts are not filled with the enlarging spirit of grace and of Christ. But the course of the children of God is a course contrary to the stream of the world. Lot others take what course they will, it matters not; they will look to themselves. It is good for them to draw near to God, and to be guided by his Spirit. A Christian seeks communion with him that is all in all, with an infinite good, with God in Christ, and Christ God-man, and happiness. Another man is straitened in his affections to some particular good, that is meaner than himself, which maketh him a base-spirited man. He that enlargeth his heart to seek out a condition that is larger and bettor than himself, is both wise and happy. One would require no more to Christianity, but to have sanctified judgments, that God is God, and Christ is Christ, and the word is the word, and rules that cannot be denied are true, unless he will be an atheistical beast below himself. And therefore Lactantius saith well, 'Religion is the true wisdom'. Let a man be judicious, and he must needs be a Christian; the necessity and excellency of it standing upon such undeniable grounds.

Obj. Oh but I shall lose my reputation, saith the doubtful heart of man, and be counted a fool. I shall lose my friends and contentment, if I come to be religious and serious indeed.

Ans. These be idle objections, as if they were not in this kind better in religion than in the world: as if God did bid us to our loss, as if Christ bid us follow him to our disadvantage. Surely no! He is Lord of heaven and earth, and can recompense us in this world. But what is all pleasure here to the pleasure of a good conscience? What is friendship here to communion with God, and friendship with Christ, and the protection of angels? What are riches to him that is the fountain of all riches? Did not Moses know what he did, when he forsook Pharaoh's court? or Paul, when he said, 'to be with Christ is best of all?' Philip, i. 28. Did not Abraham know what he did, when

he left his father's house and followed God, though to the giving up of Isaac, whom he knew God could raise up again, he being all-sufficient? Heb. xi. 19. Perhaps I lose a friend, or petty pleasure, or contentment, but that was but a particular good, serving for a particular turn only. But instead thereof I have God, that is all-sufficient for all turns, that is near to me, and never nearer than when I deny anything for his sake. A man hath never more of God than when he denieth himself most for God; for in what measure we empty ourselves of love to any creature, in that measure God fills the soul with contentments of an higher kind. We have within that particular good, which we parted with; and we have peace and grace, which is incomparably above it. Think of that, and it will be an infinite encouragement to live to Christ.

And therefore take these rules. Seek the end in the means? I can have Christ my end, my riches, pleasures, friends. It is well. But if I cannot have my end with these things, away with them! When they be gone, the end will remain. Christ will continue, though they leave us. We may enjoy anything here, if the main end can be enjoyed with them. If not, let us be willingly stripped of all, for we shall be stripped of them by death. God hath enough. He hath all things at command; and hath wisdom enough a thousand ways to provide, that we shall not be losers by him, no, not in this life.

Consider then what it is to give ourselves to the Lord. When we give ourselves, we give all things else with ourselves. 'They gave themselves to the Lord,' 2 Cor. viii. 5, and then they would easily part with their goods, as the apostle saith.

But we will never give ourselves to the Lord, till we consider what he hath done for us. He hath given himself wholly for us; left heaven for us; denied himself for us; made himself of no reputation for us; became a worm and no man, a curse for us. And in way of requital we should answer him, with giving ourselves and all we have to him. This is to be a Christian to purpose. Christ hath given himself to me, and therefore I will give my goods, myself, my life to Christ, that is, in affection and preparation of spirit, though not in action. And in action too, when he calleth for them. I am not mine own; he hath myself. And fructus sequitur fundum. He shall have whatsoever is mine. If he call me to suffer losses, crosses, disgrace, or death itself, welcome all. I am his: and therefore whatsoever is mine is his. And it is no more than he hath done for me. He went so low, that he could not be lower, and be God. He hath advanced my nature as high as my nature could be advanced, by union with his person; and he will advance my person to

heaven. And therefore the martyrs were willing to part with their lives. They 'loved not their lives to death,' as Christ's phrase is. 'He that loveth his life shall lose his life,' Mat. x. 89. 'My life is not dear to me,' saith St Paul, Acts xx. 24, so ready was he to resign all for Christ.

Reason. The reason is, which I desire may not be forgotten, we have a better being in God than in ourselves. If we lose our natural life, we have in him a better life. If we lose our riches, we have them in heavenly treasures. The water is not lost that runneth into the sea; it is in the ocean still, its better receptacle.

It was St Paul's desire 'to be dissolved and to be with Christ, which is best of all,' Philip, i. 23. But if he will have me to serve the church here and enjoy my life longer, his will be done. So he liveth to the Lord, and dieth to the Lord; and whatsoever cometh, he is in utrumque paratus: whether he liveth or dieth, he is the Lord's.

The Fourth Sermon

For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.—Row. XIV. 7, 8.

In these words the apostle taketh us off from ourselves, and assigneth us to a true end. As the first thing that grace doth, is to set God and Christ in his own place, the heart; so, in the second place, it begets a regard of ourselves, such as may stand with the love of Christ. For till Christ hath a place in the heart, by our coming to some degrees of self-denial, self hindereth us in all our whole course, both of believing and doing. For we have naturally contrary principles to all articles of faith, and contrary motions to all the commands of God. It hinders us in our duties to God, to others, to ourselves. And therefore to what I formerly said, I may add this consideration,

Doct. That it is no easy thing to be a Christian. If we were required to renounce anything else, we might obtain it of ourselves, sooner than deny ourselves; for what is nearer to ourselves than ourselves? 'Thousand rivers of oil, the first fruits of the body, would he given for the sin of the soul,' Micah vi. 7. That outward mortification, so much magnified in popery, is nothing to the renouncing of a lust. But if we would be Christians to purpose, we must be stripped of ourselves; as they say of the serpent, he must part with the old

slough. We must have an higher principle than ourselves before we can do it. A Christian is above himself, and better than himself, and stronger than himself, because he hath a better self than himself. And by virtue of that better self, which is grace in his heart, he is able to bring under all his other self, not only his sinful self, but his natural self; neither his life nor anything is dear unto him, in comparison of Christ.

Therefore we must not have conceits of religion as easy. Indeed, if we had sanctified judgments, and hearts set at liberty, it were an easy thing. If we had judgments to see, that we are never more ourselves, than when we are not ourselves; that we have a better being in Christ than in ourselves; that ourselves are our worst enemies—if the judgment were thus possessed, and the will and affections made answerable to this judgment, it were easy to deny ourselves. But self hinders the knowledge of itself all it can. Peccatum impedit sui cognitionem: sin naturally hinders the knowledge of its own foulness. That which should discern sin is clouded, and that which should hate sin is engaged to sin. So that under the use of means we must labour to know our condition, and the foulness and danger of that condition. And that is the excellency of God's ordinances and divine truths, that by them we come to know ourselves. But I will not enlarge myself in that.

What it is to live and die to the Lord we have declared. That it is to make Christ his chief aim and end, and do all in virtue of that end. Then is a Christian in his right temper, when God's end, Christ's end, and his end have the same centre—a qualification very excellent.

That that makes God delight in his children so much is, that they have the same end, the same God, the same Spirit with Christ. It is so excellent to prefix a right end to all our actions, that it spiritualiseth common actions. As St Paul saith of servants, 'They serve the Lord in serving their masters,' Eph. vi. 5. Whatsoever the stuff of our actions be, yet in that aim and spirit in which they be done, they may he services of the Lord.

Now life implieth the whole course of our actions. All our actions should be to the Lord immediately and directly, or mediately and reductively, as they are quickened by the Spirit of God. And that is the excellency of a Christian. He considers of everything as it helpeth his last end; as on the other side, a base worldling considers religion, and all things else, as they suit to his worldly aims. But to speak of the next point.

'Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.'

Inference. This is the inference drawn from the former two generals, negative and affirmative. 'None of us liveth to ourselves, or dieth to ourselves.' And from thence it is inferred, 'whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.'

And as it is an inference raised from the former, so we may consider it as a cause why we must 'live to the Lord, and die to the Lord: for whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.'

The words are a certain bottom and foundation for a Christian's comfort in the uncertainty of his condition here, being between life and death. Sure he is of death, as of life; but when to die, and how long to live, he is uncertain. But be that as it will be, this is certain, 'living and dying, he is the Lord's.'

So that, take the whole condition of a Christian, take him in all estate of life or death, which two divide the whole condition of man, for all men may be ranked into these two orders of 'quick and dead;' I say, consider a Christian in either of them, Christ is Lord of both. Take him in a condition of life, while he liveth 'he is the Lord's.' When he giveth up his breath, 'he is the Lord's.' So that, come of him what will in this uncertain condition, this is certain and sure, 'he is the Lord's.'

Now a Lord is he that hath dominum in rem et personam, right to persons and things, and the disposing of them pro arbitrio, as it pleaseth himself; and so Christ 'is Lord both of life and death.'

1. First, In general, as he is Lord of all creatures by creation, God having given 'all power into his hands, both in heaven and earth,' Mat. xxviii. 18.

2. Secondly, In a more particular manner and right. He is Lord of all those that be his by a peculiar gift from all eternity. God hath given us to Christ in his eternal electing love. 'Thine they were, and thou gavest them me,' saith Christ, John xvii. 6.

3. Thirdly, And then we are Christ's by his own purchase. We are the price of his blood. 'We are bought with a price,' 1 Cor. vi. 20, 'not of gold or silver, but with his precious blood,' 1 Peter i. 18; by that price God's justice is satisfied. God so gave us to Christ, that he gave him to redeem and shed his blood for us, that his justice might be no loser.

4. Fourthly, We are his by conquest. For he being so excellent a person as God-man, hath rescued us from all our enemies, sin, Satan, death, hell, and whatsoever else. What have they to do with us, when God's justice is once satisfied?

5. Fifthly, Those that are true believers are his in regard of a peculiar interest between him and them. They give themselves over to him by a contract of marriage and covenant, and therefore he is Lord of them, by their yielding of themselves to him as a Lord. They take him for a Lord, as well as for a Saviour, and that is the foundation of the spiritual marriage and the covenant of grace on both sides. Christ giveth himself to us, and we by the Spirit of Christ have grace to give ourselves back again to him.

By our own voluntary contract, we have given up ourselves to him in our effectual calling, which is our answer to God's call, when he calleth on us to believe, to take him; and the soul answers, 'Lord, I believe, and accept thee.' This by St Peter is termed the answer of a good conscience, 1 Peter iii. 10, and is, when we can say, I am thine, thou art mine, and I yield myself to thee, to be disposed of by thee. No Christian can claim Christ his Lord, but this contract hath passed between his soul and Christ.

So that if you look to God the Father, we are Christ's by donation; if you regard Christ himself, we are his by purchase; if we regard the enemies we have, we are Christ's by conquest; if we regard ourselves, we are his by voluntary acceptance of the covenant of grace, and by contract passed between him and us; yea, and Christ is so our Lord, as that he is our husband; our Lord, as our king; our Lord, as our head. We owe to him a subjection, as subjects; a subjection, as his spouse; a subjection, as his disciples, to be taught by him our Lord and Master.

Now the term of Lord is usually given to Christ, rather than to God the Father, both in the New Testament and the Old too.

And if there were no other reason for it, it is enough that God so styleth him.

But, secondly, God in the second person hath done those things that make him our Lord, more than the Father or Holy Ghost. For he in the second person hath taken our nature, and died and rose again for us; and hath conquered all our enemies. He hath in the second person made us his spouse, his members, and in all degrees of nearness to him. And because

God in the second person hath done all, therefore in the second person he is more termed Lord than God the Father or the Holy Ghost. And therefore, Acts ii. 36, God the Father 'hath made him Lord and Christ.'

This is a point of wonderful comfort, and not only a comfort, but a direction how to carry ourselves. It is not only a point of dignity and prerogative, but a duty.

1. First, It is a grand comfort 'we are the Lord's,' and the Lord's in a peculiar manner, as before. The devil is the Lord's, the earth is the Lord's; all is the Lord's. But we are the Lord's by eternal donation, by purchase, by conquest, by voluntary yielding to him. And therefore it is a most excellent condition.

Quest. What is the Lord?

Ans. If we be Christ's, we have him for Lord; that is, Lord of life, Lord of glory, Lord of grace; that is, Lord of lords, King of kings. He is an independent Lord. None is above him, the Father and he agreeing together; if you know one, you know both. He is an absolute Lord, a free Lord; He hath no dependence at all upon any creature whatsoever. An eternal Lord; we have an eternal being in him; for we are when we are dead. And therefore the apostle divideth it: 'Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.' We have a substance when we be dead, and a Lord of equal continuance with ourselves, a king for ever. Therefore it is a point of wonderful comfort.

Obj. But you will say, Freedom is a sweet thing, especially freedom from government, so as to have no lord to control us; therefore how can this be so excellent estate, to have Christ our Lord?

Ans. 1. Beloved, we are creatures. We are neither of ourselves, nor by ourselves, nor for ourselves.

2. Besides, we have enemies greater than ourselves, the powers of hell; and therefore, if we had not a better above us, what would become of us, but to be totally subjected under the power of enemies? It is the happiness of the inferior, to be in full subjection to the superior. It is the happiness of beasts to be under man, that they may keep from destruction. It is the happiness of the weak, to have tutors and governors. It is the perfection of inferiors, to yield a gracious subjection to that that is better than themselves.

For everything is perfected by being subject to that which is better; and therefore we, especially in our lapsed condition, seeing we are our own greatest enemies.

2. God in love will not trust us with ourselves since the full, but will have our happiness to be dependent and subject to another—to a God in our nature, an excellent Lord; and therefore an excellent Lord, because, what I spake before, Christ hath all the authority in heaven and earth committed to him, not only over us, but over our enemies, that they shall not do us harm. And, indeed, he cannot be Lord of the church, but he must be Lord of all creatures in heaven and earth, that no creature may prejudice his church. He hath universal authority over all things, and all for the church's cause.

4. And then he hath all the good qualities of a Lord; not only authority, but wisdom and strength and power and bounty and goodness, and whatsoever may make him a gracious Lord. And therefore it is our perfection to be in subjection to this Lord.

To set forth a little the excellency of this Lord.

He hath the sweetness of all superiors whatsoever; as he hath taken the name of all superiority that is sweet and lovely, so he hath the affections of all, and eminently more than all. He is a Lord, as a husband; he loveth more than any husband can do. He is a Lord, as a king; he can do more for us than any king. 'He hath all power in heaven, and earth, and hell, over the devils themselves.' 'All knees bow to him, of things in heaven and in earth, and under the earth,' Philip, ii. 10. And he is Lord as an head. Whatsoever superiority is near and dear, that he is to his church.

He requires service. Ay, but he is such a Lord as enableth us to serve him, 'helpeth our infirmities by his Spirit,' Rom. viii. 29. Without him we can do nothing, but in him we can do all.

And as he enableth us to perform service, so doth he reward every service, every good thought; nothing is lost that is done for Christ's sake, not a cup of cold water. He giveth strength to perform, accepteth it as a work of his Spirit, and then rewardeth it. He is so a Lord, as he standeth for his; so a Lord, as he appeareth for us now in heaven, against all accusations of Satan. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's people? For Christ maketh intercession for them. He stood for his disciples here on earth, and upon any occasion was ready to defend them; and he is as ready in heaven to stand for

his subjects and servants, and will answer all accusations of a malicious world against his church and children, 'and will bring forth their righteousness to light, as the noonday,' Ps. xxxvii. 6. He standeth for their credit, and engageth himself for the defence and protection of his Mount Zion, his church.

And to add one thing more out of the text concerning the excellency of this Lord: he is an unchangeable Lord. His love is as himself, and his care as himself, eternal: 'for whether we live or die, we are his.' What other people that are under a government can say so? For all their governors' love and care endeth in death. In the mean time their minds are variable, their affections may die before themselves; as how many have been cast off in their old days! But God will not do so. 'Forsake me not in my grey heirs,' saith David, Ps. lxxi. 18. He is our Lord while we live, and he leaveth us not when we leave to live, but is our God to death, in death, and after death, and for ever. It is a relation that holds for eternity, as our Saviour Christ saith of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He is the God of Abraham. Abraham is dead; Isaac and Jacob rotten in their graves. Ay, but their souls are in heaven; and because be is their whole God, their bodies shall be raised again and united with their souls, and be for ever with the Lord.

In all the vicissitude and intercourse of things in this world, we need something to stick to; and this the Christian hath to stick to, that never faileth. He is the Lord's, and the Lord is his; he is Christ's, and Christ is his. Christ hath a love that is as himself, unchangeable. 'Whom the Lord loveth, he loveth to the end,' John xiii. 1. The promises made in Christ are as Christ —the promises of grace here, and glory hereafter certain. As his nature and love is unchangeable, so the fruit of his love in his gracious promises is always certain. They are the everlasting portion of the church.

The good things promised are everlasting likewise. We may build upon them. We cannot build on riches here, or life here, but we may build on eternal life, eternal glory and happiness.

So that, cast a Christian into what condition you will, he hath God and Christ in covenant with him, and the love of Christ, and all the gracious promises and the things promised. And these do not vary. Life varieth: we may live now, die to-morrow; but whether we live or die, these four things mentioned are certainly ours.

A Christian cannot say of anything here, that it will be his long. His estate is his now, and many ways there are to take it away; his friends are his now, but their friendship may decline; anything in the world may be so ours to-day, as not ours to-morrow. And therefore, were it not that in this variety of conditions we had something that is afterward, where were our comfort? We may outlive all comfort here, but we cannot outlive our happiness in Christ: 'for whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.'

To speak of this a little, as it yieldeth comfort in death. 'We are the Lord's,' not only while we live, but when we die. Why? Because we have a being in Christ when we die. Christ is a living root; because I live, you shall live also.' This Lord is the 'Lord of life;' and therefore whosoever is one with the Lord of life, he can indeed never die. Heath is only a change of a natural gracious life here, to a glorious life in another world; from the church warfaring here, to the church triumphant in heaven.

It is not properly death, for misery dieth, death itself dieth; we do not die. Heath overthroweth itself, but a Christian's life is hid with Christ; and when he dieth he dieth to live, and is found in Christ at the day of judgment, and shall be for ever with Christ. Therefore it is no great matter what kind of death a Christian dieth, because he dieth in the Lord.

'Blessed are they that die in the Lord,' Rev. xiv. 13. He saith not, them that die a fair death. A wretch, an opposer, an hypocrite may do so, and go to hell. But blessed are they that die in the Lord, because Christ is their Lord in death; and so saith the apostle, Hob. xi. 13, 'All these died in faith.' He saith not, they all died a fair death, for they did not, but many of them died a bloody death; yet they 'all died in faith,' and so they died in the Lord.

And therefore when we read in the histories of the church that some were torn in pieces with wild beasts, that 'they gave the bodies of the saints to the fowls of heaven,' as David hath it, Ps. lxxix. 2, which may discourage some to be Christians, let us not think that any matter; 'they died in faith.' And as the psalmist saith, 'precious to the Lord is the death of all his saints,' Ps. cxvi. 15; for he taketh notice of them in their lives, not only in their lives, but the hairs of their head, they being all numbered. He taketh notice of the tears that fall from their eyes, and will not he take notice of their blood? He taketh notice of their persons, their hairs, their tears, and will he part with their lives for nothing? No. He will be paid for the lives of his children. When he parts with them, his enemies shall be sure to pay for it. He will be avenged on them for it, as the blood of Naboth was on Ahab. But he will be

revenged on all the persecutors of his church, and take a strict account of every drop of blood that hath been shed, for their persons are precious. God taketh special notice of them. They are his members, his spouse, and near unto him.

And then he will not have them die till they have done their work. He taketh special notice of them all their life. And when they have done what they came for, as Christ saith of himself, 'I have done the work thou gavest me to do,' John xvii. 4, then he sendeth for them home. They die not at adventure, but under the care of one that knoweth them well both in life and death.

And therefore it is that God so revenged the persecutors of his church, for the blood of his saints, from the blood of Abel unto this day.

And as the 'death of his saints are precious,' so are all things that the saints have. Their credit is precious, their goods are precious. God taketh notice of everything they part with for his sake. As he and all his is ours—himself, his happiness, his Spirit, his privileges—so when we are his, all ours are his. He taketh care of our lives, of our deaths, of our credits, of our riches, of our estates. We part with nothing for him but he considers it, and will reward it abundantly.

'He that dieth in the Lord is a blessed man;' so saith the Spirit, Rev. xiv. 13. The flesh will not say so, but rather will infer who would be so religious, for such venture their lives, and are counted as the off scouring of the world. The devil will teach this lesson, and the world. As they have lived in the flesh, and will sell all to be somebody in the world, though they go to hell when they have done. But, saith the Spirit, blessed are they who not only die for the Lord as martyrs, but that die in the Lord; whether to seal the truth of God with their blood, or otherwise, they die happily; and so this is a ground of special comfort.

And as it is a ground of special comfort, so it is a ground of direction.

'Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.' Therefore it may be a foundation of living to the Lord. If we be the Lord's, surely we ought to live to him. If we be his, all our endeavours, whatsoever is ours, are his. Fructus and fundus, go together, the fruit and the soil; and therefore if we be the Lord's in life and death, we must not live to ourselves as our own, but give ourselves to him, and not to anything else; we are not our own, nor man's,

but the Lord's. And therefore we ought not to yield up ourselves to our self-wills, self-wit, self-love, to be at our own disposing, and to live as we list. We are redeemed from ourselves, yea, from all our vain conversations.

Some think Christ died, and therefore they may be vain, especially at the solemn time of Christ's nativity. The devil hath so prevailed with the world, and will till there be a new face of the church; they never honour the devil more than when they seem to honour Christ. For, say they, Christ came to set us at liberty. Did he so? But it was to deliver us from wickedness; yea, from vain conversations, and not to purchase us liberty to live as we list. 'Our tongues are our own,' say they in the psalms, Ps. xii. 4. Ay, but Christ saith, they are not your own, they are his. And if they be not Christ's, they are the devil's. Our thoughts are not our own, but all should be dedicated to Christ. Therefore we should be content that Christ should set up a regiment in our souls, that he may rule our thoughts, desires, our language, and members, that they may be all 'weapons of righteousness,' Rom. vi. 13.

We have nothing our own, much less sin, from which we are redeemed. And not only from gross sins, but from such conversations as are vain in themselves, and will be vain to thee.

And when we are redeemed from sin, and from vain conversations, we are redeemed from ourselves, from the world, from the devil; whom now hath a man to serve? None but this Lord. We have renounced all other in baptism, and we are revolters and rebels, and renounce our covenant in baptism, if we renounce not the world and the lusts of it in our lives.

Ourselves we must not serve. For we are redeemed from ourselves, and not only from our carnal selves, but natural selves. Christ is Lord of our natures. And a Christian ought to say, Lord, of thee I had this body; of thee I had this life of mine, these goods of mine, this credit of mine, this reputation and place in the world. As I had all from thee, so I return all to thee again.

And as we are not our own, we must not be other men's. 'We are not servants of men,"as the apostle saith, Rom. viii. 12, seq. We must not take upon trust the opinions that others would put upon us, or what we list ourselves in religion. We must not have men's persons in admiration, for advantage. We must not idolize any creature, for as we are not our own, so we are not any other's, but we are the Lord's.

The happiness of a Christian is to be independent on the creatures. He may use them as subordinate helps, but he is to depend only on this Lord, what to believe, what to speak; and not to take up this or that opinion to please this or that man, thereby to rise to greatness.

It is a base thing to say, I believe as my parents believe. Are you your parents'? Your parents are the servants of this great Lord, whose you are, and to whom it is your duty to yield yourselves.

Use 1. And therefore, in solicitation to any sin, make that use of it, that the holy apostle doth in that gross sin that reigns so much in the world, and brings many to hell, defilement of body. Saith he, 'Our bodies are bought with a price,' 1 Cor. vi. 20. 'And shall I take the members of Christ, and make them members of an harlot?' 'Cor. vi. In. So when we are tempted by corruption, and Satan joining with it, reason thus: Shall I defile this body of mine? My body is not mine, it is the Lord's; my members are not mine, they be dedicated and consecrated to him. What should such base abominable thoughts do in a heart consecrated to Christ? I am his, my thoughts his; my desires should be his.

Let those that be given to swearing, and blaspheming, and idle talk, consider that their tongues are not their own; and yet for whom do they employ their tongues as an instrument, but for Satan?

Use 2. So when we come to die, make use of it, not only for comfort, but for duty. 'We are Christ's,' and therefore if he doth call us by any kind of death, if he sends for us by a bloody death, go to Christ that way, because he is Lord, and disposeth of whatsoever befalleth us, and determineth by what death we shall glorify him. Be of Saint Paul's resolution, to 'glorify God both living and dying,' Phil. iii. ID, seq. He knew God should be glorified by his death as well as by his life. So we may glorify Christ by any death, be content to yield ourselves any kind of way to him.

There be two virtues we ought specially to exercise in the hour of death: assurance of faith that we are Christ's, and a resignation to his will, that in faith and in obedience we may commit ourselves to him, as to a faithful Creator and Redeemer. This is our duty.

And it is no easy matter to do this. Many bequeath themselves to God, but, alas! they have alienated themselves before to the world. They have given their bodies to wine, to women, as the Scripture phrase is, Rev. xiv. 4.

Or they have given their spirits to the world. As we use to say in our common speech of some men, they are given to the world. But when they have given their strength to the flesh before, and do at time of death bequeath their spirits to the Lord, will he own them? Alas! they are alienated before, and so put out of their own disposing. And therefore ordinarily, unless the Lord work a miracle, it is impossible to die in the Lord, if a man have not lived to the Lord before; which may teach us to give ourselves really to him in our lifetime, that our lives being a service to Christ, we may comfortably die to him, and have our souls to dispose of.

The like subjection must be showed in all conditions whatsoever. If God will have me to honour him in a mean calling, I am not mine own, I am his; my life, and all my condition of life, are only to him. My calling, my estate, it may be, is low, that my pride may be humbled. But God hath set me in my calling; he will have me to honour him in it. In the meanest calling, a man shall have enough to give an account of; and therefore there is no reason to be ashamed of our calling. I am the Lord's, in my life, in all the passages of it; in my calling, in all the troubles of it, I am to look for support and protection and provision and direction from God. I am here by his appointment. And therefore he that hath set me in this place will provide for me, protect me, guide me by his Spirit what to do in my place. And so it is a ground for contentation in all conditions.

You see, then, there is great reason why we should not live to ourselves, but to the Lord; that we should not die to ourselves, but to the Lord. For it is a great comfort, and a special duty; and therefore, in a word, we cannot have a more comfortable experiment in all divine truths than this, that God in Christ hath passed over himself to be ours, and we have passed over ourselves to him, if we have grace to do it. And then to plead and improve it when it is done, there is not a comfort of greater comprehension; and therefore the apostle dwelleth on the point, 'No man liveth to himself, no man dieth to himself; but we live to the Lord, and die to the Lord.' To what end is all this, but that we should settle it as a bottom and ground of comfort and contentment and happiness, that we are not our own, but the Lord's?

Think, therefore, of this one thing, that we are his, that hath a command in heaven and earth, to whom all knees bow with subjection; his that is Lord of lords, and King of kings, that is Lord paramount; who will not suffer anything to befall his church, or any particular Christian, that shall not be for their good, for he hath all power in heaven and earth for that purpose, and

for ever. What a comfort is it in life and death, in the midst of oppositions here, or from the powers of hell, that we have a Lord that is commander of all, 'Lord of life or death.' He 'hath the keys of hell and death.' Himself hath conquered all, and he will conquer all in us by little and little. What happiness is it, I say, to be under such a Lord!

The Fifth Sermon

For none of us liveth to himself, and no man died to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.—Rom. XIV. 7, 8.

There is nothing more available to the living of a Christian's life than to have the eye of the soul on his main end and scope. And then to be furnished with some maxims and principles to direct our lives to that scope. Where the parts are most noble and large, there the aim and scope is most excellent. Now a true Christian, being raised above others, hath an end and scope above other men; and that indeed maketh him a Christian in good earnest, when God by his Spirit discovers an higher excellency than the world can afford, and setteth our hearts towards it.

Now the apostle setteth down the scope of our whole condition, both of life and death. First, negatively, 'No man liveth to himself;' 'no man dieth to himself.'

Then, affirmatively, 'We live to the Lord, and die to the Lord.'

And he giveth the ground of both: 'Whether, we live or die, we are the Lord's.'

If we live to the Lord, we shall have a being after life. A Christian is, when he is not; when he is not here, he hath a being in heaven; and suitably to his several conditions he hath a Lord to own him in all. Now he liveth, yet cannot build on life, nor anything below, because life is short and uncertain. But this he may build on: 'Whether he liveth or dieth, he is the Lord's.'

Now Christ is said in Scripture to be Lord oftener than God, because God in the second person hath appeared in our nature, overcome all our enemies, hath triumphed, and is now in heaven in our nature; and because Lord is a word of authority and sovereignty. And God hath made him governor of quick and dead.

He is a Lord in regard of God the Father, by donation. God hath given the elect to him before all worlds.

He is Lord in regard of himself, by conquest over the enemies of our salvation.

And then by ransom. He hath paid a price to divine justice for us. For though God gave Christ to us from all eternity, and us to Christ, yet on these terms, that he should ransom us. God will not have his justice a loser; therefore Christ must pay a price to divine justice. Such was his mercy, and the glory of his mercy, to find out such a way to satisfy justice, that God should die.

No attribute of God must be a loser; he must have the honour of all his attributes; and therefore of his justice. And here is the glory of his wisdom, in contriving a way that mercy may triumph and justice may be satisfied.

And then he is Lord by our voluntary submission to him; for we set a crown upon his head when we subject ourselves to him.

He is our Lord in all estates, 'living or dying;' at all times, without limitation; in all conditions, whether it be a life of prosperity or adversity, let us die by what manner of death soever.

And so I showed we are the Lord's in a double sense: in regard of our carriage to him, and in regard of his care over us; both must be included. We are not the Lord's only for that he taketh care of us, and without our service; nor that we do. him service without his care of us; but he is so our Lord, that we have grace to acknowledge him, and he hath grace, and love, and mercy to protect and acknowledge us both in life and death.

It is no prejudice to a Christian's estate that he is another's. It is the happiness of the weak to be under a stronger; of those that be deficient, to be under fulness. Now there is all-sufficiency in Christ. Therefore to be under him is our happiness.

Give me leave to illustrate this. Everything is beautiful in its own place. Things that are highest, it is fit they should be highest; things that are lowest, it is fit they should be lowest. If the head were not in its own place, there would be deformity in the body. And so it is fit Christ should be our Lord, being God-man and the glory of our nature. And it is our happiness, our

beauty and comeliness, our safety and perfection, to be under Christ, and to be only under him. He is only larger than the soul; he is of equal continuance with the soul; he is only suitable to the soul, being a Spirit, he only is eternal; and therefore being every way so abundantly satisfactory to the soul, it is the happiness of the soul to have him for its Lord, especially considering what a Lord he is—a Lord independent; Lord of lords, that hath all other lords at command; a bountiful and gracious Lord.

And we are not only the Lord's while we live, but when we come to die. Therefore we should be willing to die when our time cometh, yea, to die any kind of death, because he is Lord of 'quick and dead.' We should be like David and Moses, who were very fruitful towards their ends. And as we are not ashamed to live to so good a Lord, so we should not be afraid to die to him, as one said of himself.

This word Lord implieth, there be some duties owing by us. We are the Lord's in our souls, in our bodies, in our conditions; and therefore we should wholly give up ourselves to him, and entertain no thoughts to dishonour him; give way to no risings, no desires which become not the subjects and servants of the Lord; believe nothing that we take up of ourselves, keep the chastity of our faith and understanding, not to believe lies and untruths; but submit our very understandings and faith to God. We must not be servants of men, in our judgments or souls, no mancipium alienae libidinus, as the philosopher saith. But consider what Christ hath revealed, and let us submit to that.

And therefore it is a grand error in the Church of Rome, who would have people to believe as the church believeth, which is, primum mendacium, the first lie, that leadeth them into all those errors; to believe Christ and Scripture no further than the church discovers them. And so they overturn all. For they believe God because men say so. It is a dangerous error that runneth into practice. If the church say treason must be done, we must be traitors. It is no matter what the Scripture saith. The pope he is the head of the church, and he can dispense with what he pleaseth. But 'my sheep,' saith Christ, 'hear my voice,' John x. 4. And it is our duty to hear what the Lord of our faith saith, which is only Christ. If he be our Lord, then let our wills be brought into subjection to his will; nothing is more out of order than this will of ours. If that were once subject to Christ, all controversy between God and us were taken away. All the strife is, whether we shall have our wills or he his

will. The spouse hath no will of her own, but it is resigned to her husband. So must we submit our wills to Christ's desire.

And then again, we ought not in anything to regard the honours of men. Christ is Lord of our affections. We must hate what he will have us hate, and love what he loveth; our whole souls must be conformable to Christ.

And our bodies are wholly his too, and therefore we must be content that our bodies should be used as they used his body. He gave his body for us; he took our nature; and in that nature went about doing good, suffering hardship. He was hungry and thirsty; he was crucified in our nature, suffered in our nature; and so should we be content our natures should be used as he would have them, to take much pains in doing good; to suffer hunger, thirst, restraint, yea, death itself for Christ, because we are Christ's! It is no more than he did for us. He being our Lord, was abased for us in his blessed body and flesh; and therefore shall not we suffer for him?

So our conditions are his. Suffer him therefore to cut us out a portion, to allot us any condition.

The word implieth more particularly an application to ourselves. 'We are the Lord's, and the Lord is ours.'

And likewise a renunciation and severing from all others. 'We are the Lord's, and none else;' the Lord's, and none but the Lord's; if we are anybody's else, it is in the Lord and for the Lord.

Here is likewise resignation. We are the Lord's,' and therefore we will give up ourselves to him, with a resting in him, and high estimation of him, and glorying in our condition through him.

And then here is an improvement of this implied: We are the Lord's; therefore we ought to improve it on our part, by serving him; and on his part by believing that he will have care of us.

We are the Lord's, first, by particular application, which is wrought by degrees.

First, God by his Spirit revealeth himself to be ours, not fully, but by letting in so much light into the soul as may carry the soul to him, and make us yield to him, trust in him, and cast ourselves upon him; and by doing so

we grow into further acquaintance with him, and he honours our faith with a further sense and assurance that he is ours, and we are his.

There is a great deal of distance and breadth between the first act of faith, by which we cast ourselves on Christ, and a confident persuasion that Christ is ours and we are his. That is a fruit of faith; and there needeth a great deal of growth before we come to that.

And therefore if you ask, What doth the soul first to make Christ his own? It is this, In the use of means, wherewith God pleaseth to be effectual, a light is by the Spirit let into the soul, whereby the heart is persuaded that he hath a good meaning towards it, that he is a gracious Lord, and will forgive the sins of all that rely upon him. And with the acknowledging of these truths, together with the offer of mercy in Christ, there is so much sweetness let into the soul as carrieth the soul back again to Christ to rest upon him. For unless Christ begin in some degree to make love to the soul, and giveth a taste of his sweetness, we cannot rely upon him nor love him, not only because we are creatures, and he is first and must begin to us, but because it is the nature of a guilty soul, when it is under terror and awakened, to forecast such doubts, that till Christ letteth in some glimpse of his love, the soul dare not look Christ in the face.

Now in the unfolding of these divine truths of the gospel, some intimations are given 'that Christ is mine, and I am Christ's,' which afterward becometh the claim of an experienced Christian. This therefore directeth what course they shall take to get Christ that want him. They must attend upon the blessed means of salvation, and then consider how far forth they may lay claim to Christ.

For, first, all that live in the church are Christ's in some degree. God hath prevented men with his love in admitting them to the visible church, and there is an obligation on them to think well of Christ for that, because he had care of them before they had care of themselves, by vouchsafing them the seal of baptism, and making them members of the visible church.

Secondly, Unless they labour, being come to years of discretion, to feel a further assurance that Christ is theirs, they disannul and deny their baptism; and therefore it is good for such souls as are touched with sight of sin to gather upon Christ, and to wind about all helps they can to work on Christ, as the vine gathereth on the tree it windeth about. I am born in the church, I have been baptized, lived in times of the gospel, have opportunities to hear

the blessed truths, and therefore I will have good conceits of Christ that he meaneth well to my soul.

Indeed, a company of wretches that rest in their baptism, being profane swearers, vile persons, abusers of their calling or anything, can say, Are not we baptized? and do not we come to church? But they forget that this is an obligation on them to be good, and no excuse for them to be evil. It tieth thee to renounce that thou livest in, else thou deniest thy baptism.

We must know, beloved, that Christ loved us, not as we love a goodly pillar or other curious piece of art that cannot love us again, but the intercourse between God and man is mutual. If he say he is ours, we say again, I am thine, Lord, and give myself to thee; and the claim is mutual. He claimeth us for his, and we claim him for ours; for he deals with reasonable creatures, that can enter into covenant with him as friends. We must therefore give up all to God. If God be God, let us own him. And as we cannot serve Christ and sin, we cannot servo Christ and antichrist; we cannot comply with Christ and his enemies. Those that have the mark of the beast absolutely cannot be Christ's, nor have communion with him, but are enemies to Christ, though under pretence of religion. But where a man is truly Christ's, he is none but Christ's; Satan is content with any part, but Christ must have the whole heart.

God's children have something in them that usurpeth, some corruption in them which is not absolutely removed, but it is but a rebel, and they have an enemy's mind to it; all that is contrary to Christ is renounced; whereas in them that be carnal sin is as a lord, but in God's children it is as a thief. He is there, yet they own him not, but get strength against him. He ruleth not there but as a tyrant. There is a renunciation of lordship and dominion of sin. Though they have inclinations to this and that sin, yet they have no liking to that liking, no inclinations as spiritual to that inclination as carnal, but make it an object of mortification. They renounce all other lords; when all other men, that have not the Spirit of Christ, are under the dominion of some reigning lusts.

And as it implieth a possession, so likewise an estimation; as God esteemeth us, so we esteem him above all. And therefore God calleth his church his portion, his jewel; and we call Christ our portion, our treasure, our pearl, our all. St Paul counts 'all dung and dross in comparison of the excellent knowledge of Christ,' Phil. iii. 8. And all that belongeth to Christ he esteemeth. And therefore the church glorieth that God is their God, and

makes claim to him as St Paul, 'I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me,' Gal. ii. 20. And as Thomas, 'My Lord, and my God,' John xx. 28. This is the best evidence of a true Christian, whose estate is no way known better than by his estimation. 'Whom have I in heaven but thee, or in earth in comparison of thee?' saith David, Ps. lxxiii. 25.

It implieth likewise a duty of resignation to Christ in life and death, because we are not our own, and therefore are in all things to be at his disposing, to be led what way he pleaseth, and to pursue his directions, though to the crossing of our corrupt nature, to be content to go to heaven as he will lead us, by fair ways or foul ways, by fair death or bloody death, 'if by any means we may attain to the resurrection of the dead,' as St Paul saith it, Philip, iii. 11.

Besides this, we must have a care to implead this and to improve it, as the apostle doth here, 'Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.' He will have care of us, and therefore we ought to serve him.

It is a special after-part to be able to make it good to God in all troubles and conditions whatsoever: 'lam thine, Lord, save me; I am thine, Lord, teach me; I am thine, Lord, protect me.'

Avouch and make it good against the temptations of Satan, urging thee to distrust, I am not mine own, I am God's and Christ's; and therefore if thou hast anything to say to me, go to him that hath paid my debt. Thus plead the goodness and graciousness of God.

Plead it against temptation to sin. I am not mine own, 'I am bought with a price,' 1 Cor. vi. 28. My body is not for uncleanness, but for the Lord.

Plead it against our own consciences in times of desertion; search narrowly what we have of Christ's in us, and do not cavil against ourselves too much in times of temptation. If we have but desires of the soul to God, lose not anything that is good; if I renounce my interest in Christ, I am where the devil would have me; then he can do anything with us. And therefore plead it against our own distasteful hearts in times of darkness. I give myself to him, and my desires are to him; my faith is little, but yet something; my love is little, but yet I love the Lord. 'I believe, help my unbelief,' Mark ix. 24. We must take notice of anything Christ hath wrought in our spirits, that we may implead our interest on all occasions; for if we yield to despairing hearts

in times of temptations, we are gone. Therefore say with Job, 'if thou kill me, I will trust thee,' Job xiii. 15. Lie at Christ's feet; if thou wilt damn me, so it is, I will lie here, and wait here. For if I have not present audience, I shall have it. God waiteth to do them good that wait for him. He will try our spirits, whether we will take a seeming repulse; therefore we must, as the woman of Samaria, grow on Christ, and catch at his words, Mat. xv.; and as the servants of Benhadad, who retorted on Ahab presently, 'Thy servant Benhadad,' 1 Kings xx. 83.

And as we must implead our interest, so we must improve it in the whole course of our life, and in all conditions whatsoever. If we have any loss or crosses, yet the soul can say, Christ is mine, and I am Christ's. Though a man taking a journey lose things of less value, yet if he hath a pearl left him, he is content, for he hath that that will make him a man.

And therefore be not much disconsolate for any crosses. They cannot take away my Christ, my promises, the comforts of the Spirit. I have a Christ, and in him all that shall be for my good.

Improve it in all opposition of flesh and blood, hell and the instruments of hell, Satan and wicked men. They are mine enemies; but if Christ be my friend, it matters not. Christ can make our enemies our friends.

And all things are ours if we be Christ's. We have a general charter. Things to come are ours, life ours, death ours; and therefore if we be Christ's, make use of him.

As it is baseness of spirit to rest in anything in the world but Christ, so it is baseness of spirit for us that are Christ's to be dejected for anything in the world. We have the treasure, we have the mine. We have the sun; what if we lose a beam? We have a spring; what if the stream be dried up? If Christ giveth us himself, it is no matter what we lose. But we are sure of him, 'for in life and death we are the Lord's.'

And therefore let us hence answer all objections. Oh that we should have such grounds of comfort and stability, and yet make no more use of them! If these things were fresh in our thoughts, nothing would discourage us.

Quest. If you ask, How shall we know in particular that it is so indeed that we are Christ's?

Ans. 1. I answer, If we have given ourselves to him by a contract of our own, if we be married to him. You know marriage must have consent of both parties. Those that give not themselves up to Christ to be his, they are not his. They that live under the power of any sin against conscience, as their Lord, that love anything better than Christ, and will not part with it for Christ's sake, Christ is not theirs, for they be engaged another way.

Ans. 2. Again, If we live to Christ, we are sure we are his; if we do not live to Christ we are not his. If Christ be ours, as the life which we live is his, so our course of living will be to him. We shall direct all our courses to him, making him our last end; and therefore, if we will know whether we be Christ's, what is the scope of our lives? what is our aim? If so be that Christ may be glorified by me, I am content to part with anything, with life itself, I may know that I am Christ's. 'He that will not deny all, that hateth not father and mother for my sake, is not worthy of me,' Mat. x. 37. Self-denial, and hatred of all things in comparison of Christ, argueth an interest in him. Therefore it is a great deal of grace, and the soul is much subdued before it can say, 41 am Christ's, and Christ is mine.'

For when sin and other withdrawings from Christ are to be deserted, first, there is much ado in the understanding.

Have I reason to do this? Well, if my judgment say it is good, yet my will saith it is better to have my will than to yield to God, though I hazard the ruin of myself. Oh this is a fatal, naughty disposition, and a sign of ruin; yet the reputed happiness of many men consisteth in their chief misery.

Again, Good things first coming to the judgment are there repulsed. But if they come to the will, there they be more opposed. And then the affections make a stir and bustle, love and hatred, and engagements to worldly things, and all to hinder our claim and interest to Christ. But he must be set up in place of self-love, before he can say, 'Christ is mine, and I am Christ's,' and that is an hard matter. Therefore let us consider what our aim and scope is.

In a word, if we be Christ's, undoubtedly we will side with Christ. 'Who is on my side? who?' saith Jehu, 2 Kings ix. 32. In ill and doubtful times Christ's calls are for a party, and calleth out, Where is my party? who standeth for me? who owneth Christ and his truth and doctrine and good ways, honesty, and religion? Who is on my side? saith Christ. Why, I am for the Lord, as in the prophet Isaiah, saith the soul that can own Christ. Ay,

Christ will own us, we shall own him; if we be ashamed of him, he will be ashamed of us at the day of judgment.

They that for hope of preferment and to be somebody in the world can cross their own consciences, and Christ in their consciences, by doing that which by his Spirit he telleth them is naught; are they Christ's when they set up self as an idol above Christ, and side with the world and the flesh against Christ?

Again, He that can say in truth of heart Christ is his, and he is Christ's, he will solace himself, delight himself, and live upon this comfort. It is a rich claim, and there will be spiritual wisdom where there is this interest to implead and improve it. It is not given to lie dormant, but grace is given with it to improve it, and live upon it. All that is Christ's will please him that hath Christ. His truth is sweet to him; the Lord's day, the Lord's work, the Lord's servants, the Lord's ordinances, whatsoever hath the stamp of the Lord, it is sweet to him, because he is the Lord's, and the Lord is his.

This is contrary to the disposition of that generation that can cunningly despise persons and causes, if they see anything in them opposite to their own base courses and lusts.

But above all, where Christ is any man's in truth, the Spirit of Christ is in that man's heart, a witnessing Spirit and a sanctifying Spirit. The Spirit will witness an interest, and fit and sanctify the soul, as a gracious vessel for Christ's service here, and for glory hereafter. And though the Spirit witness not so loud that he is Christ's, yet he may know by the work of the Spirit that Christ is his; for the Spirit frameth him to a connatural disposition to Christ, and all that is Christ's. They love his ways and government. A gracious man would not be under another government than Christ's, if he were to choose. He hath made his choice indeed; but if he were to choose he would have Christ's government, because he findeth a sweetness in it, and a suitableness to the dignity of it. A man never findeth himself more himself than when he is most gracious.

Carnal men, though they submit to outward means, yet they cast away the bond of Christ, they cannot endure the yoke; but they that are Christ's have a connatural disposition to the government of Christ. And they complain to Christ of other lords, 'Other lords rule me,' Isa. xxvi. 13. This lust reigns in me: Lord, subdue it; claim thine own interest; let nothing rule in

me but thy Spirit. I am weary of my inclinations to this and that lust. And so there is a conflict ever maintained.

To stir us up, in a word, to labour to be more under the government of Christ, and to get assurance of it, let us consider, if we be not Christ's, whose are we? There is but two kingdoms. If Christ rules us not, the devil and the world must rule us.

And what kind of subjection is it to be subject to our own lusts? to a damned world and to Satan? Is it not to be ruled by our enemies, and base enemies? Our lusts are baser than the devil himself. For the devil is a substance, and ruleth by them. Now who would be willing to serve an enemy? nay, to be a servant of servants, to be under those tyrannical enemies, restless enemies, that do encroach upon us more and more? and all the fruits we have by their service is shame and grief at the best; and shall we serve those that will pay no better wages? Yet this is the condition of all that have not Christ for their Lord, They servo some base lust, and Satan, a tyrannical lord, that instead of better rewards, punisheth them with eternal destruction; so that they serve him with the price of their own souls.

I beseech you, seriously consider of it, and put this quaere to your souls; I have lived in such and such a sin, but what is the fruit of it? The best is shame. If I am not ashamed here, it will end in eternal shame. So that it is a sweet thing to be under the government of Christ. It is utile dominium, a dominion for our good.

And lest we should be discouraged, take heed of all temptations that withdraw us from the love of Christ's government, because our nature is opposite to this yoke. If they seize upon us, we shall be great losers by them in our reputation, and in much of that comfort which otherwise we might have gotten.

Beloved, you should lose nothing by Christ. What we lose for his sake, we shall gain in peace of conscience, in grace, and in this world too, if he seeth it good. No man ever lost by the service of Christ. Let a man lay beginning and end together, and tell me if he hath gotten anything by serving his lusts; for God payeth him home here, in much terror of conscience, and crosses, and losses at the end, besides hell hereafter, though at first he enjoy some seeming comfort.

And therefore lay it as a principle, that God's service is the best and and most profitable service.

Obj. Ay, but it appeareth to the view of the world that they that stick close to Christ, and will disclaim all for a good conscience, fall into this and that misery.

Ans. 1. First, The reason is, because they be not good enough. It may be they be negligent in the service of Christ; and therefore God will purge them, and make them better, and will try their graces, that they may know themselves the better.

2. Secondly, One main end is, indeed, Christ will suffer his to be exercised with this and that affliction, that he may have glory in his servants; that the world may see he hath some that are content to lose something for his sake; that will part with anything, and break with any man that they may please the Lord.

3. Thirdly, If we serve Christ, he will speak to our consciences that it is not in rain to serve him, howsoever things fall out in the world. I confess there is a mystery in Christ's government, which we must take notice of. We can give no reason why his enemies should so reign, and his church be put under hatches. Only in general we know, that all this, in conclusion, shall servo for the church's good. 'And all shall work for the best to them that love God,' Rom. viii. 28. God is all this while a-working the church's good and the enemies' ruin, though we see not the mystery of Christ's kingdom.

I beseech you, labour to make a good use of this; get under Christ's government, and when flesh and blood shall put up a petition, or suggest anything, give it a non placet, deny the petition; say, I am Christ's, and I owe nothing to any but to Christ; therefore not to sin or myself. All my debt is to the Spirit, and to Christ. Therefore I will 'sow to the Spirit, not to the flesh,' Gal vi. 8. 'I am bought with a price,' 1 Cor. vi. 20; my liberty cost Christ dear, therefore I will die honourably, rather than prostitute itself to any base courses. Thus we should have high thoughts of ourselves. And upon all temptations suggested to us, make use of this consideration, that we are not our own, but Christ's.

Christ's Exaltation Purchased by Humiliation

First Sermon

For, to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.—Rom. XIV. 9.

The dependence of these words upon the former I take to be this: The scope of the apostle in this chapter is to stay the rigid censures of others concerning weaker Christians, especially about matters of indifferency, or at the least of a less nature. In the 6th verse, saith he, 'He that regards not a day, regards it not, to the Lord he that cats, eats to the Lord; and he that eats not to the Lord, he eats not, and gives God thanks,' &c. His reason is this: they that in eating or in not eating do it with a religious respect to the Lord; if they eat, it is to the Lord; if they eat not, it is to the Lord; that is, in obedience to the Lord. They are to be borne withal, because they do it with religious respects. Though perhaps there may be a little error in the matter, yet there be some things of such indifferency that they [do] not give denomination to the action, if it be to the Lord. Howsoever the action be not altogether to be excused, yet the person is to be excused, and is not to be hardly censured. Therefore considering that they do it, and they that do it not, do it to the Lord, be not hasty in your censures.

Quest. How doth he prove that these holy Christians did eat or not eat to the Lord?

Ans. From this, because they were the Lord's. They that are the Lord's, they live to him, and die to him; and therefore they do particular actions to him. 'No man,' ver. 7, 'lives to himself, nor no man dieth to himself,' which includes all particular actions. 'Whether we live, we live to the Lord; or whether we die, we die to the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.' He proves therefore that they do eat or not eat to the Lord, if they be good Christians, because they are the Lord's.

Those that are the Lord's live to the Lord, and do all particular actions to the Lord. Such must not be harshly censured, because they are the servants of the Lord.

Quest. In the third place, How doth he prove that they are the Lord's that live and die to him?

A us. He proves it from the main ground in tho text: 'For, for this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.' So you see the dependence of the reason, they eat or eat not to the Lord. Why? 'Because they are the Lord's.'

But how is it they are the Lord's? It is the end of the three actions of Christ here. 'Christ died, and rose again, and revived, for this end, that he might be the Lord of the dead and of the living.' So you see the connection of these words with the former.

In the words you have argumentum et argumenti ratio, the argument, and the reasoning from the argument; the ground, and the inference from the ground. The ground is: 'Christ died, and rose again, and revived.' What is the inference from that? 'That he might be Lord of the dead and of the living.'

In the words therefore we will consider the argument itself, and the ground itself,, and then the inference.

'For, for this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived.'

There are three branches of the ground.

Christ died, rose, revived.

Of the inference we will speak afterwards, and show how these grounds enforce that inference, that he should be 'Lord both of the dead and of the living.'

'Christ died.'

1. First of all, you must know that Christ died here as a public person, or else the inference were not good. Christ took upon him the person of no man, but the nature; for this end, that he might be a public person. If Christ had taken the person of any body, there had been two persons of Christ. He had died in one person and not in another. Now having the nature that is common to all men, and not the person of Peter or James, &c., when he died the person died in that nature wherein he might die; so when it is said, 'Christ died,' we must consider Christ as a public person, not taking the particular

person of any man, but the general nature of man into union with the second person. Christ died as a public person.

2. Secondly, Christ died as the 'second Adam.' The spring of all misery and death was from the 'first Adam,' but the 'second Adam' was a quickening Spirit, 1 Cor. xv. 45. He died as a public person, and the 'second Adam.'

We must know, moreover, that he died as the great High Priest of the church, offering to God the Father a sacrifice that made him Lord over all, as we shall see after. He died as a priest, as indeed he that was foresignified by all the sacrifices and priests. He was both priest and sacrifice: Heb. ix. 14, 'By the eternal Spirit, the Godhead, he offered himself to his Father.'

3. Again, He died a voluntary death, for else he had not died in obedience. His death was violent in regard of them that forced it, but it was voluntary in regard of them that he offered himself for, as a sweet sacrifice to his Father. That voluntariness made his death a sweet sacrifice; for whatsoever the Father did to him, he joined with the Father in it. The Father gave him; he gave himself. The Father appointed him to be so and so; and he joined with the Father in all things. 'No man takes away my life from me,' saith he himself, John x. 18. It was a voluntary death in regard of his freedom; nay, he thirsted after it, as you have it in the Gospel. He longed after it, upon high considerations, howsoever in a lower consideration, as it was a tormenting thing and a bitter cup, he had a desire that it might pass; but it was upon lower respects. Upon higher respects, the will of his Father and the salvation of mankind, he thirsted to drink of that cup.

A man may will and nill the same thing upon presenting different objects and respects, and reasons. That which a man may decline, as we say, in this respect, looking to a particular end, that a man may desire, looking to a higher end; because man is framed so to yield to the stronger reason alway. Thereupon that is no objection, 'he seemed sometime a little unwilling.' It was looking upon something presented to him that made him in that respect unwilling; but looking upon other respects he gave himself willingly; the Father and he joined together.

And therefore by the way, when they talk of the active and passive obedience, there was action in all his passion; chiefly in his passion there was action; for if it had been mere suffering without voluntary obedience, what obedience had that been? A beast may so suffer, but against his will; but his

voluntary obedience was the chief in all his passion. 'He humbled himself to the death of the cross,' as it is Phil. ii. 8.

4. Yet further, as he died voluntary, so he died as our surety. Therefore he died a 'cursed death' duo to us. 'He was made a curse for us,' Gal. iii. 13, that he might remove the curse from us. These and such like conclusions must be observed in this, that the apostle saith, 'To this end Christ died,' because we shall have use of them afterwards.

Here we might stay and admire, that life should die! that glory should become shame for us! and that he that is the author of all blessing should become a curse! Indeed, it is a great mystery that Christ, being God, should stoop so low that he could join together the infinite majesty of God, and that low degree of abasement, that he might condescend unto. Domine quo descendis, &c.: Lord, how far goest thou? He could not go lower and be God. God, to shew his love to us, showed himself God in this, that he could be God and go so low as to die; and not only to die, but to die a shameful and cursed death for us. But I pass to the particulars.

'For this end Christ both died and rose,' &c.

1. He rose again; and indeed it was impossible but he should rise again, because he is the Lord of life. Now the Lord of life, and life itself, could not long die. It was but by dispensation that he died, viz., to work our salvation. But he could not be detained any longer by the sorrows of death. He died therefore, and rose. He rose, even as he died. He rose a public person, and as a 'second Adam,' to give and infuse spiritual life into all his branches. He rose as our surety in our room. He rose in spite of the Jews, that laboured to keep him down all they could. By the way, this shows that he will rise in his church, and in his children, in his religion, and in his cause. Let the world and all the devils in hell lay a stone upon Christ, upon his cause, and church, and children; they will rise again, oven as his blessed body did, in spite of all the watchfulness of the Jews.

2. Again, As he rose, so he rose with many; not alone, to shew, as I said before, that he rose as a public person. Another man riseth as himself; the rest rise not with him as caused by his rising. But Christ rose as a public person. Therefore many rose with him, Mat. xxvii. 53. The graves were opened to shew that he rose as a public person, as our surety, as a spiritual head, and as the 'second Adam,' who could infuse life into others. What became of those bodies that rose with him after? The Scripture saith nothing

of it; nor what became of Moses's body. They rose to do God a service and Christ an honour, which when they had done they were content to be disposed of by God again, and, it is likely, to return from whence they came. For if the head of the church himself was content to come from heaven into the virgin's womb, and from thence to the cross, and from thence to the grave, and to be abased for us, those that have the Spirit of Christ, those blessed souls in heaven, might well be content for a time to be abased, to take bodies, to do a service for their Lord and Master, who was content to forego heaven thirty-four years, and the glory due to him.

Therefore by the way, if God will use us, though we be never so great, for a particular service to the church, shall we stand upon it, when the blessed saints in heaven, those blessed souls, were content to come and take bodies for a time, to do God service, and then to sleep again?

3. Again, he rose on that day which was ever after, and well may still he, called the Lord's day; for a new world began with his rising, therefore a new Sabbath. Saint John saith, 'I was in the Spirit upon the Lord's day,' Rev. i. 10. If a man be ever in the Spirit, it is upon the Lord's day, when the Lord of the day doth honour his people, giving them to enjoy his ordinances, and joining effectually with them, maketh them full of the Spirit, and raiseth up our dead hearts after him.

'And revived.'

Why is this added to rising again? 'He revived.'

1. To shew that he rose never to die again, and that indeed he never meant to lay aside that body again, as once he had, to die for us. Consonant hereunto is that Rev. i. 18, 'Behold, I was dead and am alive, and I live for evermore; I have the keys of death and of hell.' He lives for evermore, as Hob. vii. 25, 'He sits for evermore at the right hand of God, there making intercession for us.' He dies no more.

2. Again, This 'revived' is added to shew the kind of his life, differing from that life he lived before. That life he lived before he died, was supported with meat and drink and refreshings, even as our poor lives are. It was a life subject to death that he died in, but after his resurrection, except it were for a particular dispensation, to confirm the faith of his disciples, he needed no more to eat or drink or sleep, or any natural supports and helps; for he was enlivened immediately by the Spirit of God which flowed into

him. He was full of the Spirit, and that did supply all other things whatsoever. Even as in heaven, 'God shall be all in all,' 1 Cor. xv. 28; that is, he shall he so immediately to us, to supply all, as we shall neither eat nor drink nor sleep, nor have magistrates nor ministers; but the Spirit of God will be all in all; so it was with this life of our blessed Saviour when he revived. The Spirit supplied the absence of all other supports whatsoever that he used before he died. And indeed our Saviour Christ came to bestow that life upon us that he lived after his resurrection; not this natural life of ours, that needs meat and drink and refreshings. This is not that life that Christ specially aimed at when he came to die, but that spiritual and eternal life that he lived after the resurrection; a life not subject to death; a spiritual life, not needing any created support whatsoever.

You see the grounds; the inference from these grounds follow in these words, 'that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.' The ground hath three branches: death, resurrection, and reviving. How all these do flow and give strength to this inference, I will touch in the particulars. First, then, Christ died 'that he might be Lord of the dead and of the living,'

Christ died, 1 Peter i. 18, to offer himself a sacrifice, to redeem us by his precious blood. 'We are not redeemed with gold or silver, but with the blood of Christ.' He could not be our Lord till he had bought us. Now his death was the price of our redemption; I say 'redemption,' not 'emption.' A thing may be bought that was never sold away before. Now we were sold to Satan, and under a contrary government. Now Christ satisfying divine justice redeems us. He buys us again. We had subjected ourselves to the devil, and put ourselves under his regiment, till we were ransomed by Christ. Now Christ shall have no right to us till the price be paid to divine justice; for mercy must have justice satisfied; the attributes of God must not fight one against another. Christ, therefore, is Lord of us, because by death he gave full content to divine justice. So that now, notwithstanding justice, yet we are Christ's, and are saved. Nay, now the justice of God helps us. The most terrible attribute, justice, is a ground of comfort, for it stands not with justice to have the same debt paid twice. For God is just and faithful, saith the apostle, 1 John i. 9. So then you see there is a ground from death why we are the Lord's. We are Christ's because we cost him dear. He hath paid a price for us that is worth more than the whole world. Now God showed his love in nothing more than in this, that he parted with that that is next himself, the greatest, his Son, who being God, yet died, in that nature that could die, to redeem us, and hereupon becometh Lord.

2. Secondly, He rose again, therefore 'he is Lord of the quick and the dead.'

(1.) First, Because his rising again was a manifestation that his death was a full satisfaction to divine justice, or else our sins should have kept him in the grave still, he being our surety. But our surety being out of prison, it is a sign he hath fully discharged all our debt, and the price is paid. If the surety and the creditor be agreed, we know' the debt is paid.

(2.) Secondly, In that he rose again, he is Lord, because in rising again he entered into the possession and exercise of that Lordship that he had purchased. The right is one thing, and the use and possession of the right is another. Christ was Lord of us before he died. He was Lord of us when he died. But he did not enter into possession of his Lordship till he rose again. Therefore he saith, 'All power is given to me, both in heaven and earth,' Mat. xxviii. 18, when he was ready to go up to heaven, to shew that by his resurrection the right he had by death was manifest.

(3.) Lastly, Because his rising again showed that the Father was fully pacified. He obtained the gift of the Spirit, which next Christ himself is the greatest gift. God gave his Son first, and then the Spirit that comes from the Father and the Son. The Spirit was not given till his resurrection and ascension, as it is John vi.; vii. 39. Why? Because till all enemies were fully subdued by his death, and witnessed to be subdued by his resurrection, the Spirit could not be so fully given, the Spirit being a declaration of the goodwill of God that sent it. Now when the enemies of Christ were triumphed over, and God had showed by the raising of his Son again, that he was fully satisfied, then the Spirit comes as the Son of God's favour, which Spirit doth enable us to be subject to Christ, and makes us come under Christ's kingdom, which is a spiritual government. Wherefore because he obtained the Spirit for his members upon his resurrection, thereupon is the inference good. He rose again, therefore he is Lord 'of the quick and of the dead.'

3. Thirdly, He revived; therefore he is Lord of the quick and of the dead. Reviving and taking such a life as is not subject to death anymore, he is now in heaven to make good that he purchased on earth. He revived, I say, to be a king, priest, and prophet at the right hand of God for ever: there to rule his church, and to overrule all the enemies of it till he hath subdued all; till he hath 'gathered all the elect,' Mat. xxiv. 31, and brought his church out of the

world, and made 'his enemies his footstool,' Ps. cx. 1. You see then the ground is good, and the inference is good.

'Christ died, and rose, and revived,' that he might be Lord of the quick and dead.' I come now to the thing proved.

'That he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.'

Christ is Lord both of the dead and of the living. For the better clearing of the point, let us see what is lordship.

'Lordship' properly is jus in rent et personas. It is a right, and where it is full, it is a right with possession either in things or persons.

But what manner of 'lordship' is this?

1. Christ is an universal Lord of and over all, over all the world; both over all the dead, and all the living; but more especially, and in a peculiar manner, he is Lord of his church, even as a husband is lord over his wife, which is a lordship with sweetness. So Christ's government is with unspeakable, with unconceivable sweetness. He is Lord as the Elder Brother, as the first begotten is over the rest; for he is the 'first begotten among the dead,' Rev. i. 5. This likewise is a sweet government. It is indeed a lordship of a king over his subjects, as his lordship is a branch of his kingly office; but it is such a lordship as is for the good of his subjects. It is not a derived happiness. They enjoy the head and the subjects. Christ accounts himself happy in his church, which is his fulness. The church is 'the fulness of him that filleth all things,' Eph. i. 23. And more especially is the church most happy in this government. It is such a lordship as is, indeed, altogether for the good of the subjects. 'To us a child is born, to us a Son is given,' Isa. ix. 6. He died, and rose, and revived, and all is for us. A Christian may say of Christ that he is lotus in mens usits expensus, as one well said. He is all mine; he is all expended for my use and profit. It is such a lordship as makes all his subjects kings. Therefore it is said, Rev. i. 5, 'He loved us, and gave himself for us;' to purge his church, as it is Eph. v. 26, and likewise to 'make us kings and priests.' Where note, Christ hath a notable attendance upon him. He is served with none but kings. All God's children are kings. Even the meanest servant that is anywhere in the world, in spiritual respects is a king. What a Lord and King is this, that makes all his servants kings! You see, therefore, as Christ is an universal Lord, so also he is a peculiar Lord over his church.

2. Again, He is an independent Lord; only his Father joins with him in all. He is subordinate to his Father as Mediator, but he is independent in respect of all human authority whatsoever. All human authority is derived from him. 'By me princes reign,' &c., Prov. viii. 15. His government in regard of all those governments is altogether independent. Therefore he is called 'the Lord of lords,' and 'King of kings.' He is Lord Paramount, as we say, over all; and they all are or should be dependent upon him.

3. And likewise be is a Lord of the whole man, body and soul; be is a spiritual Lord. He commands not tho body only, but the soul. He sits in the throne of conscience especially, and there be subdues the conscience and the soul to him. There be prescribes laws to the conscience and pacifies the conscience, and stablisheth conscience and settles it against all fears and terrors whatsoever. He is Lord of body and soul, especially of the soul. He bows the neck of the inward man, and brings it wholly to be subject to him. He lays his command upon the very soul itself.

4. And he is an eternal Lord. You see here he is Lord of 'the quick and of the dead;' all other lords have nothing to do with men when they are dead. They can do them no more harm. They have some power, indeed, over their dead bodies, but, alas! that is senseless. Their government ends in death, because they are lords over the outward man only. But Christ's lordship is when we are gone hence, and then more especially. For then we are more immediately with him. We are nearer the fountain when our souls are gone to him that gave them. 'I desire,' saith St Paul, 'to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which is best of all,' Philip, i. 23; especially then he is Lord, when we are gone hence.

5. In a word, he is an excellent Lord, for he hath all things that a lord should have. A lord should have three things: authority, suitable virtues and abilities, power and strength answerable to all. Now the Lord Christ hath all these. And, first, he hath authority, for God the Father gave him power over all. He purchased it, and his Father gave it him. 'He gave him the heathen for his possession,' Ps. ii. 8; and 'All power is given to me in heaven and earth,' Mat. xxviii. 18; and he hath full authority, as it is John xvii. 2, 'Thou hast given me power over all flesh.' He hath then authority. Secondly, he hath all graces and virtues fit for a lord and governor. He hath righteousness, wisdom, bounty, affections, Ac. We need not make doubt of it; for he is the spring of all these in others. 'His sceptre is a sceptre of righteousness,' Ps. xlv. O. Thirdly, he hath strength answerable to his authority; for he is a Lord

that is God. Sometimes among men authority wants power or other qualifications; but in Christ is all, the utmost and greatest fulness of all. These things premised, let us make some use of all.

But, first, let us see why it is said, 'He is Lord both of the dead and of the living,' prefixing the dead before the living? To shew, I conceive, that Christ is Lord of those that were dead before, as well as of those that are alive now. Christ is the Lord of all from the beginning of the world, from Adam to the last man that shall stand upon the face of the earth; therefore he is Lord of those that were dead before, as well as of those that are alive now, and that shall die after. 'He is Lord of the dead, and of the living.' Now for use, first, where he saith, 'For this end.'

Use 1. It is a point wondrous pregnant, and full of very comfortable use: first, showing that the grounds of a Christian's faith and comfort are very strong, as you see how the Holy Ghost dwells upon the argument. 'For this end,' saith he, Christ died and rose again and revived, that he might be Lord of the quick and of the dead.'

God doth all to ends, it being a point of wisdom to prefix an end, and work to it. If God hath an end and providence in the hairs that fall from our heads, hath he not a far greater in disposing of things for the good of the church? His Son is given to death, and raised again. It is for the greatest end in the world, being the greatest work. The greatest work hath the greatest end. Such was this end, the lordship of the church: 'For this end,' saith he, 'Christ died, and rose again, that he might be Lord of the dead, and of the living,' which is his church.

And is this Christ's end, to be Lord of the living and of the dead? We must have it then our end too, to serve Christ, to live and die to him; for being under him, our ends must be answerable to his, as we shall see after.

'For this end.'

Use 2. Again, where it is said he died, and rose, and revived, 'that he might be Lord of the dead and of the living'—It is a profitable course—I speak it only in general—when we think of the abasement of Christ, to think of the end why. So of his exaltation: it is good to keep these together to avoid scandal that might arise in our minds from either, thought of by itself, that God should stoop so low. Lest the thoughts of Christ dying and stooping so low should offend us, it is good also to think of the end, that 'he

might be Lord of quick and dead;' and if that dazzle thee again, to think of our Saviour now in glory, full of majesty in heaven, and how shalt thou have access to so glorious majesty. Oh come down again, and think of God incarnate, God going up and down in our flesh, of God dying, dying a cursed death, and rising again. Thus in your meditations interweave these thoughts, to avoid scandal. Think of his glory; and that you may not be amazed at the glory, so as to be deterred from going boldly to him, think of bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, God dying in your nature. Join these two together. 'For this end the Son of God died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.'

Use 3. Again, You see here in general that the grand principal points of religion have an influence into all the particulars; and there is a homogeneal deduction, as we call it, of divine truths one from another. All depend one upon another, and all divinity; for howsoever divine truth be contrary to carnal reason sometimes, yet there is strong reason in all divine truth. For one is the cause of another, and one depends upon another, as here, 'Christ died, and rose, and revived.' One follows another. What from all this?

'To be Lord of quick and dead.' How then proves he that he is Lord of all? Because he died, and rose, and revived. One riseth from another. So that, though carnal reason be one thing and all divinity be another, yet there is reason and deduction issuing of one thing from another in divinity, most wisely and holily; and it is a part of wisdom to observe how conclusions rise from principles, as branches and buds do from roots. Indeed, if we would enter into serious considerations of the grounds of religion, how they give life, and rise unto their particulars, they would have an influence into the whole course of our life, as perhaps we shall see in the particulars more clearly.

'For this end,' &c.

Use 4. Again, in general, when he saith Christ is 'Lord of the quick and of the dead,' we see hence the truth of the catholic church, from the first man living to the end of the church, under one head Christ. Christ is the Saviour of those that were before the law, under the law, under the gospel. Christ was the Saviour of all. He is the Saviour of the dead as well as of the living. All come under one head, which hath no further use than to inform us in that one point of doctrine, to shew that Christ is 'yesterday' as well as 'to-day,' to-morrow, 'and for ever,' Heb. xiii. 8. All that were saved before, that are saved now, and shall be for over, are saved by Christ.

'There is no other name under heaven whereby we can be saved,' Acts iv. 12. 'He is Lord of the dead and of the living.' Now, therefore, to come more particularly, 'Christ is Lord both of the dead and of the living.' What a Lord [is] we heard before.

This is a point of wondrous comfort, and likewise a point informing us of our duty; and withal showing us that Christ will work that duty in us, because he is a Lord not only that should rule over us, that we should be subject to him, but to make us subject to him. It is a point of wondrous comfort and of duty, and of this issue, that we under the covenant of grace shall be enabled to perform that duty to our Lord.

And then it is a point of wondrous security in life, in death, as, alas! sometime one thing amazeth us, sometime another; sometime we are willing to die—Elias was afraid to live; sometimes we are afraid of death, as we are all naturally. Why, come life or death, come what will come, we are under a Lord that is Lord of 'the dead and of the living.' So it is a point of wondrous security and quiet to a Christian in all passages. He sometimes lives and sometimes dies, but his salvation is not at that hazard to be off and on, but 'whether he live or die,' he is sure to be saved, for he is under the Lord of the living and the dead.

But to speak a little of the first. It is intended for comfort, as well as direction to duty, and to be subject, to submit to the Lord. It is a comfort that we have a Lord that rules us for our good while we are living, and when we are dead, and for ever; and indeed we cannot have a greater comfort, beloved, than this, that 'we are not our own, but that we are bought with a price,' 1 Cor. vi. 20, that we are under Christ. Why, what a comfort is this, will yon say. Homo non est. natus, &c., as the natural man said, a man is not born to subjection but to honour and government. What comfort is this to be under Christ, to be under a governor!

Ans. Oh beloved, know that it is the greatest comfort; as the rule is, everything is perfect if it be weak, by that whereby it is subject to a higher. The vine is perfect by leaning to the elm. It would lie on the ground else, and be spoiled. The perfection of the weak creature the sheep is to have a shepherd. The perfection of a weak nature is to have a rule for their good. The perfection of the ship is the pilot. It would dash on every rock, and be tossed with every wave else. And so it is our perfection, that we are under a Lord, such a Lord as this is, cui serrire regnare cat, &c., to whom to serve is to reign; for all his servants are so many kings. It is our perfection to be

subject to him, therefore it is a wondrous comfort that Christ is become 'Lord of the living and of the dead.' I beseech you, therefore, think of it in your meditations. All the Scripture aims at this end to comfort. Whatsoever is written, is written for our comfort; and this is a principle of divinity among the rest, that a Christian is not his own man now, but he is under Christ. And this is a comfort both in life and death at all times. As the psalmist saith, 'My times are in thy hands, Lord,' Ps. xxxi. 15. He saith not, 'my time,' but 'my times are in thy hand;' so we may say our times are in Christ's hands; our time of being born, our time of living and dying; and when we are dead, our time of rising again. Our time, the whole current of our time, is in thy hands, not in the devil's hands, not in our enemies' hands, beloved, for they would make short work with us then; but our times are in our Lord's hands. Christ is the Lord of our times, the Lord of our life and death; and when we are dead, he is a Lord for ever; for he lives for ever, and therefore he is or ever a Lord. Beloved, we do not die at the devotion and good pleasure of any man whatsoever. They cannot stir so much as a hair from our head, without the will of this Lord. All the devils in hell cannot stir a hair of our head, I say, nor all men that are acted by the spirit of the devil. They may threaten punishment, but, alas! they can do no more than this Lord of lords will give them leave. Therefore it is a point of wondrous comfort.

Obj. Oh but will a poor soul say, Christ indeed is Lord of the living and of the dead, but I find a great deal of corruption in me, &c., and I am a sinner.

Ans. Why, he is Lord over thee. He hath a sweet lordship over thee, as well as a commanding lordship. He is not only a king, but a husband, as it is Eph. v. 20, 27, 'He gave himself to purge his church,' and to make his church fit by little and little. Thou hast sin and corruption, but thou hast a merciful husband that will bear with the weaker vessel. Doth he command others to do that; and will he not practise that that he enjoins others? Undoubtedly he will; and therefore it is a comfort, it is a sweet government and subjection, as of the husband over the wife. Christ purgeth and cleanseth his church; he doth not cast it away.

For I beseech you, consider, he that died for his church and children, when they were enemies, will he cast them away now they are poor friends, and desire to please him? as Saint Paul divinely reasoneth, Rom. v. 10, 'Much more shall we be saved by his life.' If he saved us by death, much more now by his life, being in heaven. Consider he rose and lives for ever; therefore will

he cast us away for some imperfections, that died for us when we were enemies? He that will not 'quench the smoking flax, nor break the bruised reed,' Mat. xii. 20, will he cast away his poor children that strive against their corruptions? He will not, nay, he hath promised where he hath begun a good work, he will finish it to the day of the Lord, Phil. i. 6, Though it go but slowly forward, yet that beginning is a pledge of proceeding. God will never remove his hand from his own work till he have brought it to perfection. Therefore let any soul comfort itself that will come under this Lord. In a word, what greater comfort can we have than this, that he is such a Lord over us, as is Lord over all other things in the world besides? For he could not be Lord of his church, except he were Lord over hell, and all power were subject to him. Now being so he is such a Lord of the church as can restrain the power of all creatures whatsoever; because else they might annoy the church and affront him in his government by opposition, if he were not Lord of all things else, as well as of the Church. But this is the comfort of a Christian; he is under a Lord that is Lord of all the enemies of the church; and he is so Lord over them till by little and little he make them his footstool. That that is begun in this world shall be consummate hereafter by that lordship; nay, he will make all the enterprises of the very enemies of his church whatsoever serviceable to his poor church; for as the apostle saith, 'All things are yours, because ye are Christ's,' 1 Cor. iii. 23. He is such a Lord as that besides himself being ours, he makes all the world ours, yea, the devil is ours; for in spite of him, whatsoever he doth, it is ordained to the salvation of the church. The church's enemies are the servants of the church, the involuntary servants; for they weaken the church and scour it. God raiseth them up for the exercise of the church; and when he hath done, you know what course he takes with them. So then he is Lord, not only over all, but he overrules their actions for the good of the church, whatsoever they are; and he makes all the endeavours and plots of the enemy for the church's good; all is yours, life and death. Though it be death by tyrants, all kind of death whatsoever, it is yours. What a comfort is this, that we are under such a Lord as this.

Especially what a comfort is this at the hour of death, when Christ, that ruled us all our lifetime before, will take then the government and possession of that jewel that he hath bought with such a price, our precious souls; that when we must part with friends, and part with this sweet body, that the soul so much loved, and with the world and all things in the world, then Christ will own [us] for his when the world will own us no longer. Therefore methinks Christians should be at a point, for life or death. He never goes out

of the dominion of Christ; nay, he is nearer Christ; he is more Christ's. If there be any comparison to be made when he is dead than when he is alive, 'Blessed are those that died in the Lord.'

To apply this a little to the present occasion. Here in this sacrament we are to have communion with the Lord, of his death and resurrection. For what is the sacrament but a representation of his body broken, and of his blood poured out for us, that he might be Lord over us? The more communion and fellowship you have with Christ, the more assurance you shall have that you are his, which is indeed the grand comfort of all, that we are Christ's, that Christ is ours; for then heaven and earth is ours, all is ours. Now God hath ordained these sacraments for this end. The word is the sceptre of his kingdom whereby he rules. The sacrament is the seal of the word. Therefore all good subjects, that submit themselves to the kingdom of Christ, must submit themselves to this sweet ordinance of Christ, that;he hath ordained for our good, the word and the sacraments. Thereby we shall find the effectual working of his Spirit in us, subjecting the whole inward man to his gracious government. But having spoken of this subject at large heretofore, I only desire you to raise up your thoughts to consider whom you have to deal with; with him that is Lord of the quick and of the dead. We have to deal with the mighty Monarch of heaven and earth, Christ. Therefore come, as with faith, because he hath ordained these things to strengthen faith; so come with reverence, knowing with whom we are to feast and to deal. Consider of these things; and then I hope that God will vouchsafe a blessing answerable to the intendment of his ordinance.

The Second Sermon

For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be the Lord both of the dead and of the living.—Rom. XIV. 9.

I showed the dependence in the forenoon; a Christian, by the Spirit of God in him, he hath a blessed aim at all times. Howsoever he may fail in particulars, yet his aim is right.

This doubt rose from difference of aims, whether he should please God or man. His doubt rose in pleasing of God, what might please him most; and because he sees not always what might please him, therefore he carries this honesty, that whatsoever he doth he will do it to the Lord, and whatsoever he doth not he will not do it to the Lord. His aim is for good at all times.

Now this is proved from the general disposition of Christians. They live and die to the Lord. Therefore their particular actions must he to the Lord. If their whole life and death he to the Lord, their actions must he to him.

Now he proves their whole life and death are to the Lord, because they are the Lord's. How doth he prove that they are the Lord's—that is, Jesus Christ's? Because the text saith here, 'For this end Christ both died, and revived, that he might he Lord both of the dead and of the living.'

And surely he is Lord. He will not miss of his end. God never misseth of his end, because he can remove all impediments between him and his end. Now it being Christ's end to be Lord of the quick and of the dead, he is Lord. If he he Lord, then those that are under him, and led by his Spirit, aim both in life and death to glorify him in all things. This in a word be spoken, for the inference of the words.

'To this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived.'

Here you have a ground and an inference; an argument and a reasoning from it.

The argument or ground is, 'Christ died, and rose, and revived.'

That that riseth thence is, 'That he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.'

In the ground itself I told you how Christ died as a public person, as the 'second Adam,' &c.; and now here you are to take notice likewise that he rose again as a public person, as the 'second Adam,' &c.

And likewise he revived, not to die again, as in his first life. When he began to live, he began to die; but when he revived he did not die again. He lives for ever to make intercession for us in heaven. Christ never dies again, Rom. vi. 8, seq. He rose to a life that shall never end; for the divine nature doth flow into his human nature, and doth immediately inspire such a spiritual life into it, as it lives for ever, by virtue of the Spirit of Christ actuating, and stirring, and moving him, as his natural life did here, when he was upon the earth.

'Christ died, and rose, and revived.'

To what end is all this'? What is grounded hence? That Christ therefore is Lord of quick and dead? This is inferred from all three.

'Christ died,' that he might reconcile us to God by his death, satisfying justice; and so justice being fully satisfied, he might have his end in being Lord of his church. He had a mind to marry us, but he could not till he had rescued us. Therefore to rescue us out of divine justice, and from the tyranny of Satan, God's jailor, he made satisfaction to divine justice. As for Satan he brought us out of his kingdom by strong hand; and so doth continually by the power of his Spirit. Now hereupon it must needs be that he must he Lord of that he paid so dear a price for.

And then he rose again for this end, that he 'might he Lord,' because, howsoever he had a title to be Lord of the church,—by the union of the human nature with the divine, he was Lord alway,—yet in regard of the exercise of his lordship, it was deferred till his glorious resurrection and ascension. Then that that lay hid before, Christ's divine power, majesty, and lordship, that appeared and manifested itself, as it is Rom. i. 4, 'He was mightily declared to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead.' He was the Son of God before; but then it was a kind of begetting, because it was then manifest. Things are said in Scripture and divinity to be when they are apparent to be. So this day of the resurrection Christ was begotten; because it was apparent then by raising himself from the dead, that he was the only-begotten Son of God. Now that made way for his lordship; for after his resurrection God gave him power over all things in heaven and earth; and then upon the resurrection he had the Spirit in more abundance, having conquered all enemies between God and us. Therefore he was fit to be Lord by that, because he could give the Spirit to them over whom be meant to rule.

But then in his own person, he rising, triumphed over all opposite enemies whatsoever; over death the last enemy, and over Satan, sin, and the law, having cancelled all. Surely [since] he hath overruled all for himself, he will overrule all for his church and people; and therefore he rose again to be 'Lord of quick and dead;' and he may well be, because he is Lord of 'quick and dead' in his own person. He is Lord over all in his own person, and therefore he is Lord over the church, and all the enemies of the church. So far as the enemies seized upon his person, so far he overcame them all. He hath as much care of his mystical person the church, as he had on his own body; and more too, for he gave that for the other.

And then he revived to be Lord over all; that is, he lives for ever to make good what he hath gotten by his death. He will not lose the price of his own blood. He is in heaven to appear before God, and sits at the right hand of God, and rules there till he have made his enemies his footstool, till he draw his church home to heaven, to himself. 'He lives for ever,' as the apostle saith, 'to make intercession,' Heb. vii. 25. Hereupon it must needs be that by living for ever he is fitly qualified to be Lord over all the 'quick.' Now I proceed.

'That he might be Lord both of quick and dead.'

Christ is Lord both of the dead and of the living. You see upon what ground he is Lord of all, as well as of his church. He is an eternal Lord over the dead and the living. He is a transcendent Lord, above all other lords whatsoever; and he is independent. He is not obnoxious to any. All have power from him; and in some sort indeed Christ hath redeemed even all other creatures. They are Christ's. And in some sort even proud wicked men, that live in the church, that have perhaps some parts (which are the occasion of their damnation, because of and by them, they are proud and insolent), they are redeemed by Christ, thus far to be serviceable to his church, to use their parts to his own ends. They go a great way in salvation, that so by their parts they may be fit to do service to the church. So he is Lord not only over the church, but of others for the service of the church.

Now this point, that Christ is Lord of the dead and of the living, it yields many comfortable uses. I spake of some things in general, and then we came to some particulars, as,

1. First, Seeing Christ is Lord of the quick and of the dead, tee may comfort ourselves under the sovereignty of Christ. To be Solomon's servant was accounted a great happiness. Those that did observe the government of Solomon did think so, as the Queen of Sheba, 1 Kings x. 8. Alas! what shall we think of those that are under Christ, who 'is greater than Solomon,' Mat. xii. 42, a most great, a most wise, a most loving, a most gracious and powerful Lord over all. Therefore it is a most comfortable condition, here in this life, to add a little to that point, however it be service. It is against the nature of man to serve a man, yet not to serve a more noble; to serve God is to reign.

Besides, while we live here, such is our disposition, such is the weakness of base sinners, that they must be ruled by another; and indeed our happiness

and security consists in being ruled by another higher than ourselves. We are not fit to be our own governors. St Paul saith to the Galatians, 'an heir in his non-age differeth little from a servant,' Gal. iv. 1. So it is with Christians. Till they be in heaven they differ little from servants; and therefore they must be under tutors and government.

And as it is a comfortable, so it is an honourable condition; for Christ's servants are so many kings. Christ is served of none but kings, and such kings as do not rule over slaves, but such kings as in Christ rule over the greatest and terriblest enemies of all. A Christian can think with comfort and encouragement upon those enemies that make the greatest tyrants of the world to quake; he can think of death, of sin, of damnation, of judgment, of the law: of all these things Christ's kingdom is another manner of kingdom than the kingdom of the world. They are poor kingdoms; their monarch's head must he as low as the basest subject they have. They know not how soon, and perhaps have a more terrible account to give than any other under them. It is not so in Christ's kingdom.

Therefore those Christians that are afraid of death, they forget their dignity; they forget him on whom they depend, for Christ is Lord 'both of the quick and of the dead.' If so be Christ be their Lord when they die, what need they fear to die? And therefore let us comfort ourselves when God calls for us. He is our Lord as well when we die as while we live, and more too; for then our souls have more immediate communion with him. Can there be more comfort than this, that we have a Lord over that died for us, that rose for us, and lives for ever, and doth immortalize his subjects too? Join these together, an ever-living Lord and ever-living subjects, co-existent, I mean, for the time to come. We indeed have a beginning— Christ hath none as God— but we have an eternal state to be for ever, and an eternal Lord to rule us for ever, and to make us happy for ever. What comfort is more than this, that howsoever there be variety of conditions in this world, we live, we die, we are in prosperity, we are in misery; yet here is no variety in the state of salvation. Christ is not a Lord to-day and none to-morrow; but 'yesterday, to-day, and the same for ever,' Heb. xiii. 8.

2. Again, As it is a point of comfort, so it is also of duty. If Christ be our Lord in life and death, our duty is to look to him in life and death, to live and die to him. For our aim must answer his aim, if we ever intend to come to heaven; for we are understanding creatures, and have a communion with him in a poor measure. Therefore what he will make his end must be our end. His

end was that whether we live or die he might rule over us. Our end should be, in life and death to be ruled by him.

How shall we live to Christ?

We live to Christ—this is a ground of all other duties that follow—when we know and acknowledge Christ hath a full interest in us, by being our head, by being our husband, by being our king, our elder brother. He hath all the sweet interest to us that any relation can inright him to; for all other relations among men are but shadows of that grand relation. There only is the reality of things. He is a true head, a true king, a true elder brother, a true husband to his church. All ours are but poor representations of those glorious things. Then know and acknowledge so much. That is the ground of all living to him.

Upon knowing and acknowledging issues all other obedience in our life to Christ. Those that thus acknowledge Christ, they must be directed by his will, and not their own. As a servant as far as he is a servant, and a wife so far as she is a wife, they have no will of their own, so he that lives to Christ and acknowledgeth him to be a Lord, he must have no will of his own, but he must live according to the will of Christ, as you have it excellently set down, 1 Peter iv. 1, 2, 'Christ suffered for us in the flesh. Let us arm ourselves therefore with the same mind; for he that suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin, that he should no longer live the rest of his time in the flesh, to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.' It is a comment upon this place, 'Christ died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord of the quick and of the dead that is, that we might live according to his will, and not after our own. Do you think our Saviour Christ would so far deny himself to leave heaven, to take upon himself our base nature, and be so far abased in it, to let us live as we list? Oh no; we must live the rest of our days, not according to the lusts of men, or our own lusts, but according to the will of God; and therefore as the apostle admonisheth, Rom. xii. 2, we must search 'what is the acceptable will of God in all things.' What is the end of our hearing sermons, of our reading, and all the pains we take in the means of salvation? Not only to know what God will do to us, but what he will have of us. He will have the directing of our lives; and therefore if we live to Christ, we must labour to know his good pleasure to us; what he means to do for us and so his good pleasure with us; what he will have us do again by way of thankfulness. Christ squared his life immediately according to his Father's will. 'It is written in the volume of thy book, that I should do thy will, O God,' Ps. xl. 7. So all that

are Christ's must have the same spirit, to direct all their lives according to his will. Now the most grand things of his will—for his will is in the Scriptures—are that we repent. He commands all to repent. His will is that we believe in him. His will is our sanctification, as it is 1 Thes. iv. 23. His will is that we suffer, and in suffering submit ourselves to him; and the Scriptures is express in many other particulars, but these especially are named, to shew something wherein we must direct ourselves according to his will. But, not to insist upon particulars, in all things we must labour to direct our lives according to his will.

Secondly, That we may live to God, we must aim at the glory of Christ in all things, and at the credit of religion, not at our own credit. If Christ be Lord of the quick and dead, while we live we must not seek our own glory but his. The contrary to this the apostle complains of: 'All seek their own,' saith he, 'and not the things that are of the Lord Jesus Christ,' Phil. ii. 21. We must consider what is for the credit of religion and the honour of Christ; and not what is for our own advantage. Is it not good reason that we should seek the glory of him that is Lord over us? Naturally proud man is led with a spirit of self-love; and he seeks himself in all things, even in his religion. So far as it stands with his own lusts he will be religious, and no further. So long as God's will is not contrary to his, he will do God service; but if it cross his will once, then he will give God leave to seek him a servant.

Thus man makes himself an idol; he sets up himself in the room of God; he doth all things, as from himself, so for himself; nor indeed can he do otherwise, till he put off himself wholly, and deny himself—a man cannot go beyond himself but by grace, that raiseth a man above himself. It makes him have an eye to some excellency, out of himself, conformity whereto and interest whereinto will make him happy.

Now that we may aim at Christ in all things, it is good to call ourselves to account for our aims. Wherefore we live and wherefore we have, are, or do anything, either in grace or nature, it is or should be, not only that we may be saved ourselves, but that Christ in all may be glorified. We need not sever these; for Christ joins them both together; and he that seeks his own salvation seeks the glory of God, because God will be glorified in saving us. The end hath a main influence into all actions; and as it differenceth man from other creatures, that though he do the same action as a beast, he eats and drinks and sleeps, all for another end, for an end beyond himself, because he is a reasonable creature, whereas other creatures rest in

themselves. So it differenceth between natural men and Christians; they differ in their aims, not in their actions. Both do the same thing. One doth it for base ends of his own; keeps within the circle of those ends. The other having a light discovering excellencies better than the world can afford, and having another spiritual life above, he is thereby directed to further aims in all; yea, even in his civil actions.

Saint Paul gives a rule, that 'whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we should do all to the glory of God,' 1 Cor. x. 31. Though the action be common and civil, not tending directly to the glory of God, as eating, &c., yet our aim should be in it, at Christ and at God, that the body thereby being refreshed may be fit to serve God.

And indeed there is not the commonest action of this life, but we may shew that we have a good end in it, and therein glorify God. Therefore in Scripture it is put as a kind of limitation: 'Obey in the Lord,' 'many in the Lord,' do all things in the Lord; that is, in Christ. He shows that we should do all such things, intimating that as we must go about such enterprises with invocation of the name of the Lord, &c., so chiefly we should do them so far, and no farther, as they may stand with the favour and glory of Christ. In subordinate things, the rule of subordinate things is to do them so far as they may help to the main end. Now the service of all other is subordinate to the service of Christ, and all other bonds are serviceable to the main bond in marriage, or whatsoever may not prejudice the bond of marriage in the Lord; marry not rich, nor honourable, but in the Lord. All things must have their limitation to be done in the Lord; that is, so far as they may stand with pleasing the Lord. Thus we see what it is to live to the Lord with his good pleasure and likening.

Now an assistant help—of living to the Lord—is a perpetual self-denial of our own wisdom, will, and affections in all things, else we shall live to ourselves, and to the Lord we shall never attain.

But you will say this is a hard saying. True. But consider this one thing, that we are the greatest enemies to ourselves of all; and we carry in ourselves a cursed enmity to all that is divine and supernatural. Naturally we are trained up to our own will, therefore we cannot endure the yoke of Christ without supernatural strength.

Again, Divine things perpetually cross the liking of the soul; whereupon there is an antipathy between us and Christ, and divine things. Therefore

there must be self-denial of necessity. Now the knowledge of this will be a good means to enable us to the duty.

Another help to this, of living to Christ, is to complain of ourselves to Christ, as Saint Paul, Rom. vii. 24, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?' &c.; to inform against our rebellions, that we live too much to the flesh and too little to the Spirit, too much to ourselves and too little to Christ, by reason of that principle of flesh and blood, and to desire him to captivate all, and bring all in subjection by his Spirit. This is alway a sign of a man led by the Spirit, that it directs him to Christ. The Spirit, as it comes from Christ, and the Father, so it directs to Christ, to the pleasing of the Father, and of Christ in all things.

Here I might take just occasion to reprove a company of men that live under the gospel, that will be saved by Christ forsooth, but will not have Christ a Lord to rule over them. They will be ruled by rules of state, or rules of flesh and blood, and their own lusts, by the rules of hell sometime, so that they may have their own aims, their own ambition satisfied, and raise themselves to their own pitch; a disposition cursed, and opposite to that religion which they profess. For our life should be a living to Christ, and under Christ a living to the church and state. But say they, 'Let us break their bonds, and cast their cords from us,' Ps. ii. 3. What! do they think we will be awed with a company of poor preachers? Away with them! We will have our own wills; let us break their bonds in sunder. Christ sits in heaven, and laughs them all to scorn, Ps. ii. 4. They shall know at length he will be no Saviour where he is no Lord. If he may not rule them by his Spirit and holy directions while they live, he will not own them when they die. For you see the text joins both here, 'he died,' and 'he is Lord.' When he died there came water and blood out of his side, to shew that he came not only to shed his blood, to die, and to satisfy divine justice, but by water to cleanse us, and to fit us to be subject to his government. Therefore those that take him as a priest to die, and will not have him as a Lord, they rent his offices. I do but touch these now.

We see what it is to live to Christ. Let us see what it is to die to the Lord?

(1.) 'To die to the Lord' is to know and acknowledge that Christ hath power over us when we die; thereupon to submit ourselves to him, and not to murmur and fret, when he comes to call for our life and soul, as if we were unwilling to part with them.

(2.) Then again, to die to Christ, is when upon any good occasion he calls for our lives in standing for a good cause—-for the church or state—to be ready to lay it down. There is not the least tittle of truth, but that it is better than a man's life. A man may not only die, in case of martyrdom, but in case of justice and truth, and so he must be willing to die if he will die to Christ.

(3.) Again, We die to the Lord when we carry ourselves so when death comes, as we may express some graces to glorify God, even in our very death; when we study to do all the good we can, that we may die fruitfully; out of this consideration, my time is short, I will labour to be sowing to the Spirit as much as I can, not to die like fools, but wisely, knowing that there is no further opportunity. Here is the time of seed; hereafter will be the time of reaping. Therefore there is no Christian that is master of himself at the hour of death, if some disease disable him not, but he studies how to shew himself as fruitful as he can at that time; as you see our Saviour when he was to die, what long chapters there are, three together, of his demeanour, how he strengthened his disciples, what an excellent prayer he made to God. See Moses, how he carried himself at his death, what excellent admonitions he gives; and good Jacob, what an excellent will he made; and St Peter, knowing he must put off his earthly tabernacle, 2 Peter i. 14, he labours to put them in mind 'to glorify God,' as Saint Paul saith, 1 Cor. vi. 20.

A Christian ought to end his days in faith and obedience; in faith that God will take his soul, when he commits it to him, and he shall reign for ever in heaven. In obedience thereupon, because he believes, he dies in faith, he will die in obedience. I even offer myself to thee, because I believe thou wilt care for me when I am gone Hence; for thou art the Lord of life and death, and thou art the Lord of me when I live, and when I am dead.

Well, as it implies duty, so it implies a gracious effect, that we shall be enabled to this duty. He indeed in himself is a Lord. We ought to acknowledge him so, nay, we shall have the Spirit if we be his, to cause us to acknowledge him. You have a notable place, 2 Cor. v. 15, to this purpose, 'The love of Christ constrains us, because we thus judge, if one died for all, then we are all dead.' If he died to redeem us from death, to what end did he die? He died for all, that 'they might not live to themselves, but to him that died, and rose again,' 2 Cor. v. 15. It is nothing but this in the text, 'we should live to him.' Now this, that we should live to him, it is not an aim of ours only, but an effect that he works in us. He died 'that we might live to

him.' For he died and rose that he might obtain the Spirit. But this Spirit he enableth us to live and die to God: as you have it, Rom. viii. 8, at large proved. Those that are Christ's have the Spirit of Christ, and are led with it.

Beloved, it is a part of the new covenant, that whatsoever our duty is, we shall have ability to perform it by the Spirit of Christ; for all the gracious promises of the gospel are not only promises upon condition, and so a covenant, but likewise the covenant of grace is a testament and a will (a will is made without conditions; a covenant with conditions), that as he hath made a covenant what he would have us to do, so his testament is, that we shall have grace to do so; he will put his Spirit into us, and circumcise our hearts, or else, beloved, there would be no more strength of the covenant of grace than there was of that of nature in Adam. Why did Adam fall? He had not the Spirit to uphold him, nor had he the promise of it to keep him that he should not fall. Therefore the covenant of works was frustrate. But now the covenant of grace is this, that whatsoever God requires he will give his Spirit to enable us to do it, that the covenant may not be frustrate. If God should not make good our part as well as his, we should not be saved. Therefore, now in the covenant of grace we may boldly go to God and Christ; and allege unto him, when any duty is pressed upon us, and when we are about to perform any duty, and find want of strength, 'Lord, thou knowest I have no strength of myself, I am a barren wilderness; but thou hast entered into a covenant of grace with me, which covenant now is a testament, a free will, that thou wilt give what thou requirest, Lord, in the use of means that thou hast ordained; in attending upon thee, and looking up to thee, I desire that thou wouldst give me strength to submit to thee, to live and die to thee, to direct my course as I should.' This should be the course of a Christian, and not to set upon things in his own strength; but when duty is discovered, look to the promise of grace and of the Spirit, and put them into suit, and allege them to Christ in the use of sanctified means, as reading, hearing, holy conference, and the like; and he will enable us to do that that is our duty.

Therefore a man may know who is indeed under Christ's government by this, for he that is actually under Christ's government and acknowledged him to be his Lord, he hath ability to live and die to him in some comfortable measure; to deny himself, to go out of himself, to live and to die to the glory of God. The Spirit of God hath given him this victory and triumph over his own heart.

Last of all, if this be so, here see the wondrous secure state of a Christian. Beloved, that as Christ is his Lord both in life and death, and it is his duty to subject himself, so Christ will give him grace so to direct his life. Therefore let us do our duty, attend upon the means, and lift up our hearts to God; let God and Christ alone with all the rest, let Christ alone with ruling us and with enabling us to be ruled by him. He is Lord not only over us, but in us by his Spirit. But the Spirit 'breatheth where it listeth,' John iii. 8. There must he waiting upon God in his ordinances, till we find ability to holy duties; and those that have so much patience to honour God and Christ so far as to attend in the use of good means till the good hour come, till the Spirit come to subject their spirits to duty, no doubt but God intends well to them. But those that are so short-spirited that if they find not ability to deny themselves and to live to God, and to break off their course of sin, but give over in a kind of base despair, it is just with God to leave them to themselves, that they shall even live and die to themselves; that is, they shall live without respect to Christ, and die without respect to Christ at all, as if there were no Christ to take care for them.

Now out of this branch of holy security, upon the care and power and lordship that Christ hath over us for the time to come, it riseth that a Christian may be assured of his salvation, of his perseverance, because Christ is Lord of all. He is Lord of his heart. He is Lord not only of the things without us, but of our spirits within us, and he will enable us to subject ourselves to him, 'that neither things present, nor things to come, or anything, shall ever be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ,' Rom. viii. 89; not only from God's love to us, but from our love to God.

Beloved, let this encourage us to come under the government of Christ. There is no security or safety but in his government. We are sure of nothing in this world, but we are sure of this, that Christ, if he be our Lord, is our Lord for ever, and that nothing in the world shall ever be able to separate us from him.

I will close with this. You see Christ is ours, whether 'we live or die.' He is 'Lord of quick and dead.' Let us labour to live to him, that he may rule over us while we live, else when we come to die, though we never so much—perhaps out of principles of self-love—desire him to be ours, it is to no purpose. While we live, therefore, let us submit to his government, and if we live to him we shall easily die to him. If we do not inure ourselves by daily self-denying and practising of the duties of obedience to live to him, how

shall we come to die to him? Our life may be snatched from us against our wills; we may die with a kind of fretting and indignation that we can live no longer, that we can enjoy our pleasures no longer. But to die meekly and quietly, as to a Lord, submitting ourselves to him that is the Lord of life and death, a man can never do it that hath not lived to the Lord. Therefore I beseech you every day be acquainted with the actions of living to the Lord. Whatsoever you do to men, do it as to the Lord, in the Lord's strength to please him, and as it may stand with his favour and no further. And especially take the advantage of your younger years to root out lusts that will grow to that head else, that God in his judgment, giving yon up to yourselves—after long rebellion—you shall never he able to deny yourselves to live to Christ, and, when death comes, to die to Christ; therefore let us inure ourselves to deny ourselves in the practice of every holy duty, as to the Lord betimes, that so we may get the upper hand of our flesh in these holy performances, that they may be easy and sweet to us, as indeed the yoke of Christ is after it is worn a while. The subjection of Christ is the sweetest subjection in the world. It breeds the greatest peace and joy and love and contentment to the soul, and which is more than all, a blessed hope for the time to come. He that is life is inured to holy duties, and hath overcome the rebellions of his base flesh; when he comes to die he can say with Simeon, 'Lord, now let thy servant depart in peace,' Luke ii. 29; that is, Thou Lord of life, now thou wilt have me die, I am even content to die, to resign myself to thee. Who can say so but he that makes Christ his Lord all his lifetime? Then when death comes he is content to yield unto him as a Lord, else it will be just in the hour of death for Christ to say, as it is Judges x. 14, 'Do you come to me and commend yourselves to me? go to the lords you have served.' You have served the humours of such a one, you have alienated your souls to such a one, you have given your souls to sin and to such men as are instruments of the devil, you have denied your honesty, your faith, your religion; go to him, go to the gods you have served, they are your lords; I am not your Lord, I was not all your lifetime. Though these speeches be not uttered, the effect of them will; the soul will conclude I have served mine own lusts and the humours of others all my lifetime, how can I look that the Lord should take my soul? Therefore let it be our daily practice to live to the Lord, to have the chief aim of our life in our eye to direct our actions so as they may be serviceable to the main, else not to perform them.

Herein consists the main happiness of a Christian, that whether he lives or dies he is not his own, but he is his, that can dispose of him better than ever he could of himself; for if we had the disposing of ourselves, as Adam

had, what would become of his? What became of Adam when he was master of himself? He lost himself and all. The 'second Adam' hath bought us with his blood and life, to rule us for ever. Will he then suffer us to be disposed of by ourselves? No. Whether 'we live or die, we are his,' if we yield ourselves sweetly to his government, in life and death.

The Third Sermon

For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be the Lord both of the dead and of the living.—Rom. XIV. 9.

In these words, as you heard heretofore at large, the apostle labours to stay the thoughts and affections of men concerning the things of indifferency, that they should not be hasty to censure another's servant, who stands or falls to his own master, as you have it in verse 4.

The reason is, because whatsoever they do they do it to the Lord. 'He that regards a day, regards it to the Lord; he that regards not a day, regards it not to the Lord.' Some things are of that nature that the right aim puts a qualification upon the actions. A good end cannot qualify many actions, but some actions are of that nature that a good end doth not altogether justify it, but it frees the person from some censure; he doth it to God. Some upon some conceit may abstain from a thing for religious ends, and are not to be censured; some again perform it, and are not to be censured, because they do it to the Lord; that is, out of religious respects.

How doth he prove that they do it to the Lord? He proves it more generally, ver. 7, 'None of us live to ourselves, nor none of us die to ourselves,' which I spake of before.

Then he proves that we are the Lord's, because it was the end of Christ's dying and rising and reviving, 'that he might be the Lord both of the dead and of the living; and if he be the Lord, then we ought to live to this 'Lord of the quick and dead.'

We see Saint Paul here makes use of a general truth, of a grand principle, that we are the Lord's, and therefore live to him and die to him, and do particular actions to him, or not do them to him, to shew that we should have in mind information on sound general truths, that are the ground of all particular practice, as we shall see after.

'For to this end Christ both died, rose, and revived,' &c.

The words they are Christ's universal government of the dead and of the living, inferred from the end of his death, reviving and rising again, a comfortable inference from a strong ground.

We considered the particulars, Christ's death, rising and reviving.

Christ died as a 'second Adam,' as a public person, in whom dying all died. When other men die particular men die; when Paul was dead, Paul died and there was an end, only there was an exemplary good in his death. But there is more than an exemplary good in the death of Christ. Christ died alone and singular in this respect; because in him dying all died that were his, that the Father gave him to die for. For they go parallel, God's gift and Christ's death. He did all by commission, and he would not transgress his commission, and he died a violent and cursed death, because otherwise he could not have saved us that were under a curse. So as a 'second Adam' he rose, and as a public person. Therefore we see in the resurrection of Christ many rose. It is like enough they died again. It was for a particular dispensation, to shew that Christ rose as a public person; and it is not strange to think so that to honour God they should be content to live a while, when Christ himself that was God was content to be man, and to be abased to death. That grand mystery makes all other things credible. He rose, therefore, as a public person, to give life to all that he died for.

So he revived. That is more than to rise again, never again to lay down his life, as you have it excellently set down among other places, Rev. i. 18, 'I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I live for evermore, Amen;' and he seals it too, 'I have the keys of hell and of death;' that is, the dominion of hell and death; for indeed Christ is life itself, and life cannot die. As God he could not die, and therefore he took upon him that nature, wherein he might die for us; and now having done that dispensation, that office, there is a perpetual influence of life from the fountain of life, his Godhead, to his humanity. So he never dies any more. Then hero follows the scope and end of all, 'That he might be Lord of the dead and of the living.'

The three offices of Christ, they have this order in regard of manifestation. First, he was a prophet to instruct and teach his in himself, and likewise by his ministry. And then a priest to die for those that are his, to make intercession now for ever in heaven. And then a king. First, a prophet, then a priest, and then a king. He was all at once. The very union invested

him in all these, but in regard of manifestation he was first a prophet to instruct us of the end of his coming into the world; and then a priest to do that grand office that we have most comfort by; and then a king to rule us. He could not be otherwise, for if he had manifested himself a King and a Lord in his glory, where had been his abasement? If they had known him to be the Lord of glory, they would never have crucified him. Only some sparkles of his Godhead and lordship and kingdom and royalty over all flesh break out in his miracles; yea, in his greatest abasement there were some sparkles, I say. Even when he lay in the manger, kings came to adore him. When he paid tribute, he had it out of a fish by a command, by majesty. When he was on the cross he converted the good thief. So somewhat brake out of him that he was a person more than ordinary, but that was for special ends. Ordinarily he went on in a course of abasement, and all that he might perform the great work of redemption. Therefore he made a stop of his glory and kingly office, that he might not manifest himself in that relation and office; that he might do the office of a priest to die for us. Therefore you have it hero in the due order. Christ died and rose again, as the high priest of his church, 'that he might be Lord of the dead and of the living.' He was so before, but he was not manifest before. Therefore he is said to be manifest to God by the resurrection, Rom. i. 4. He was God from eternity, but he was born then: 'This day have I begotten thee,' Ps. ii. 7. It is spoken of the resurrection. So you see here Christ's offices, the state and condition of his humiliation and of his exaltation, and the use and end of all, 'that he might be Lord of the dead and of the living.'

And if we be anything offended with that abasement, that God should die, look to his rising and reviving and lordship over all, both quick and dead; and if we be dazzled with his glory, look back again to God in our flesh, and God in our flesh abased, even to the death of the cross. Oh, it is a sweet meditation, beloved, to think that our flesh is now in heaven, at the right hand of God; and that flesh that was born of the virgin, that was laid in the manger, that went up and down doing good, that was made a curse for us and humbled to death, and lay under the bondage of death three days; that this flesh is now glorious in heaven, that this person is Lord over the living and the dead. It is an excellent book to study this. Beloved, study Christ in the state of humiliation and exaltation.

'That he might be Lord of the dead,' &c.

How is Christ Lord? He is Lord of the dead, those that died before he was born, and of the living, those that are since. He is 'yesterday,' that is, to those that were before he was; and 'to-day,' that is, when he was; and 'to-morrow' and 'for ever the same.' Therefore he saith of the dead and of the living; of the dead, that is, in reference to former times Christ; is the 'Lamb of God slain from the beginning of the world,' Prv. xiii. 8.

By what title is he Lord?

By a title, beloved, not as God, but by a title of conquest as a redeemer, for he died that he might be Lord. We are a 'bloody spouse' to Christ. We are the price of his blood. He died that he might be Lord. He must win us before he could have us. Thereupon dying and purchasing us, now he is Lord of his church and children by marriage. Before he could marry us he must be born in our nature, for the husband and wife must be of one nature; and being in bondage to a contrary king, to Satan, he must redeem and purchase us out of Satan's hands. So he is a Lord by conquest; and then he is a Lord in a nearer relation, he is a Lord as a husband, 'He is Lord both of the dead and of the living.'

But the point is sweetest in the use of it; only know for a ground that 'Christ is Lord of the dead and of the living,' as mediator, God-man, not as God, but as God-man, God in our nature; and hereupon we have divers sweet comforts, as for example,

First of all, it shows what we may expect from Christ, what Christ will do to us, and what we ought to return to him again. For relations are bonds, especially when they are so founded as this of Christ's is, to be Lord over us both in life and death. It is founded upon redemption and upon our spiritual marriage. Relations are bonds, and therefore they tie on his part to shew what we may expect from him. He is 'Lord of the living and of the dead.' We may expect on his part all that a gracious Lord should do to provide for his church and children. We may expect that from him that we can from none else, that he should not only be Lord over us, but that he should make us subject, that he should flow into us by his Holy Spirit. For here is the prerogative of Christ, that he is such a head as quickeneth dead members. He is such a husband as makes his spouse beautiful. He puts glory upon her; no other husband can do it. Moses married a black woman, but he could not alter her hue, much less her disposition. It is not in the power of any man. A king cannot alter his subjects; but he is such a King as alters the nature of his subjects. He makes them subject, he takes them out of a contrary kingdom,

as being not born his subjects, but 'born anew by the Spirit.' He doth all provision, protection, the changing of our natures, the beginning of a good work; and where this Lord begins a good work he finisheth it to his own day. For, beloved, know this for a ground, that now in the second covenant we are not left, as Adam was, in the hands of our own free will to stand or fall, but now in the second covenant that is founded upon Christ's death and satisfaction for us, Christ gives grace. He gives his Holy Spirit to bring us within the compass, and performs both our part and his too. He makes good his own to be a gracious Saviour to us; and he performs our part too, or else the second covenant, the covenant of grace, should be frustrate as the first was, if it were left to our freedom. Therefore that is that that we may expect from this lordship of Christ, the performance of the covenant of grace in 'writing his law in our hearts,' Jer. xxxi. 38. Other kings give laws and write them in tables, but they cannot write them in the hearts of their subjects. But he is such a lawgiver as writes his own will in the heart; he teacheth the very heart obedience. We are taught of God 'to love one another.' 'I will write my law in their bowels, and in their inward parts;' that is, they shall not only know what they should do, but they shall know the doing, the affecting, and performing of the things. They shall be able to do the things. So Christ is a Lord over us, not only teaching us what we should do, and enjoining us in a kind of superiority, this is your duty, and not this; but enabling us to do that that he commands. He gives us the very doing, the affections and loving. He teacheth our hearts to love. I say this we may expect from him in the use of means, and subjecting to his ordinances; which is a wondrous prerogative to those who will submit to his law.

We may expect again from this Lord advancement. He is such a Lord as makes all his subjects kings. The meanest man that is a subject to Christ, that hath the Spirit of Christ, is a king. Now he is a king over that that all others are slaves to, that are not Christians. They rule over others, but they are in thraldom to their own lusts. But he is a spiritual king, a king over hell and death, and those things that the very greatest of men are afraid of, as who fears death most and hell most? Those that deserve it most, by reason of their great place, sink most in sin and rebellion against God, and contract more guilt than other men. That that they are afraid of, a true Christian as a Christian is most triumphant over. He is a king over those things, for every subject of this Prince is a king.

Christ's manner of government is hid now. There is more reality in this than can be expressed; therefore wonder not. In a word, Christ as our Lord

binds himself to bring us to glory, never to leave us till he hath brought us to that place that he is in himself. 'Father, I will that where I am they be also,' John xvii. 24; and he purgeth his church, Eph. v. 27, 'that he may make it a glorious church.' He takes upon him not only to die, to redeem us from hell and damnation, and to set us in a state of favour with his Father, but to go on in a course of fitting us till he have brought us to the glorious condition that he is in. It lies upon him to do it. Therefore let us do our duty, as we shall see after; and let him alone with that that belongs to him.

For ourselves, beloved, this is our honour, that we are under such a King, such a Lord, both living and dying. It was the honour of those who lived in Solomon's time, that they were under such a wise king and prince. The queen of Sheba judged it so, 1 Kings x. 8. But what an honour is it to a Christian now, that he is under such a blessed prince as Christ is. It is a great honour to be the spouse of such a husband, to be the subject of such a King, to be members of such a head. And therefore we should oft think of it, to put honourable thoughts into us; and I know no greater way to keep us from sin, from base courses, than to have our thoughts strained to this high point, to think of the dignity of a Christian, what a condition he is now brought into in Christ, and what he shall be brought unto ere long. This should make him honourable to himself, to make him in a holy state, to think himself too good to defile his soul or body, that is so dearly bought and so highly advanced: 'Shall such a man as I flee?' saith Nehemiah, Neh. vi. 11. Oh look to that. Shall such a man as I flee? It is the honour, beloved, of a Christian, that he is Christ's, living and dying.

Obj. But you will say an honour. It is an honour to be free; the subject is bound, non swims nati, Sec., as the heathen man said; we are not born to slavery, but to honour and liberty, and it is an appetite ingrafted in man, to desire freedom above all things.

Ans. It is true, in reyno nati sumus Deo, See., we are born in a kingdom, and to serve Christ is to reign; for where there is a subordination it is a prerogative to be under a better; as for the body, being baser than the soul, it is for the good of it to be under the soul, because it is more excellent. It hath life and wisdom. The body is a loathsome dead thing of itself. The sheep being a weak, simple creature, shiftless, to be guided by a shepherd, who is of a superior nature, and wise to defend it. It is its security and safety for the vine, that is a weak plant of itself, to have support. It is for the good of it. For man that is in a subordination to a higher nature, to God, for him to be

under the government of Christ, God-man, of God in our nature, it is a great honour; as they could say in the schools, everything hath its perfection, by being subject to a superior, except the highest of all, which is not subordinate, but independent. Whatsoever is dependent hath its perfection by dependence; therefore it is an honour that we be under Christ, the greatest honour in the world; especially if we consider what manner of government Christ's is. It is a rational government, agreeable to our principles; for he guides us as a prophet. He is not only a king, but a prophet to teach us. He saith, not, you shall do this; he stands not upon terms of will; no. He is a prophet to teach us what we should obey. He convinceth us, and then useth us, that we would not be but under such a government; and then when he rules our will he doth it sweetly. He draws it with the cords of a man, as the prophet speaks, Hosea xi. 4; that is, by allurements, he brings us to heaven byway of love and enticements. What greater rewards can there be thought of than those that Christ leads us by, and draws us to subjection by? And therefore he works upon our will sweetly, by persuading us by allurements in that kind.

In a word, he is such a king as is a husband. Would you have a milder government than that of a husband, which though it be not a parity, yet it comes as near as can be. Such a government is Christ's. As he is a king, so he is a husband. He knows how to bear the infirmities of his church. He that bids the husband to favour the wife as the 'weaker vessel,' doth not he practise his own principles? Will not he favour his own spouse as the 'weaker vessel,' think you, that hath promised not 'to quench the smoking flax, and break the bruised reed'? Undoubtedly he will. Therefore it is an honour to be under the government of Christ, so rationally and sweetly he draws us with the cords of a man. It is the government of a husband, and of a wise husband. I do but give a taste. You may enlarge them in your own meditations.

And as it is our honour, so it is our security and safety to be under him. Why? Because when we come sweetly under Christ's government, we need fear nothing. He that fears Christ, all things fear him. Since Christ hath taken our nature upon him, the devil himself is afraid of man's nature. He trembles to think God hath appeared in our nature. Now he is afraid of a Christian [since] God hath taken this nature. Then he is such a king as we may be secure under him, as a universal King over all things, that he may be King over his church; for he hath all power in heaven and earth: Mat. xxviii. 18, 'All power is given to me in heaven and earth,' and all for the government of

his church. It is our security to be under him that governs all things for the good of the church. He saith, John xvii. 2, 'Thou hast given me power over all flesh.' Christ hath all power given to him in relation to his church; therefore he hath power over the devil, over hell, and over all wicked men; and all monarchs and opposite power is subject to him, that they shall serve the church. When they do scourge the church, they are but Christ's rod; they are but instrumental to Christ; they do but his work; therefore it is a great security, and we need to fear none if we be under Christ.

8. Again, To go on: as it is our honour and security, so it is a spring of our duty. Christ is our Lord. He is Lord of all. Therefore it teacheth us our duty every way.

Our duty one to another—to those that are not Christians—to Christ himself.

It teacheth us in all standings how to carry ourselves. To give a taste of this, the apostle presseth it oft, that Christ is our Lord, and will be our judge.

Therefore for others we ought not to be hasty in judging or censuring. We ought to love them, because we have all one Lord. This must force love. 'We have all one Lord, one baptism,' &c., Eph. iv. 5. We are many in our severals; but we are all one under this bond, being all under one Lord.

2. Then again, it teacheth us how to carry ourselves to men otherwise affected; not to be servants to the humours of men. Christ rules over us, both living and dying; therefore he not the servants of men, but according to the Scripture's limitation, 'marry in the Lord,' 'obey in the Lord,' 'walk in the Lord,' do all in the Lord; that is, so far as it may stand in the will and pleasure of him that is the Lord of lords. For when the authority of any superior doth countermand against the will of this Lord, it ceaseth to bind. When they command anything in subordination that may stand with the pleasure of the Lord, then the authority is divine. We obey Christ in obeying them. As Christ said to his own mother, when she commanded things that she had no authority to do, he calls her mother no longer, but 'woman,' she stretching then beyond her compass, John ii. 4.

3. Again, To go on: this should teach us, in that Christ is the Lord of the living and of the dead, to account ourselves not our own. It should teach us perfect self-denial in matters of religion, especially not to be overwhelmed of our own conceits in the great mysteries that Saint Paul cries out of, 'Oh the

depth,' Rom. xi. 33. You have many that quarrel with those things, and would bring them to reason. They will go no further in religion than they can see reason; whereas one saith, I believe, because it is impossible, and too far above reason; therefore I the rather believe it. It is ofttimes good to stand at a stay in God, as if we were at a nonplus, to admire at him in the mysteries of Christ's governing the church, why he suffers some part of the church, that perhaps is better than other parts, that are quiet and exempt from the cross, to be exercised with afflictions, and others not, not to scandal at this, and to be over-busy in searching out the reason of this. Christ is our Lord, and he is infinite in wisdom; and it is his prerogative to do such things, as he is not liable to give a reason of to us. So God 'will have mercy upon whom he will have mercy,' Rom. ix. 18. In great mysteries remember the sovereignty of this our Lord. He is 'Lord of quick and dead.' Let this stop our judgments, and teach us to deny ourselves when we cannot give a reason of them; in a holy admiration, say with Saint Paul, 'Oh the depth.'

And so for our will. He is Lord of the quick and dead. We say of a wife she hath no will; and a servant is not a distinct person, as it were, in law, he is another's. We are Christ's servants, his subjects, and his spouse and when we begin to be Christ's we have lost our own wills, we resign them up to Christ. Thy will shall be mine in all things. If thou wilt have me do this, I will do it; if thou wilt have me suffer, I will suffer; if thou wilt honour thyself with my goods and with my life, thou shalt have them. Of thee I had this body, this soul, this state, this reputation; I have whatsoever I have from thee; it is maintained by thee. Thou art mine, and I am thine; therefore I give up all to thee back again. It is a ground of perfect resignation, that Christ is Lord of the quick and of the dead. Therefore stand not upon terms with Christ. When he calls for anything, in case of suffering and sealing the truth, let him have it. It is not lost. We have a better foundation in him than we have in ourselves. When we give anything to him, life, or state, or credit, or whatsoever, we have a better life, a better state and condition in him; because all is more eminently in him, the primitive fountain, than in the derivation and beams from him. When we lose anything it is but a beam from the sun, and whatsoever we lose in particulars we have in the whole, in the fountain again, in Christ. Therefore faith would help all this. In case of suffering and trial, what! is the cause good or no? Then I will resign myself and all that I have and am to Christ. He is Lord both of the quick and of the dead.

We must know, beloved, that we are redeemed from ourselves; and therefore make this use of it when we are tempted by any sin: Christ is my

Lord; I am redeemed from my base lusts. What have I to do with this anger? what have I to do with this ambition? I am no debtor to the flesh. I am under Christ. I am under grace. He hath redeemed me from my vain conversation. I owe it nothing but mortification and denial. Therefore, in all solicitations of corruption, learn this lesson, fetch arguments hence. Christ hath done great matters for me. He lived and died, and lives for over, that is Lord of me living and dying. There is no greater slave than he that is a slave to his own flesh and to his own lusts. Therefore when we are stirred to anything by our base nature, which must die, or else we shall never live eternally, we must kill it more and more daily; and death is the sum and accomplishment of mortification. When we are stirred to anything, go to Christ and complain to him. Blessed Saviour, thou didst die, and rise, and revive, that thou mightst he Lord of the living and of the dead. I beseech thee, claim thine own interest in me. Bring all into captivity to thine own Spirit. What hath this base affection to do with me? What have I to do with it? I am freed from it; I am redeemed from myself. What have I to do with myself but deny all? I am thine altogether; therefore take thine own interest in me, possess me, fill me with thy Spirit, be all in all in me; let pride and ambition and such things have no footing in me. It is good pouring out the soul to God to that purpose: to complain to Christ when it is thus with us, because it is his office to rule us. Now, Lord Jesus, do thine office. Thy office is to be king; to rule in me. Other lords would fain rule in me. Pride, and lust, and base covetousness would fain rule, as the prophet saith, Isa. xxvi. 18; but what hath other lords to do with me? Thou art my Lord, and hast right to me living and dying.

It is a point of wondrous comfort likewise to us in all afflictions whatsoever, especially such as concern the state of the church. We are now in ill times, if we look about us. However, God continues better to us than we deserve. We are as the three young men in the fiery furnace, untouched, when all is in a combustion round about us. Where is Christ's ruling now, when his poor church is thus used and trampled upon in France, in the Palatinate, in Bohemia, and the Princes of Germany.

Beloved, it is our faults. Perhaps we waken not Christ as the disciples; they awaked Christ when there was a mighty storm, and moved him to rebuke the winds and the waves, and there followed a calm; so should we. Christ loves to be awaked by our prayers; and if the church would join in forces, one church with another, altogether they might work wonders. Let us offer a holy violence to Christ by prayer and the use of holy means. He is Lord still of the church; and take things at the worst as they are, he is but

carrying things to his own ends. Beloved, if we consider things aright, it can hardly be otherwise with the church than it is. If we consider the former security, and dulness, and want of prizing the great things of Christ, the ministry of the word, and the sacraments, we live under the gospel in such deadness and such sins as a Turk would scarce commit. We are no more affected with it than a Jew or a Turk that hath not the means. Will Christ endure this, that we should come to be careless whether we have the gospel, the blessed truth of God, or no, and grow sinful, and have less conscience than a Turk or a Jew? Will Christ continue his blessed prerogatives and privileges to such? Therefore, if we do but look to the ordinary dispositions of most men, a man would think it impossible but that judgment should come. Will there be a reformation of these men without a spirit of fire, without some purging flame?

Then again, Christ is humbling his church for the advancement of it, and suffers the enemies to triumph for their further abasement. He is compassing a blessed work. There is a great wheel a-going, but we do not see the issue of things. All this great wheel the Lord rules, and governs, and moves. You shall see at length what it will drive to. We see in a clock there are many wheels, one contrary to another, but all helps the clock to strike, all join in that; so there is a stroke, there is somewhat that will come out of all these troubles that seem contrary one to another, some up and some down; but all these wheels will help to bring out some stroke, some glorious thing, that posterity perhaps may see that is now a-working. Therefore let none take scandal. Christ 'rules now in the midst of his enemies,' Ps. cx. 2. We must not catch at pieces of Christ's workmanship; as in a poem, we judge not by a piece, but look to the catastrophe, we look to the upshot and closure of all. Though all was in a combustion, there we see all things brought to an excellent and wise issue. Therefore, I beseech you, suspend your judgments a while, and then you shall see with a spirit of faith all the enemies overthrown, even as if we did see it with our eyes of sense; and in the mean time, persuade ourselves that Christ is about a blessed work, as he is king of our church.

One question the papists move upon such texts as this, that I will address briefly, because it may trouble some, though it be of no great moment. It is said here that Christ died, and rose again, and revived, that he might be Lord of the dead and of the living. Hence, not only papists, but some others move this question, which I will give a little light unto.

Whether Christ by his dying and abasement did merit anything for himself, because it is said here he did this that he might be Lord of the dead, &c.

He abased himself to the death of the cross. 'Therefore God gave him a name above all names,' Phil. ii. 9.

The papists they fall upon Calvin that saith he did not, and that makes me the rather to touch it. Calvin, as he was a very holy man, so out of his holiness he avoided curious questions as much as he might, therefore gives an excellent answer. Saith he, whether he did or no, 'It is curious to search, it is rash to define'. For satisfaction, take these grounds, and all is well.

1. First of all, that Christ is perfectly glorious now in heaven, both body and soul. There is no question of that; and that he came to this glory, both of body and soul, and the manifestation of it, after his abasement by his humiliation; first, he must die and suffer, and then enter into glory.

2. Again, remember this for a ground that Christ as man merited not the grace of union or unction, for how could he merit before he was? Could Christ merit to be united to the second person, that was the greatest grace that ever was? No; nor the grace of unction, habitual grace in Christ, whereby the human nature was filled with all grace. It was upon unction. Presently they follow one another. There was no meriting of that thing, because from the beginning of his incarnation it was by union of his nature. These things being thought upon, for other things they are not material; only it is best and safest to think that he did not for himself merit anything. For if so be all glory was due to him by virtue of union, which he had by grace and by virtue of unction, if he had died presently; he might have gone to heaven presently indeed, without dying, if there had not been a dispensation laid upon him to die for us; and therefore by virtue of union and unction that was free, heaven was dire to him presently, and all that glory that he had afterward.

Why was there a stop of that glory? that his body being united to the divine nature, was not presently glorified, as now it is in heaven, so that he lived in abasement, and died a most cursed death?

Beloved, all this was for us; and then after the dispensation was finished for us, after God's justice was satisfied for us, there was no more stop or stay of his glory. But then his divine nature did flow into his human nature; and then his human nature became glorious, so glorious as it was capable of what

he did for us. Therefore it is good to think of the love of Christ, that he considered us and not himself in that his abasement, as the Scripture runs in that strain: 'To us a Son is given, for us a child is born,' Isa. ix. 6. He died for us. He gave himself for us. He rose for us. He ascended for us. He sits at the right hand of God for us. Himself indeed hath glory, but together with us. And therefore when we think of the glory of Christ, think of us in him. When we see him born, think he was born for me; when we see him die, think we die with him; when we see him buried, think ourselves buried with him. So in the state of exaltation, when we see him rise, and sit at the right hand of God, think he is there to prepare a place for me. Whatsoever he hath, or whatsoever he did, he regards us in all; therefore it somewhat obscures the glory and the love of Christ to us, to conceive that he had a self-respect in these things, when he saith in the text, 'For this end Christ died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord of quick and dead.' I beseech you, consider whose goods he respects in this lordship. Is it not a profitable lordship for us? Is it not for our good that he is our Lord in life and in death? and not only our Lord, but the Lord of Satan, of death, and of all our enemies. He is Lord over all, saith the apostle, 'God over all, blessed for ever,' Rom. ix. 5. Therefore he is Lord over sin, over death, over hell, over all that we need to fear. It is for us. Therefore our good is intended. Though there be a redundance of glory in Christ, in all these things, yet think he respects our good. The best meditation of Christ is to think all is for us.

Beloved, is it not a great mercy that he should stop the issue and the beams of glory, that should otherwise have come upon his human nature, that he should be content to be in the shape of a servant, and be eclipsed in regard of manifestation, and abase himself to the death of the cross, and all for our redemption, when he might have gone to glory another way? But as one of the ancients saith well, 'If he had gone to heaven another way, he might have come thither himself, but he could not have helped us that way; therefore he would go to heaven by way of abasement and concealment, and stopping that of his glory that he might help us and pay the price to God for us and reconcile us'. I beseech you, let us see his love to us in all this. Enough for that question, which I would not have mentioned, but that it hath a special use and comfort, and may be an incentive to kindle love to Christ regarding us in his birth and life and death, in his resurrection, in his ascension, in his glory, in all.

To draw to a conclusion therefore; Christ is our Lord both in life and death. It is for ever. Oh beloved, therefore I beseech thee, let us project for

his glory for ever as much as we can. He is our Lord. When we are dead, he is Lord of our souls, of our happiness. We are nearer him then than we are now. He that is my Lord both living and dying and for ever, shall I not labour that when I am dead there may be a church here? that when I am dead posterity may serve him, and be subject to him? Shall he for ever be Lord for my good, and shall not I as much as lieth in me, lay a foundation for ever in his service, that when I can serve him no longer myself, then posterity may serve him?

It was a cursed wish of a pagan emperor, When I am dead, let heaven and earth be mingled if they will. But a Christian thinks, Christ is mine, and for my good both living and dying; nay, I have more good by him when I am dead than alive; therefore I will labour that he may have glory in his church by me and mine, and all my counsels and projects shall be that it may be for ever and ever, world without end. Therefore they desire that God may be served and glorified in the church for ever, as he is their Lord living and dying.

And let it be our comfort in the hour of death—that may be nearer us than we are aware of—that he is not only Lord of the living, but of those that are dead. He hath the keys both 'of hell and death;' that is, he hath the government of death; and therefore shall I be afraid to commit my soul to Christ? What a ground is this comfortably to yield our souls to Christ! Lord, take the soul that thou diedst to purchase, that thou didst rise again to justify, that thou dost live now in heaven to make intercession for, that thou hast given thy Holy Spirit in some measure to sanctify; take this soul to thee! It is thy soul as much and more than mine; I am not mine own, nor my soul is not my own. 'Into thy hands I commend even thy spirit; for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord of truth,' Acts vii. 59. Thou hast redeemed this soul of mine, therefore now take this soul, that thou by thy Spirit hast wrought in some poor measure to desire to please thee: that soul that thou hast sprinkled with thy own blood; take that soul, for thou art Lord both living and dying. And what a comfort is it, when death shall close up our eyes, that we can look forward and see then ourselves nearer Christ; for then we go to Christ our husband, as Paul saith, 'I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which is best of all,' Philip, i. 23. When a Christian thinks at death, Now I am changing for the better; Christ will not leave me at the hour of death, neither dying nor living, but will watch over my dust. My dead body is a member of Christ. Death may separate body and soul, but it cannot separate soul or body from him; therefore take no thought for body or soul. For my soul I

know he will receive it; and my body, as a good deposition, is laid up in the dust. He watches over all the dust and ashes and everything, and will make the earth faithful in giving up that deposition. He is Lord of me dying as well as living. Shall I be afraid to die, when in death I commend my soul to such a sweet Lord, and go to my husband and to my king?

And that is the end of the sacrament, for the word and sacrament are parts of the regiment 'of Christ whereby he rules his church. He rules his church outwardly by the word and sacraments, and inwardly by his Spirit. His Holy Spirit makes good his own good means; and therefore as the subjects of Christ, I beseech you let us come to the ordinance of Christ. He is such a Lord as doth great things by despised means, bread and wine, poor means. But consider what a mighty Lord useth them for our soul's good; and it is his glory to magnify himself by base and weak means. He goes contrary to the course of the world, that stands all upon outward excellency; therefore lot no man stumble at the meanness of the moans, but consider what groat things he works by the foolishness of preaching, and the meanness of his ordinance, the sacraments. He beats down strongholds. He builds us up in Christ to salvation. He communicates himself and all his benefits to us. Therefore, I beseech you, come with faith; come with this persuasion, Christ will bless his own ordinance; and come with comfort. Christ communicates himself to us. The nearer we come to the fountain, the more we draw. And come with preparation; know with whom we have to deal, with him that is 'Lord of quick and dead.' Come with reverence. But these things I have oft upon this occasion stood upon. So much for this text.

The Life of Faith

Sermon I

And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.—Gal. II. 20.

They are the words of a man pursued by the law unto Christ, proceeding from the Spirit of Christ; the nature whereof is, to apply generals to particulars. So St Paul here, 'The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.' He sees he is dead by the law; therefore he seeks for a better husband. The law' finds him dead, and leaves him dead. Thus pursued by the tenor of the law, he flies to Christ, and says, 'I am crucified with Christ,' nevertheless I live. How? 'Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.'

There be three ranks of men in the world, under which all men may be comprehended.

1. The estate of nature.

2. The estate of men under the spirit of bondage.

3. The estate of grace under the gospel.

This is the speech of one of the third rank, of a man awaked by the spirit of bondage, who hath attained to a clear and evident sight of his misery, and of the excellent remedies, of a man who hath attained to a new frame and temper of soul. It is the speech of a person in the state of grace, who now aspires to a more noble and excellent life. In the words we may consider divers things.

1. That there is another manner of life than the ordinary life of nature.

2. That it is a better and more excellent life than that he formerly lived; as if he had said, Now, since I have seen the misery of my former natural estate, and the excellency of a spiritual life by faith in the Son of God, I esteem my former life to have been wretched, not worthy of the name of life, compared with that which I live now, as being founded in a better root than the 'first Adam.'

3. The spring of this life is the Son of God. God is life naturally, and we have life no otherwise than from him who quickeneth all things.

4. The conveyance of this spiritual life is by faith. Water springs not without a conduit to carry and spread it. The sun warms not without beams, and the liver conveys not blood without veins. So faith is that vessel which conveys this spiritual life, that conduit wherein all spiritual graces run, for the framing and working of spiritual life, conveying all, to pitch upon those excellencies of the Son of God.

5. The object and root of this spiritual life is, faith in the Son of God, loving him, and giving himself for him.

So there is a life besides the natural life, and the root of it is Christ, who is our life. Life is the best thing in the world, most esteemed of us; as the devil said concerning Job, 'Skin for skin, and all that a man hath will he give for his life,' Job. ii. 4. Life is the foundation of all comforts; life is the vigour proceeding from soul and body. So the spiritual life is nothing else but that excellent vigour, and strong connected strength of the soul and body renewed, grounded on supernatural reasons, which makes it follow the directions of the word, over-master the flesh, and so by degrees be transformed into the image of Christ, consisting in holiness and righteousness.

Doct. The first point then is, that there is a better life than a natural life, because there is somewhat in a man which aspires and looks to a better estate. A child in the mother's womb hath life and senses in that dark place, but it is not contented therewith, but is restless as in a prison, tumbles and turns up and down; for this life that it hath is not to dwell there, but a beginning-life to fit it to live in the more open and spacious world, whither it must shortly be sent forth. So in this dark life of ours there is a divine instinct, power, and faculty in men, that nothing here can suffice; which shows, that there is a place to satiate the will and the understanding, and fill the affections; that there is a condition which shall make a man fully happy. That there must be a better life, which is this spiritual life; for this life which we live in the flesh is a thing of nothing. Our little life we live here, wherefore is it? To live a while, to eat and drink and enjoy our pleasures, and then fall down and die like a beast? Oh no, but to make a beginning for a better life. If this life be such a blessing, what is then that most excellent spiritual life we speak of? It holds out beyond all. By this spiritual life, when one is most sick, you shall see him most lively and spiritual. When sense, and

spirit, and sight, and all fail, yet by reasons drawn from spiritual life he comforts himself in Christ, the glory to come, and what he hath done for him. So the apostle shows the aim of a Christian is to be in sufferings of this life for the increase of a better, 2 Cor. iv. 10, saith he, 'Always bearing about in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.' When the body is weakest, the spirit is strongest. Take a man who hath not this spirit and hope, he is à la mort at the apprehension of death, because he hath no faith, no knowledge, no quickening life, no sense or taste of more excellent things; he knows not whether there be a Holy Ghost or not: or if he be convinced in conscience, yet he is taken up with horrors, and fears condemnation at hand for evermore. Oh what are we without this life? Otherwise an heathen or an infidel were as happy as we.

A Christian furnished with this spiritual life can see Christ and glory, beyond all the things of this life; he can look backwards, make use of all things past, see the vanity of things so admired of others; he can taste things nature doth not relish; he hath strength of reasons beyond all the apprehensions of reason; he is a man of a strong working. This should stir us up above all things to get this spiritual life in us, lest, like St Paul's living dead widow, we be dead whilst we be alive, 1 Tim. v. 6. Therefore, unless we will be dead creatures, labour we must for a spiritual life, for there is another death which follows the first death. We not only lose God and Christ, life and glory, eternal life, communion with saints and angels, but also we come to eternal torments with the devil and his angels. Therefore above all things go we to Christ, that we may live in his sight.

What is the reason we seek not more for this spiritual life? Because, when the conscience is not awakened, we think there is no such thing: like Judas, walking on in the state of nature, in drunkenness, voluptuousness, covetousness, and the like, until we perish suddenly. If the conscience be awakened, oh then it is easy to work upon such a one who sees his misery and desires the remedy. It was easy to persuade Jacob to send for corn into Egypt, when a famine was in the land of Canaan. It is easy to persuade men hungry and thirsty to eat and drink; easy to persuade a laden, weary man to lay down his burden and rest. So it is with us. If the conscience be awakened to have a sense of sin, and that intolerable wrath and eternal punishment due thereunto, we should and would long for this spiritual life.

I beseech you, let us believe there is such a life. Look 1 Pet. i. 3. There he blesses God, 'who hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.' None can go to heaven but they who are begotten again here. The main help is the use of the means. This is that pool of Bethesda, at which if we lie the angel of the covenant will put us in to be healed. Never rest then till this life be gotten in us. When we find such an antipathy betwixt our spirits and sin as is between poison and them, then there is a beginning of the work. So we should hate sinful persons, whose conversations hinder the progress and increase of our spiritual life. Those who venture on all occasions, no wonder they do fall in sinful courses. What is all their care and endeavour but to draw one into sin? They care for their lusts, and never think of any more. A Christian will care most for the nourishing of his best life, knowing that good and bad company do, the one quicken, the other dead him.

Christ is called life, the bread of life, tree of life, and he gives us living water to refresh our souls, not that he is so essentially bread, or a tree, but by the efficacy of his working in us. For God is life in himself. Therefore he swears by it: 'As I live, saith the Lord, I desire not the death of a sinner,' Ezek. xxxiii. 11. We consider not here of life so high, though this life must be derived from him principally. It is so naturally. The Son is the fountain of life, because he is God, who is radically, fundamentally, and essentially life.

But before Christ be fitted to be life for us, he must be man first, as John vi. 55, 'For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.' And the reason why he so quickens is, because he is also God, being that bread which came down from heaven, of which 'whoso eateth shall live for ever.' Now this great work of our salvation being of necessity to be performed by an infinite person as God, who could not die, he therefore took upon him a mortal nature, to open a current to mercy and justice. Therefore his flesh is meat indeed; but the flesh profiteth nothing without the Spirit which quickens; for there must be a Spirit to seal up all this unto us. As without shedding of blood no forgiveness of sins, so without the Spirit sealing these things unto our souls, we can have no comfort of them. When we speak of spiritual fife, he it is that we live for; by him, and in him, and through him we live. Therefore, 1 Cor. xv. 45, 'the last Adam is called a quickening Spirit,' because by that Spirit he quickened himself, and quickens us now to live the life of grace, and shall hereafter quicken our dead bodies at the resurrection. So he is called 'the Sun of righteousness,' for light and heat, because, as the sun lightens and warms, so he is the light of the world, as John speaks,

'lighting everything which cometh into the world,' John i. 9, warming also and cherishing the mass of things, and therefore is called light and life.

Thus have we seen briefly there is another life than the life of nature; that this is a most excellent life; and that the root and spring of it is the Son of God. Now the way of conveyance of this life is 'by faith.' A fountain is not sufficient to send forth water abroad; there must be pipes to convey it for use. So from the heart and liver there must be arteries and veins for the maintenance of life and conveyance of blood through all the body. Christ is the heart and liver of all spiritual life; but there must be a conveyance to bring it to us, and this is faith. But why is faith the grace to convey life to us?

(1.) Because we are saved now out of ourselves by another. Therefore that grace which brings us to this great good must lead us out of ourselves. This faith doth, which is the hand of the soul, to lay hold of all the graces, excellencies, and high perfections of Christ.

(2.) Because faith gives all the glory to the party whom it relies on and trusts, as Rom. iii. 20. Paul shows why works were excluded; and such a righteousness was brought in, saith he, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth; and then he adds, 'Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay, but by the law of faith.' If by love it had come, or humility, patience, or anything in us, some boasting might have been; but this looks another way, lays hold upon another's riches. Faith acknowledgeth nothing to be at home; therefore it goes to another to fetch it, which else it would not do.

(8.) Because we must be brought back again to God by a contrary way than that we were lost by; for the same way we could never have recovered. The serpent, we know, shaked Eve's faith in believing the threatening. Whilst they kept the word and feared the commandment, they kept their life; but, losing this awful respect, they lost communion with the fountain of love. So we fell by infidelity, and must return again by faith in the righteousness of another.

By this time we are come to the main thing intended, how we live by the faith of the Son of God. We shall not haply roach the depth of so profound a mystery; only I will endeavour to give you some few heads, wherein faith principally excerciseth her powers and functions.

1. The life of faith is exercised in our effectual calling.

2. In the state of justification, whence comes reconciliation.

3. In a vigorous life, arising on the comfort of our justification.

4. In our sanctification; in those supplies faith finds out to make up the imperfection thereof.

5. The life of faith in glorification.

G. We live by faith in all the several passages of this life, as we shall see when we come to them.

Thus we live continually by the faith of the Son of God, and so we must live till we come to heaven.

1. We live the life of faith in our effectual calling. The Spirit works it, the Spirit is God's hand. This makes, that our eyes are bent upwards to see a better life, to see a calling, to live holily and righteously in all things, to see what a rich means is provided to reconcile God and man, to satisfy justice, and so to draw us in a new way and course of life, to rely on God, and look unto him in all our actions. Then the grace of union is given. God's Spirit works our hearts by this faith, to have first union, and then communion with God. Thus the soul being seasoned, and seeing the excellency and necessity of another new life, touches Christ, and begins to live the life of faith in effectual calling; for at first we are dead and unlovely creatures, estranged from grace and gracious actions, until, in this estate, Christ is discovered by the Spirit, and faith to unite us to him.

2. Secondly, We live the life of faith in justification. This is a life of sentence that the soul lives by, peace being spoken unto it by the pardon of sin; for God by his Spirit doth report so much to the soul, giving us assurance that Christ our surety and peace-maker is raised up again. So Eph. ii. 5, it is said, 'Even when we were dead in sins, he hath quickened us together with Christ, and raised us together, and made us sit in heavenly places with him.' And why? Because our Surety hath paid our debt. We say of a man condemned, he is a dead man till he have a pardon, which when he hath obtained, we turn our speech, and say, he lives. So in justification: being united unto Christ, and believing our pardon, we are said to live. Our sins lie on him as our surety; for then, as our husband in charge, he doth pay all our debts. Thus by virtue of our marriage to Christ, he discharges all our debts, and goeth away with them; even as the scapegoat in the wilderness went

quite away with all the sins and iniquities of the people, never to return again. Look we therefore to our sins, the curse and wrath due unto them, and all as laid on him. Look at whatsoever is good in him, that is for us; whatsoever is evil in us, look in him for it, to have it taken away, pardoned, and not imputed.

As we sin daily, so Zech. xiii. 1, 'There is a fountain daily running, to wash away sin and uncleanness.' Therefore for our daily sinning, we must continually run and bathe our souls in this blood, apply the comforts of his sufferings, intercession, and obedience unto us. St John teaches us thus much; saith he, 'If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world,' 1 John ii. 1. If we sin daily, he justifies the sinner daily: He came to save sinners: therefore, when sin stirs us up to run from God, we should run to him. Faith says, 'There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus,' Rom. viii. 1. Why? My sin was condemned in Christ, and a condemned person hath no voice. Christ came to destroy sin, and condemned sin in the flesh. Our sins wore crucified with him, and are now all condemned sins, if we will go unto Christ, who hath borne all our iniquities, as the prophet Isaiah excellently shows. Therefore St Paul triumphantly demands the question, 'Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth?' Why? 'It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall then separate us from the love of Christ?' Rom. viii. 38, 31. So in our daily sins you see we have use of these things, to have, upon our confession, a daily pardon of course taken out every day. Thus God would not have us sink. So long as there is matter of guilt in us, God will have a way to cleanse our souls, and renew our comforts. Every day we run into new debts, and every day in the Lord's Prayer we are taught to ask pardon, and to run unto God, to have the book crossed out with his blood. Every day a Christian must eye the brazen serpent, I mean the Lord Jesus, signified thereby; he must sprinkle his heart with the blood of Christ, that the destroying angel may pass by him in the day of wrath, as the Israelites then did. This is it to live by faith; every day to sue out our pardon; to look unto our advocate and surety, who hath paid our debts, and cancelled that obligation against us, contrary to us, as the apostle speaks, daily to wash in that ever-running fountain. 'Christ is a priest for over, after the order of Melchisedec,' Ps. cx. 4. Though the act be past, he remains the same still. What puts down our courage, strikes us with terror and fear, but our sins? Oh, but why is this

brazen serpent lifted, but thus to wash away our daily frailties and failings, so as whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life? John iii. 14, 15.

So justification is not only a sentence of pardon, but it is also, as Rom. v. 15, a title to life everlasting: 'For if by one man's offence death reigned by one, much more they which receive the abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by Jesus Christ.' Where God pardons, he advances. So if Satan shall come to shake my title, to shake this faith, assure him that Christ came to save sinners. If he object, thy title is naught and stained, being thou hast so many sins and corruptions about thy mortal body, answer him, What serves my faith for but for my comfort, to shew me that my title is in Christ? my strength and ground of comfort is in him, not in myself. See one parallel example, how David lived this life of faith in justification: 'If thou, O Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, who shall stand?' Ps. cxxx. 3. There he pronounces death on himself ere he be acquitted, and so must we in the like case. But then comes the appeal: 'But mercy is with thee, that thou mayest be feared.' Enlarge it yourself. If a man be not sound in this point, all he does is nothing. This is all in all. Our sanctification without this is nothing. This is the ground of all. Be careful of this, to look to Christ's obedience, life, death, and sufferings, and those comforts flowing from our interest therein.

But to direct you a little further ere we leave this sweet point.

First, Look back every day unto the passages thereof. See how we have passed along, see what sins have escaped thee; then come at night to God, confess and be sorry for all, resolve against all, crave strength against all. Oh it is a fearful state to sleep in sin; better sleep in a house full of adders and venomous beasts. See also and watch every morning; corruption doth cleave to all our best actions; we pass no day so, but we have cause to say, Lord forgive us our sins. By this course we shall keep our souls free, being ready for death. We shall by our particular reckoning, every day clearing the score, be ready for our great general pardon, and when trouble comes, have only that to encounter with. I beseech you, therefore, put this in practice. Be sure with the day to clear the sins of that day; so shall ye live a comfortable life, and be fit for all estates, for life, for death, for sickness, trouble, or whatsoever, all our business lying in heaven then.

Obj. If it be thus, we need not care how we sin: it is but every day to sue out a new pardon.

Ans. Oh beware; ere our pardon be sealed, there must be confession, sorrow for sin, resolution with full purpose to do so no more; there must be arraigning, condemning, and judging of ourselves for it, because whatsoever we would not have God to do, we must do it ourselves. Our time in getting this quietus est sealed, is for the most part according to our sin. He that hath such a resolution to sin every day, because sin is every day pardoned, he may go long enough without pardon, at least comfort of his pardon. For though pardon of sins be pronounced, yet God hath the keeping of joy in his own hand. As David had his sin pardoned,—by the judgment of faith he knew thus much—yet Ps. li. 8, how doth he pray for joy, and that God would heal the bones which he had broken! He roared all the day, and still felt a pain like the breaking of hones. The joy of the Spirit had left him. This he cries to have restored. Thus though sin may be pardoned, yet the more we sin, the more hardly we shall repent, the longer we shall want joy; or, it may be, go all our lifetime mourning without comfort in such a case. Now let us see how it may be known that I've live the life of faith in justification.

Trial 1. First, By trying how it comes in the soul: as Rom. vii. 4, saith the apostle, 'Wherefore, my brethren, we also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should he married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.' After a man is dead by the law, and apprehends himself slain, then he comes to live this life of faith. Christ quickens none but the dead. Why do not the papists attain to this grace of justification? They never see themselves wholly dead, but join some life to the natural estate of man. Therefore Christ quickens them not. Such only are quickened by him who find themselves dead in the law. Then they come to have a holy despair, and to see that life and comfort is out of themselves in another. Justification springs from a holy despair, and receiving life, after we have seen ourselves dead.

Trial 2. Secondly, Where this life of faith is, there is a wonderful high valuing and prizing of Christ, his righteousness, merits, obedience, and wisdom of God in that way of forgiveness of our sins by this God-man, the wonderful mediator; as Philip, iii. 8. Paul accounts all things 'but loss and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord,' being contented to suffer the loss of all things to win Christ. It is the precious pearl to sell all for. Paul accounts all our own righteousness as nothing in regard of this. There must be a high estimation of the riches of Christ's obedience and sufferings: for where there is not this high estimation of it, they are rotten in the point of justification. But you see how Paul sets at nought and vilifies all

things in regard thereof; so Rom. iv. 16. Abraham is brought in to be justified by grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed. And Ps. xxxii. 2, he is pronounced to be the blessed man, 'unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and whose sin is covered.'

Trial 3. Thirdly, When we have a zeal against all contrary doctrine, as St Paul shows to the Galatians, who would have joined works to faith: 'Christ is become of none effect unto you; whosoever of you are justified by the law, you are fallen from grace,' Gal. v. 4. And in the third chapter he says, 'O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth crucified among you?' 'This only would I learn of you, received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?' Gal. iii. 1,2. A man sound in the point of justification hath a hatred to popery, and all such doctrine which impairs the riches of the grace of Christ. Death is in the Romish religion. Why are some of them then saved? Not because they die in that religion, but because they reverse their judgment in this point of justification. So you see there is a hatred, a zeal in such, as St Paul had against contrary doctrines.

Trial 4. Fourthly, There is peace and joy settled in the heart: as Rom. v. 1,2, 'Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.'

Quest. To add one thing more ere I leave this point, In the ease of relapse, what shall we do then? Are we not cut off? Must we not have a new incision?

A us. I answer, Every man who falls does not fall on all-four, fall away quite. There be degrees of falling; as in a sick man, though ill, he is not by and by dead. Some life and strength remains, which works out towards health again. There is so much grace and life in justification loft, as to recover him again. But as in other eases, so in relapses also, a man must live by faith. We see, 2 Cor. v. 20, even such as were in the state of grace, are entreated to be reconciled. Though we fall, we must not therefore fall off, but stir up grace, and recover ourselves again. So Isa. lv. 7, there it is said, 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.' And then he adds the reason, 'For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my. ways higher than your ways,

and my thoughts than your thoughts.' So Jer. iii. 1, 'They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? Shall not the land be greatly polluted? But thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the Lord.' Thus we must live by faith, for all our slips and falls, yet not to let go our hold, but still run to the horns of this altar, still fly to this city of refuge, and so we shall be safe.

Quest. But what is the reason that many who are justified yet find not daily comfort?

Ans. Perhaps they daub up themselves, and do not search the bottom of their corruption: as Ps. xxxii. 8, David, when he kept close his sin, his bones waxed old through his roaring all the day long, and God's hand was heavy upon him day and night. Then he shows how he found comfort: 'I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said I will confess my transgressions unto thee; and thou for-gavest the iniquity of my sin.' So it may be in this case. We come not off with God freely, we do not ransack our sins, we search not all the corners. Sin is a marvellous subtle thing. Again, thereby many times God will humble us for a former sin, and keep oil' comfort, until we be more humbled, and stand in awe of sin.

3. Thirdly, Hence springs a vigorous life. A life of cheerfulness, when a man hath his pardon sued out, then comes life and joy, strength of holy actions well rooted and grounded. Who should joy, if a triumphant righteous person should not? Who have cause to rejoice more than kings? By justification we are made kings and priests, are lifted above all sins and lusts, world and devil; have a right and title to heaven. Shall a carnal man joy in his titles and privileges, and shall not we much more, being sons of God by adoption, and heirs of all things? So Rom. v. 1: 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, and joy in tribulation.' Being once justified, the sting of all troubles is taken away. God is ours. We joy in God. This is all in all. The blood of Abel, that cries for vengeance; but the Spirit of God in this estate tells me, that the blood of Christ speaks better things, mercy, mercy; in his blood is always comfort, though we be weak and unskilful to apply it. The washing in this blood should make a Christian walk on cheerfully in the comforts of the Holy Ghost. But I hasten to the next, which is,

4. Fourthly, The life of faith in sanctification. This springs from these grounds:

(1.) First, Faith lays hold on Christ, as God offers him. How is this? Sec 1 Cor. i. 30: 'But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.' God gives Christ, not for justification only, but sanctification also: and thus faith must apprehend him.

(2.) Faith receives him as whole Christ in all his offices; not as a priest to save only, but as a king to rule; as a wife receives her husband, to be governed and ruled by him.

(8.) Again, Christ came not only to take away the guilt of sin, but the dominion of sin. He came, as John speaks, to destroy the whole work of the devil; as it is said, Eph. v. 25, 26, 'He gave himself for his church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.' Christ doth purge his church, not only from the guilt of sin, but also from the meddling and polluting of itself in the world with filthy things. So Rom. viii. 3, the apostle shows, that 'God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.' He came as well by water as by blood. Therefore faith puts him on, not only by justification, but also in sanctification. To clear this.

[1.] Upon justification of necessity comes sanctification. For what is the stop of God's mercy? His anger for sin committed; in which case he denies his Spirit. But with reconciliation there comes also the Spirit: as Ephes. i. 13, saith the apostle, 'In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.' Now the Spirit once given, is the seed of all graces. Whosoever is justified, hath the Spirit of Christ: Rom. viii. 9, 'And if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.'

[2.] Again, having the Spirit of Christ, faith fetches all strength from Christ. Samson's strength was in his locks; a Christian's strength is in Christ. This the devil knows well, and therefore labours especially to weaken faith, and draw us from our strength. Christ says, 'Without me ye can do nothing,' John xv. 5; and St Paul affirms, that he 'can do all things through Christ who strengthened him,' Philip, iv. 13. The Spirit gives strength.

[3.] Again, as by Christ and his Spirit we have strength, so by his Spirit we have strong convincing reasons to work with strength from reason. Why

doth a Christian carry himself in a holy just carriage answering his profession? Oh, saith he, I have great reason; Christ hath loved me, and given himself for me; and should not I give myself to him, deny my lusts, and live to him? For, indeed, the foundation of all Christian obedience is laid by faith in Christ. So when a man looks to heaven, he hath a reason to abstain from all lets and hindrances of his safe and comfortable passage; to magnify the riches of Christ's love, which hath provided for him such an inheritance, and to live accordingly. So when he looks to the pardon of sins past, he sees reason to hate them more and more, to strive against them in time to come, and to love Christ the more, who hath pardoned them. And when he looks to God's free love in Christ, he sees reason to be inflamed with divine love, to admire the riches of that grace, and to be thankful.

[4.] Again, Christian affections are as the wind, to carry us on in a holy life. Thus strength, and reason, and affections, these make a man work. First, love sets us a work: 'we love him,' saith the apostle, 'because he loved us first,' 1 John iv. 19. We have his love first shed abroad in our hearts, inflaming the affections, and kindling the heat of divine love; and then we send back a reflex of love unto him. God cares for nothing but faith which works by love. This love is a most operative affection stirred up by faith. Indeed, all our Christian graces are set a-work by faith in Christ.

Thus you see faith apprehending Christ, as God offers him; and these things which I have mentioned following, we come to live the life of faith in sanctification: an example whereof see in that woman, who because many sins were forgiven her, loved much. Love is bountiful. All obedience comes from love. Love is the keeping of the law. This affection is stirred up by faith, yea, by Christ, for by him we have the promise of the Spirit, whence all graces come, and promises of the new covenant, to have fleshly hearts given, and his Spirit put in us. All promises of justification and sanctification are derived from Christ. They are in him, made for him, and effected for his sake; for he is 'yea and amen,' the centre and ground of all the promises. Now being brought by faith to live in justification, we must of necessity also live by faith in sanctification. There be two parts of a holy life: 1. In mortification, dying to sin; 2. In vilification, living to righteousness.

For the first, What does it to a man in this case? Why, he looks what brought Christ to suffer so much; my sin. So this affection stirs up the same passion in him, in a sort, which was in Christ, and makes him hate sin with a perfect hatred, as in Zechariah it is said, 'They should look upon him whom

they have pierced, and mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first horn,' Zech. xii. 10. Secondly, It looks on the love of Christ, that made him give himself for us. This makes us to hate sin, and provokes us to live unto him who hath done so much for us. These two things in the death of Christ stir up hatred to sin.

Then again, in vivification, the same Spirit which quickened him doth also quicken us: as Col. iii. 1, 'If ye then he risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God: set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.' So that the same Spirit which is in Christ, being sent into us, quickens us also to have mounting and heavenly thoughts. As the foot and little finger, though distant, live and stir by the same life and spirits diffused through the whole body, so the same Spirit quickens every Christian this way. As also by imparting strength, he imparts reasons from the resurrection of Christ to make us heavenly-minded, so when the soul dies one way, it lives another way. For Christ having by the Spirit discovered a better state, and life to come, of eternity, immortality, tranquillity, and glory; then a Christian dies to all worldly things, and hath the affections taken up that way.

Thus we see every day so to lead our lives, as we not only live the life of faith in justification, but also of sanctification; how out of Christ's fulness to fetch grace for grace. Therefore in all our wants go to him still. He is not only a sacrifice satisfactory for our sins, but he is a storehouse also and treasure of all good things. He is made unto us sanctification, therefore beg we favour from him, and endowments of grace conformable to his grace. And again, when we lack fulness, let us not despair, but fetch the largo vessel of faith, and we shall have a share of the large graces which are in Christ, according to the largeness of our faith.

Quest. What is the reason that so few find strength and comfort in Christianity?

Ans. They set upon getting of grace, and killing corruptions by their own strength, and so are ever wanting; but if a man depend upon God, he shall have fulness out of Christ. God hath sanctified his nature for this purpose, that out of his fulness we might have grace for grace. And so again, every day go to God, and plead for strength against sin, power to lead a holy life, and imputation of Christ's righteousness, to supply the defects of our sanctification. St Paul says, 'I can do all things through Christ that

strengthens me,' Philip, iv. 13. It is a magnificent speech, and a great matter to have a man ready to suffer all things, and overcome all things. This will make us work wonderfully, if we have this strength supplied. See an instance, Luke xvii. 3, 4. Our Saviour tells his disciples, that they must forgive their brother seven times, and seven times, as often as he confesses his fault. They thought this a wonderful hard duty, for nothing is so sweet to a man as revenge, for he would willingly be his own carver in all things, and do things in his own strength. The disciples upon this fall a-praying, 'Lord, increase our faith;' as though they had said, We had need of faith to believe the pardon of so many sins, and to enable us to forgive so often. And so I say of the subduing of sin, we had need of faith to have so many sins subdued; yet faith will do it.

Now in this great work, 1, Go to God, and beg his Spirit, and repent of all manner of sin; 2. Then beg faith. This will set all other graces a-work. It is like the blood and spirits which run all the body over. So in our spiritual life, this faith must run along in all graces, and set them a-working, yea, it sets God and all his attributes a-work. It runs to Christ, and prays, Lord, increase my faith, that can bear nothing as I should, resist nothing, believe nothing, and trust nothing. This indeed must be all our strength, to see nothing in ourselves, but all in Christ.

Since Adam's fall, it was appointed that Christ must keep all our joy, our strength, and ability, yea, to be our life. God will not since that time trust us with it, for we would quickly lose all again. It is Christ's office. He hath these endowments, as man, given him, to furnish us with all things fitting to a spiritual life. Faith will fetch all from God in Christ, who is made the mediator of the New Testament, to convey all these things unto us. Yet further, let us see some trials to discern whether we live this life of faith in sanctification.

Trial 1. If it be thus with us, There will he a jetting of ourselves upon Christ's government in all duties. Faith will do all that Christ commands, depending upon him for strength; and who so depends upon Christ for strength in one duty, will depend upon him for strength in another. There is a harmony betwixt the soul of a Christian and the command of obedience. He hearkens to the precepts of duty, as well as to the promises of forgiveness of sins. Where this universal obedience is not, hero is not the life of faith in sanctification; for faith here takes not exception at one duty more than another, but looks for all the strength of performance from Christ, who for

this cause is stored with all fulness, that it may drop down upon all his members.

Trial 2. Again, There will he a wonderful care not to grieve the Spirit, in such a one. As if he should say, I must depend upon the Spirit for help and assistance to do all, to guide me in my whole course, and shall I grieve and leave off the Spirit? Shall I carry myself so as to make him leave me? He must lead, instruct, comfort me, and assure me of my happiness; shall I then quench the Spirit? Therefore, I say, there will he a giving way to it, and a resolution settled, that this guiding in sanctification is the best guidance of all. A believing heart does tremble at any thing which hinders the Spirit's working. It sets not a step forward in anything without direction of the word and Spirit.

Trial 3. There will he courage to set upon any duty, to encounter and resist any sin; upon this ground, as he should say, have not I a storehouse of strength to go to? Is not he full of grace and goodness? Are not all his works wrought for us? Have not I exceeding many, great, rich and precious promises of help? Is not he the truth itself? Is there not then supply enough in Christ to help me out in all things? It were Pharaoh like to set us to work without strength and ability to go through with our work. There is light and heat in the sun to direct and cherish, much more in Christ their Maker. It is grace that leads us through all. We are justified freely through his grace, and by his grace we have continual strength supplied to enable us in all things. It is grace, grace! A sanctified liver by faith will therefore cheerfully set upon every duty.

Trial 4. Again, in this case, all is lively in a man. As we see a lively fountain, the water whereof will sparkle and leap, so there will be living joys, speeches, delights, exhortations, sensible of good and evil. He will trust God, rely on his word and promise, because Christ cannot touch the soul, but we must be lively. As the man who no sooner touched Elisha's bones, but he stood up and revived, 2 Kings xiii. 21, so a touch of Christ quickens and makes vigorous. As Christ's promise is, John iv. 14, 'Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life.'

Let the use of all be this, Upon this discovery remember to go to Christ for succour, and labour to live plentifully and abundantly in him this life of faith.

Obj. But, may some say, how should I go on to finish this great work of grace? It is a mighty thing to attain to, so many sins to overcome, so many temptations to buckle with, so many right hands and eyes to cut off and pull out.

Ans. I answer, Faith teaches us to fetch all from Christ,' to beg his Spirit to help us in the course of sanctification, that by his might we may prevail; and so in all mastering sins beg strength of Christ, and then set upon the walls of Jericho, and they shall fall before you.

How shall this be done?

As they did; they believed the promise, that compassing it seven times it should fall to the ground. So we, having so much and so many promises for the subduing of sin in us, let us set upon them, look up unto Christ, believe the promise; and our walls of sin shall fall so far before us, as they shall neither hinder our comfort nor our salvation. Eclipse it they may for a little while, but the sun will shine again, break through and dispel all those clouds and mists.

Let us set upon all Goliath's, therefore, by the word and Spirit, and withal set our will against them, that we heartily desire and endeavour to be rid of such lets and encumbrances, and we shall in the end find a notable victory over them; and so in all troubles and vexations, as Luke xvii. 3, 4, seq., with the disciples beg of God the increase of faith. This will help us out in all storms and tempests; help faith and help all. This will set heaven and earth a-working for our good. We see, Heb. xi., that all is attributed to faith. Why? Many other things concurred in those excellent actions for doing of them; but all is attributed to faith, because faith is that great wheel which set all the rest a-working, and stirs up all, as, 1 Cor. xiii. 4, seq., it is said of love, that it does all: for the same reason, because in those things there mentioned it stirs up all the rest. So in any grace winch is wanting in us, go to Christ and say, Lord, I lack wisdom, counsel, strength, understanding, prudence in thy holy fear. The fulness of these are in thee; Lord, it is for thy glory to help thy poor servant, and bestow some measure of these upon me to do thy own work with. Lo I Lord, I lay myself down to thee to work by me. I have an angry spirit, full of tossings and turmoilings, but thou art the Prince of peace, abounding in meekness. Oh bestow on me such a meek and peaceable spirit, as, learning of thee, I may be meek and lowly in heart. I instance but in a few things; enlarge them yourselves. In all things let us, with confession of our

wants, have an eye unto his fulness, and then we shall find the more of his abundance, when we set not upon these duties in our own strength only.

Two things are opposite to this life of faith.

(1.) Despair. This cuts the pillars of hope. Against this divers, as Luther for one, have been tempted to despair, but yet setting on the work, have overcome. So the Israelites were afraid, upon the evil report of the spies of Canaan; but when they went on, they overcame and beat down all their enemies. So we say, Oh, I shall never overcome such a sin, or such a corruption, or do such a duty. This is not true, go on, look to Christ, join his strength with thy endeavour, be out of love with it, resolve thoroughly, set upon it strongly, and down it shall before thee.

(2.) The second presumption; for this know, that in his own strength shall no man be strong. In St Paul's speech, 'By grace I am that I am,' 1 Cor. xv. 10. So again, saith he, 'In him'—to wit, in Christ—'we live, and move, and have our being,' Acts xvii. 28. If we do presume, it is just with Christ to forsake us, as he did Peter. Take heed also of spiritual self-sufficiency, lest we rest on ourselves, and go not to Christ. Our moving to all good duty is by him. It is but a word for him to help us, either in things tending to a spiritual or a natural life. Therefore, for conclusion of all, leave him not. In thy emptiness go to his fulness. If thy cistern be dry, turn the cock of thy faith, and his fountain will fill it again. Take him still along with thee, and thou canst not choose but live this life of faith in sanctification.

Sermon II

And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.—Gal. II. 20.

We see here our blessed apostle doth exemplify himself a man Irving another life than the life of nature, from higher reasons, grounds, and principles: 'I live,' saith he, 'by the faith of the Son of God.' First, he considers of another life than that which is rational, correcting the error of the same; for as reason corrects sense, so faith doth reason. This makes a man a new creature. The spring of this life is Christ. The means of conveyance is faith. It is meet now we should fetch all out of ourselves; for since Adam lost what he had, it is dangerous to trust ourselves with it any more. Therefore Christ keeps it for us, and makes it ours by conveyance of his Spirit, making us all children of grace. Faith is wrought in us by the Spirit

of God, and then it works, as Augustine says, acti agimus. Thus by effectual calling being once knit unto Christ, it is consecrated, as that by which we live. Christ is conceived in our souls by faith. As he was conceived in the Virgin's womb by her yielding to the promise, so we, closing with the promise, faith is wrought, and then Christ comes to live in the heart, as, believing the promise, he came thereafter to live in her womb. In the last sermon we propounded many things touching the life of faith, how it lives in effectual calling, in justification and sanctification, in glorification, and in the several grand passages of this life, one of which remains yet to be unfolded, as, the life of faith in glorification.

Quest. 1. But how? Vision is for glory; what hath faith to do with this, which is of things unseen?

Ans. 1. I answer, we live by faith in glorification thus, because faith lays hold on the promise, and we have the promises of glory set down in the word, and with the promise we have the first-fruits of the Spirit, and having the earnest and first-fruits, God will surely give the harvest. We have the Spirit, and thence faith reasons, God will make good his promise, he will not take back his earnest. Thus faith gathers great matters, believes all, and so lives comfortably in expectation of fruition.

Ans. 2. Again, faith lives by the life of glorification in Christ the head. There is but one life of Christ and his members, and one Spirit, one with him in union in the first degree of life. His glory is our glory. As in justification our debts are made his, so his glory is made ours, as it is John xvii. 1, seq., and he is gone to prepare a place for us, to bring us where he is. 'The glory which thou gavest me,' saith Christ, 'I have given unto them yea, 'and in him also we sit in heavenly places,' Eph. i. 3. So in regard of Christ to whom we are knit, we live the life of glory.

Ans. 3. Thirdly, by reason of the nature of faith, as Hob. xi. 1, which is to make things absent have a certain being. Now faith being wrought by an almighty power, raising us above ourselves to fasten and lay hold on so many mysteries, so it makes an almighty working in the soul, makes things afar off' to come evident. Thus it presents glory to us, as though it were present, and we in some sort live by it.

How to know whether or not we live the life of faith in glorification.

1. This, where it is in faith, makes a Christian glorious, puts him in a spirit that is glorious in all estates. There is no grace in him, but it is set a-fire by this faith of glory to come. When faith looks back on things, it hath strength, but when it looks on glory, all graces and virtues are set a-work.

1. Hope is set on work by faith, and keeps the soul, as an anchor, stedfast against all assaults.

2. Hope doth stir up patience; for, saith the apostle, 'what we hope for, we wait patiently for it.' Thus patience is exercised in two ways. (1.) In suffering of grievances. (2.) In the expectation of time. So faith cloth thus put life in patience, reasoning;—Why? What! it will not be long; these afflictions will not endure ever; I myself shall away ere long; glory will come at last for ever and ever; therefore I will bear all patiently.

3. Again, it sets courage and magnanimity a-work, as Heb. xi. What made all the patriarchs so stout to hold out and endure so many miseries, but that they had an eye to the glory to come? What made Abraham forget his father's house, going he knew not whither, but that he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God, and therefore he was a stranger at home? The like we have of Moses, who forsook Pharaoh's court, because he saw him who is invisible. Yea, and of Christ himself it is said, that for the glory which was set before him, he despised the shame, endured the cross, being now set at the right hand of the Father in glory and majesty, Heb. xii. 2. So 2 Cor. iv. 16, saith Paul, 'For this cause we faint not, but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day;' and the reason is, 'For our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen,' &c. He who thus hopes, does not want a comfortable life. And therefore upon this ground it is the apostle's concluding exhortation, 1 Cor. xv. 58, 'Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.' This makes a man zealous and fruitful, so it makes a man sincere, as 2 Cor. v. 9, 'Wherefore we labour (saith he), that whether absent or present we may be accepted of him.' The ground whereof is, 'For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every man may receive the things done in his body.' In this case our comfort is in all things to be sincere in working.

Now there is an order of things. Whosoever lives the life of faith in these grand passages, that soul lives the life of faith also in all other passages of our life; and these grand passages will run in the lesser courses of our life. To touch one: when a man is in extremity of both outward and inward affliction, then faith lays hold on this general, that God is wonderful in working, and that his ways and thoughts are not like our thoughts and ways. In all several cases faith makes use of all things God hath done or promised; as,

1. Of a man in the state of grace, God in desertion appearing his enemy.

(1.) In this case faith at first conquered God, and obtained a blessing by wrestling, as Jacob did. Faith therefore knows the same way again, to go to those precious promises God hath made, of returning again, not to forsake and be angry for ever, not to plough all the day to sow, as Isa. xxviii. 24, speaks. Faith knows that God works by contraries. It knows God takes away the sense of his love, not in anger, but to stir up the conscience and sense of sin, that we may lament and mourn for it the more, and so receive a surer report of the forgiveness of it. Faith does know that his name is wonderful. He raises things past hope. When a man is in despair touching himself, and all things in himself, and of all comforts, then he is nearest home, as Paul said excellently: 'But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead,' 2 Cor. i. 9. So faith looks at God working with Christ the Son of his love, how roughly he dealt, yet lovingly, with him; for Christ is a pattern as well as a cause of good unto us. Christ in the case of his forsaking went unto God, saying, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Mark xv. 34. Faith sets God's promise against his present working; as though it should say, 'Though thou killest me, yet will I trust in thee,' Job. xiii. 15; for all this thy love is the same; thou art merciful and gracious, and wilt not he angry for ever. Faith, as I may say, pulls off' God's mask, sees through the dark cloud, that God appears an enemy for a time, that he may return again with the more abundance of comfort afterwards. Faith knows, as Paul speaks, that it is God that comforts the abject, raises the dead, will he seen in the mount, making our extremity his opportunity.

So faith reasons, Is it so, indeed? and is he wonderful in working? Doth he thus and thus work by contraries? Then I will answer his working the same way; I will believe one contrary in another, I will expect the sun will shine again, though now it be under a cloud. The like I may say of any other

extremity, as in the raising of our dead bodies. Faith, as it is in Ezekiel, sees a spirit quickening and putting life in dry bones, assuring us thereby that he can as easily raise up the dead as deliver us out of any extremity. Saint Paul's argument is to trust in God, who raiseth the dead, [that he] can do all things, work wonderful changes in our greatest miseries. As for the church now in misery, there is a promise that Babylon shall he cast into the sea as a millstone, Rev. xviii. 21. Now faith believes the promises of glory, how that God will outwork all human policy, and catch the crafty in their own nets; that as certainly as day comes after night, so assuredly all God's promises shall be made good, as David resolves, Ps. cxxx. 6, 'My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning. Let Israel hope in the Lord: for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption.'

So in any cloud get faith, and it will break through all impediments. Believe the former grand passages of calling, justification, and sanctification, and then we will trust God for the rest. Then is faith most glorious.

When it works alone, then it works most strongly. Then also God delights to shew himself most effectually; for when all other moans fail, and faith works it out alone in wrestling, then he hath all the glory, and then all is well; and therefore we must do in this case as the prophet advises, 'Let him who sits in darkness and hath no light, trust in his name,' Isa. 1. 10.

Faith does raise men up, and set them upon a rock, so sure as nothing can take away their comfort and joy in God; because Christ's name is wonderful, who then works in desperate cases when it is seasonable. A mighty God delights to work mightily, in mighty plunges. Then faith plies the suit hard: Help, Lord, or none can. Our Saviour, you see, slept in the ship until a mighty tempest rose, and then he rebuked the winds and the seas; so he seems to sleep now in the church. Why? That we may wake and stir him up by our prayers. When the Israelites' tale of brick was doubled, and the people greatly perplexed, then Moses came fitly to promise deliverance. So when the afflictions of Christians are doubled, then they are commonly most humbled. They pray hard, search, believe, and apply the promises, and then deliverance comes. Therefore in all exigents set we faith a-work, for this stirs up prayer, and prayer stirs up God, and God stirs up all the creatures. Blame we not, therefore, any trouble so much as to cry out, Oh I am undone! what shall become of me now! No, find fault with an unbelieving heart. It is not the trouble, but our weak faith which makes us to sink in these waves. Beg

then of God, in great trouble, great faith to go through. Cry, Lord, increase my faith, for then the trouble is small when the faith is great.

(2.) Secondly, In daily afflictions. Whatsoever we suffer by them, labour to take away the sting of sin by living the life of faith in justification, as David Did, Ps. xxxii. 5; confess we our sins to God, beg to have the sting of them taken away, and hereupon we shall find him to forgive our iniquity, as in David. So in all our weaknesses and imperfections of sanctification, go to Christ for more grace, and say, Lord, though I be poor and empty of goodness, and of that which thy exact holiness requires, yet Christ hath abundance of fulness to supply my wants. Oh let me receive some grace for grace out of his fulness, and accept what he hath done for me in his pure and perfect obedience; good Lord, impute it to me, for thou hast made him to be for us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. And so for glorification; in all afflictions set we glory before our eyes, as Paul did, remembering that 'our light and short afflictions, which are but for a moment, cause unto us a far more excellent and eternal weight of glory, not being worthy of that glory which shall be revealed,' 2 Cor. iv 17. So in any affliction, we have still use of the life of faith in glorification. All these must be used in our afflictions, living the life of faith in all.

(3.) Thirdly, In sickness of body. Trust to Jesus, he is as powerful and as willing to help us now as he was to help others in the days of his flesh. All things are possible to us if we believe. It is but a word for him to rebuke all storms and tempests whatsoever. Let us not do like Asa, trust only in the physician or in subordinate means, but know that all physic is but dead means without him, 2 Chron. xvi. 12 Therefore with the means run to Christ, that he may work with them, and know that virtue and strength comes from him to bless or curse all sort of means.

(4.) Fourthly, So for disgraces. Commit we our credits to him as our lives—he cares for both—remembering what Peter speaks, 'If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified,' 1 Peter iv. 14. He means such a Spirit shall rest on us, which shall make us glorious. So Heb. xii. 2, 'We are therefore in sufferings pointed unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the glory which was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.' This suffering hinders our happiness; look to him, he is now set in glory, so shall we be. It is not in man's power to

alter men's conceits. God hath this in his power, when he will heap honour, or pour disgrace upon any man. Therefore let us look up and desire no more good name than God will afford us. If dogs bark, no matter; at length God will clear our name, and our righteousness shall break forth as the noonday. Thus much the church assures herself of, Micah vii. 8, 'Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: though I fall, I shall rise again.' As though she should say, God's servants are never finally forsaken. A time will come when God will do me good for all this, when I am humbled and have made a right use of it. That we may do this, think God in Christ hath given me the pardon of sin; what matter then of all other things which cannot hurt me, and shall all work together for my good? David, we know, Ps. vi. 8, began to complain grievously in this kind; but afterwards, ver. 8, when the Lord had spoken peace to his soul in the life of faith in justification and sanctification, then he says, 'Depart from me all ye workers of iniquity, for the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping.' Then he despises the shame.

(5.) Fifthly, In our particular places and graces. Thus must we here live by faith also; for a Christian knows that he stands as in a circle set there by Christ to work. Therefore faith concludes, Here look I for understanding, wisdom, success, blessing, and ability to go through-stitch with the business I am set about. He that set me here will enable me, and if I have ill success, then I will go to Christ, and I shall speed well with his assistance, as Peter did, who, though he had toiled all night and catched nothing, yet at length, at Christ's command, casting forth his net, catched abundantly, Luke v. 5. So there may be many who take much care and toil for heaven, to subdue and overcome corruptions, and yet catch nothing; find no answerable success. Oh let them go to Christ, and trust him as Peter did, and they shall overcome so at length, as all shall be well. So if magistrates, ministers, and people would trust God for strength more than they do, things would be better than they are with them, as we see the instance in Moses, who being commanded to go to Pharaoh, complained for want of utterance. But what saith God to him? 'Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the Lord?' Exod. iv. 11. Therefore in all such wants, faith goes unto him for it. The like, we read, was Christ's encouragement to his disciples, Luke xxi. 15, 'Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what you shall answer, for I will give thee a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.' This was made good also in the by past troubles of the church, when poor silly women put to silence with their answers great learned men.

Now faith sees what Moses did, Heb. xi. 24. It looks up to Christ, to him who is invisible. It is with faith in this case, as it was with Micaiah, 1 Kings xxii. 19, when he had seen the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand. Then Ahab, a king on earth, was nothing unto him when he had seen the King of heaven in his glory. So we by faith seeing Christ, heaven and glory over our head, caring for his church, standing at the right hand of God, by assistance of his Spirit, this will put invincible courage in us.

(G.) Sixthly, For provision and protection. Faith goes to Christ, hangs and depends upon him for all these things. Faith knows that it hath encouragements, promises, and examples enough to strengthen our dependence on him, as to name one: Luke xii. 32, 'Fear not, little Hock, for it is your Father's will to give you a kingdom.' Hence the believing soul argues from the lesser to the greater. What! will God deny me daily bread, that will give me heaven, and raise me up to life everlasting? and so it cites and revolves the promises often, that a little which the righteous hath is better than the abundance of the wicked; for he adds no sorrow with it; that a little with love is better than a stalled ox with contention, Prov. xv. 17. Yea, and in this case by faith we know that the saints, in extremity, shall be extraordinarily provided for. Sometimes he will bless a little, as the seven loaves and five fishes multiplied suddenly to feed five thousand people. They were in great want before, and were suddenly supplied. So it shall be with us. Sometimes we know the woman's oil increased; the ravens also in distress shall feed Elias; Lazarus shall have the dogs to lick his sores. In the use of the means we need not fear, and wanting means God will create means when all doth fail; for then faith lives best, knowing that God commands all means, and can suddenly do what he will.

And so for protection and preservation, faith knows that Christ will be our shield and protector, therefore it relies upon him. 'Fear not,' saith God to Abraham, 'for I am God, all-sufficient, thy buckler and thy exceeding rich reward,' Gen. xv. 1. Hence the saints have so esteemed him in all ages their rock, fortress, strong tower, salvation, helper, deliverer, refuge, and the like; and Christ tells his disciples, that he is with them even unto the end of the world, Mat. xxviii. 20. He rules his by his kingly office for the good of his church. Thus much we know he made good, both in Egypt and in the wilderness, bringing his people safely into Canaan, through all those dangers they were in; providing also for the women, persecuted by the dragon, a place of refuge in the wilderness, where she was safely kept, Lev. xii. 6.

(7.) Seventhly, And for our children.

Obj. Oh, say some, I could be content with a little, but I have many children.

Sol. Here faith sets in, and answers, But are they not also Christ's children, and must not he provide for his own? Do therefore what thou canst, and for the rest despair not, but cast this burden upon him, who hath commanded thee in nothing to be careful, but in all things to make thy suits and supplications known with prayer and thanksgiving. In this case faith in a dying parent follows Christ's example, John xvii. 6, 11: 'Thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me: that they may be one, as we are.' So a dying father may say, Lord, thine they were, thou gavest them me; I have done what I can for them. Thou, Lord, art the first, best, and last Father, the world 'and the fulness thereof. Now, therefore, holy Father, keep them in thy name, for thou art the refuge of the poor and needy, and thy time is to help when all other help is at a stand. Why, consider, is not he the Father of the fatherless? Then let us leave them to him with that resolution and confidence of the prophet David, 'When my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up,' Ps. xxvii. 10. Not that he means fathers and mothers use to do so, but though they should, or even when they forsake us by death, yet God doth wonderfully save and protect their posterity. Then learn to exercise thy faith. Though thou leave them little, yet trust in God, and know that he who rests under the shadow of the Almighty, as the psalmist speaks, shall be safe, Ps. xci. 1. He who provided for them in the womb, and prepared breasts for them ere they came into the world; he who put so tender affection in women: know that he will also have care, and be more compassionate over thy children after thee. Let faith then settle thy heart on these grounds. In the womb they were nourished and bred thou knowest not how. Oh, saith David, 'I am fearfully and wonderfully made,' Ps. cxxxix. 14. And after thy death they shall be nourished, thou knowest not how. For this cause many are punished in their generations, because they would not trust to God, but did use ill means to perpetuate their houses, as covetousness, worldly policy, and the like.

(8.) Eighthly, In prosperity.

What use is there in this, of the life of faith? Oh yes, very much. for, [1.] First, What makes prosperity sweet, but because by faith one knows that his sins are pardoned? What comfort, I pray you, hath a prisoner in the Tower of

his life, though he abound in all outward plenty of gold and silver, so long as his pardon is not sealed? This sweetens prosperity, the life of faith in justification, that all my sins are nailed with Christ upon the cross, that the handwriting against me is cancelled and done away. Thus one comes to be of the first-born, 'whose names are written in heaven,' Hob. xii. 23, and to joy that he hath a double portion, being exempt from many fears, crosses, and miseries others are vexed with. Who are better Christians than they that know they enjoy all good things with God's favour and blessing? Here faith hath a continual work, to see God's love in all, and so to be abundantly thankful, according unto that we have received.

[2.] Secondly, The life of faith orders our prosperity. How? Not to abuse those good blessings bestowed on us, not to be puffed up by them, not to disdain, but to relieve others by them. Faith causes us to think of them as they are set forth in the word. It causes that we delight not too much in them, shows us better and more lasting riches, friends, and the like. It makes us take Saint Paul's counsel, 1 Cor. vii. 29, to rejoice and do all things as though we did them not, and to use the world as though we used it not, because the fashion of this world passeth away; and therefore it makes men, as Paul speaks in another place, not trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God who can do all things. In sum, it causeth us manage all the things of this world, so as thereby not to have our hearts drawn away from the chief good.

So again, in all the comforts of this life, it makes a man eat and drink and sleep, and do all in Christ, looking up into him in all his actions, living by faith, and joying that now he hath a title and a right to all the creatures. He being clean, now to him all things are clean, because he is now in Christ, who is pure, without spot, and Lord of all; for to the unclean all things are unclean. It cost Christ dear to purchase our liberty to the creatures. Therefore finding and joining in this freedom, we live the life of faith in prosperity; whilst it eyes God in all the passages of this estate, sets him in the first place, receives all, and joys in all as coming from the love and graciousness of so good a God; returning in humility the strength and glory of all unto him; supplying also the necessities of his members.

(9.) Ninthly, In God's ordinances. In the preaching of the word and in the sacraments, faith makes us live this life of faith, not to be captious how this comes that God hath appointed this means, especially, unto the end of the world to teach men by. It makes us lay aside by-conceits to think, why it is enough for me, his will shall be the rule and square of all my thoughts and

actions. He hath sanctified and made effectual this ordinance to this purpose; therefore I believe he will bless his own means, which though to the world it seems to be the foolishness of preaching, yet it shall be effectual to my salvation and the rest of his church. He made the world by his mighty word, he repaired the decayed world thereby, and by it he will also call for and raise up all the dead at the last day. Therefore I will rest upon his ordinance without further dispute.

And so for the sacraments. What is a little water to the washing away of sin? Oh, but the blood of Christ, this is the cleanser, this washes away our sins. His ordinances make it powerful and effectual to that end he hath appointed it, for the believing soul. So the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper seem weak and feeble things; ay, but they are ordained to strengthen and increase faith. Here the Christian soul believes God can so strengthen faith by his Spirit, working in us a nearer communion with Christ and hatred of sin thereby, blessing his own ordinances, so that, as meat and drink refreshes, sustains and feeds this mortal body, so shall his ordinances by his blessing be effectual for the refreshing, fortifying, and nourishing of our souls to life and endless immortality. Again,

(10.) Tenthly, So in our combats. Of necessity we must fight the good fight of faith many ways. First, if any trouble assault a believer, he hath recourse to the life of faith in justification and sanctification. As he conquered God at first, in repenting, praying, and wrestling for forgiveness of sins, and applying the promises, so now he knows how to conquer any evil that befalls him. As it was said to Jacob, 'Thou hast, as prince, had power with God and with men, and hast prevailed;' so a Christian, having in his first new-birth-pangs conquered God, and prevailed, now by the same assistance and skill he can conquer all things also. Secondly, A Christian fights this good fight by living the life of faith in glorification. Saint Paul says, 'Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold of eternal life,' 1 Tim. vi. 12; insinuating that the way to live this life of faith is to lay hold of eternal life, having serious and constant meditations of the glory to come. Canaan, we know, was given to the Israelites, divided and given by Jacob, ere his death, long before they came there. Who would not fight then for such an inheritance? Now there were serpents, giants, strong and many enemies by the way; so they fought against all, and overcame all. Even so betwixt us and heaven there be many enemies to overcome: the flesh, the world, the devil, and all those numberless number of events which by their malice and our frailty we are tempted unto. But hero faith must lay hold of eternal life, answer all

objections with this, All these shall not make me lose eternity, there is no comparison betwixt heaven and earth; false pleasures here, and true substantial joys to come. This, saith the Scripture, is our victory which overcometh the world, even our faith, 1 John v. 4. Why? Because faith makes Christ's victory ours. Christ overcame sin, hell, death, the world, and all; and Christ himself being ours, we have all made effectual for us, which we have done and suffered. So Christ overcomes in us by his Spirit, as the apostle hath it, 1 John iv. 4, 'Stronger is he that is in you than he that is in the world.' So that a weak Christian hath a strong Spirit in him, which no power can prevail against, though he hath some foils.

Quest. But how doth faith fight against the world by the life of glory?

Sol. The world offers and presents petty base things before us. Faith keeps off', and opposes the glory to come, preferring that before all; as Moses did, who because he saw him who is invisible, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, esteeming the rebukes of Christ before all the treasures of Egypt; because this glory presented better things unto him than this world hath, Hob. xi. 24, seq. And if, on the left hand, the world threaten troubles, afflictions, persecutions and the like, for well doing, and not running into sinful courses with others, then faith remembers, as it is Rom. viii. 18, that 'all the sufferings of this present world are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.' We see then that the life of faith of that glory to come, helps us in all temptations to fight the good fight against all enemies whatsoever. He who hath a crown before him, it will make him run through the pikes or anything to attain it; so faith, having glory, immortality, and the joys of heaven before it, overlooks and despises all oppositions, and sees all things subdued to Christ, as though all were past; whereupon it gathers assurance that it shall triumph over all in him.

(11.) Eleventhly, So we persevere unto the end,

Fighting and living this life of faith; that is, a Christian makes it his daily and continual life. This is a ground of perseverance. A Christian then lives in a sort the life of Christ, as it is said, Rom. vi. 9, 'Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him.' So such a one once living by faith, dies no more. There is a perpetual supply of spiritual strength imparted unto him from Christ the head, whereby he lives by faith in all the passages of this life. Rom. viii. 85, 'What shall separate us from the love of God in Christ?' Nothing can. It is a never-failing river, entertained

unto death, that whosoever drinks thereof shall never thirst again; for Christ's promise is, 'Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die,' for after faith ends, then comes the life of vision, so that all our life the life is the same, we continue so living even until death, and then faith leaves us to the fruition of the thing believed. But doth faith leave us when we come to die? Oh no!

(12.) Twelfthly, We die by faith also.

For a Christian knows that he is in heaven already. As he lives by faith, so he dies in faith also. Faith makes him, like Stephen, resign his soul to God with comfort. He knows that Christ will receive that soul, which he hath purchased by his blood. He dies by faith, because he sees death conquered in Christ before him, and because he looks beyond death, and over-eyes all things that are betwixt him and glory, having the Spirit of Christ in him, which makes him bold and fearless, as David says, 'I will not fear though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death, because thou art with me,' Ps. xxiii. 4. This blessed faith in the Son of God makes us do all things, suffer all things cheerfully and comfortably. Faith makes absent comforts present to us. It eyes such sweet contentment in God's presence, that all difficulties below seem as nothing. It knows whom it hath trusted, and what is laid up for it. A believer sees invisible things. Oh the glorious things that the faithful soul beholds! He sees the angels ready to carry him from a house of clay to a heavenly paradise; from the company of sinful men here in misery, to the sweet society of saints in perfect bliss, which he himself now enjoys the first-fruits and earnest of, and longs to be fully possessed with.

Obj. But how can this be, when neither eye hath seen, nor oar heard what God hath prepared for his?

Ans. Indeed, to carnal sense these things are indiscernible; but to a renewed soul, the Spirit that God hath given them discovers the eminency thereof above all earthly contentments whatsoever. We see they are compared to a kingdom, to a feast, to a crown, familiar resemblances, that so the meanest capacity might conceive and be taken with them. What more desirous than a kingdom for honour! what glory is there in a rich diadem 1 and what sweet refreshings are there in a feast! Yet, alas! these are all but shadows; the reality is heaven itself. Talk not then of riches, but of thriving in grace, which will make you rich indeed. What good will the riches of the world do us at the last day? They take them wings and fly away. If we have not the true riches, we may die in want for all these, as Dives did. Know this,

that if there be anything good in earthly kingdoms, there is much more in this spiritual kingdom.

Again, the children of God know these heavenly things by their taste. They have the first-fruits of them even in this life; and if the communion of saints here be so delectable, how much more will it be in heaven! God's children have a taste of that eternal Sabbath in heaven, by keeping a holy Sabbath to God here on earth; they have a taste of that eternal rest and peace which they shall enjoy hereafter, by the peace of conscience which they have here; and that heavenly joy which doth flow into the soul now, is but a taste of that eternal joy which we shall have our fill of one day.

God is so far in love with his children that he keeps not all their comforts for another world, but gives them a taste of the sweetness here. But what are all refreshments below to that which we shall have above in God's presence? As John saith, 'We are the sons of God, but we know not what we shall be,' 1 John iii. 2. Only this we know, that when Christ our head appears, all his members shall be like to him. Our life may well be said to be hid with Christ in God, because flesh and blood discerns not the things prepared for those that love him. We lead a hidden life. We cannot see God face to face, or know him so perfectly here as one day we shall do. All that we have now is a taste of the good things to come, and but a taste.

The life which we now live is a life of faith, and we are to walk by faith, not by sight. Therefore, if God did give us all here, what need have we of faith? It were no commendation for a Christian to abstain from the sinful courses of the world, if he did see the glory that he shall have present before him. But God will manifest to the world that he hath a people whose comforts are higher and greater than the world affords, who live by faith and not by sight.

God doth not reveal to us now all that we shall have hereafter, because we are not capable of such delicates, we cannot digest them; as Peter and John, they could not see Christ's glory in his transfiguration, but they must be spiritually drunk with it: 'Master, it is good being here: let us build tabernacles.' Oh but saith the Holy Ghost, 'They knew not what they said,' Mark ix. 5. So likewise St Paul, when he was caught up into the third heaven, and heard unspeakable words, he could not digest them, they did so ravish him; therefore God gave him 'a prick in the flesh,' that he might not be exalted above measure, 2 Cor. xii. 7. Are we stronger than Peter and Paul, to bear these revelations from above? Is it not goodness in God to reserve them

till such time as we are able better to relish them? Moses, desiring to see the face of God, had this answer, 'No man can see my face and live,' Exodus xxiii. 20. So he that would conceive aright of the joys of heaven must die first.

Though we cannot see or understand those spiritual excellencies, yet let us often think of them. The life of a true Christian is taken up with the consideration of those things which he shall hereafter have in heaven. There is no grace in a Christian, but it is set a-work this way. What is faith without this? The chief work of faith is about things not seen. It makes absent comforts to be in a manner present; and so overcomes the world by seeing these things above the world. How is patience strengthened, but by the consideration of future relief? If there were not better times hereafter for the godly, they were of all creatures most miserable; but the thought of that makes them wait with patience. What makes men so tender in conscience, and so fearful to sin, but the eyeing of him who is invisible?

And have we such glorious comforts in another world? Let this cheer up our hearts with joy against all contempts and slighting here below. The world knows not God, nor us, neither doth it not know what things are prepared for us; and shall we care for their abuse and scorn? What though we walk up and down here unknown, our condition shall one day be manifested with glory in the sight of all, and then we shall esteem of things below as they are. The consideration of this should raise up the spirit of every Christian. What makes us do things that are excellent, but our believing an excellency in such ways and courses? He that sees an excellency in God, you may turn that man loose to any temptation; for if Satan tempts him to any sin, he thus considers with himself, Shall I lose the sweet contentments of heaven for a base lust? Shall I lose my peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost, for the satisfying of my unruly corruptions? Consider what we lose in the committing of any sin. The profit and pleasure that a man gets in following the world, alas! what is it to the precious comforts which we lose? Who would be beholden to Satan for anything? Is it not a disparagement to go from God, as if there were not sufficient in him to quiet the soul? Hath not God enough, but we must be beholden to the devil our enemy?

Oh, then, let us admire the love of God to his poor creature, in preparing such great things for him. Let us say with David, 'Lord, what is man, that thou art so mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou so regardest him?' Ps. viii. 4. How wonderful is thy mercy in having such high

thoughts towards lost sinners? 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that hath thought us meet to be partakers of an inheritance, immortal and invisible, reserved in the heavens for us,' 1 Pet. i. 4. A sound Christian begins his life in heaven here upon earth: he praises and glorifies God by a holy and fruitful conversation. This is our best way of blessing God. Praise in the heart will soon break forth in the tongue.

The apostle, when he speaks of the state of God's children, calls it a 'heavenly kingdom,' a 'glorious inheritance,' a 'wonderful light,' a never-fading condition. He is not able to express their happiness, it is every way so full. 'So God loved the world.' So, as I cannot utter it. 'Behold what manner of love the Father hath showed, that we should be called the sons of God,' 1 John iii. 1. It is so free and so rich love, that I am not able to declare it. Envy not, then, the wicked in their pleasure and bravery. Alas! they are but for a term of life; pity thou rather to see them delight in such sinful vanities. Shall a Christian envy any in their pleasures here, when he himself is in such a state of admiration? He should be so far from grudging and repining at the prosperity of others, that he should solace himself cheerfully with his future hopes. The thoughts of his good to come should revive him more than any want or discouragement should deject him. What though we have not our comforts in possession? We are sure of them; God reserves us for them, and them for us. We are like little children, that think not of the portions that their parents have left them till they come to age. Many weak Christians think not of their Father's portion, they mind not those unspeakable joys laid up for them in their minority; but as they grow in grace, so they will have more knowledge of it, and longings after it.

If it be a great matter to come out of a dark prison, to see the light of the sun, what will it be to come out of this dark world, into the glorious light of heaven? A natural man knows not this, but when once we come to see that light that we shall have in glory, then we will admire it, and cry out with the apostle, 'Oh the exceeding love of God in Jesus Christ!' Indeed, those things that came by the gospel cause wonderment, that God should love flesh and blood so as to prepare such excellent things for them.

But we must know, God doth qualify all those hero that he prepares happiness for hereafter. The reason is, because no unclean thing shall enter into heaven. We must not think to come out of the mire and dirt, and enter into heaven presently. No. There must be a suitableness wrought in us for such a condition. Those that will not live holily here, have no dwelling in that

holy place. If thy heart can tell thee that thou hadst rather have this honour, and that pleasure, than grace in thy soul, the word of God doth as plainly tell thee, that the excellencies of heaven are none of thy portion. A swine loves the puddles rather than the sweet fountain; so wicked men delight in the world more than in heaven, which plainly shows they shall never come thither. Nothing will comfort us at last but a true change of heart. If thou boost not a new creature, thou shalt have no part in the Now Jerusalem: therefore let us not feed ourselves with vain hopes. There is none of us but desires heaven; but why dost thou desire it? Is it because it is set forth to be a kingdom, an excellent place of joy and rest? Is it for this only? Assure thyself, then, thou wilt never come there. Thou must desire to have heaven, because of the divine nature, because it is a holy place, and near to God, if thou wouldst possess it indeed; and 'if thou hast this hope in thee, thou wilt purge thyself, as he is pure,' 1 John iii. 3.

If we would have faith ready to die by, we must exercise it well in living by it, and then it will no more fail us than the good things we lay hold on by it, until it hath brought us into heaven, where that office of it is laid aside. Here is the prerogative of a true Christian above an hypocrite, and a worldling; whereas they trust, and things they trust in fails them, then a true believer's trust stands him in greatest stead.

For use of all. See then how faith is the life of our life, and the soul of our lives, because by this we are knit to Christ Jesus, the life and food of our souls. Let us then make use of it; house and entrench ourselves in him, as it is Ps. xc. 1, 'Make him our dwelling-place in all generations.' He is our buckler; our enemies must break through Christ ere they come at us; all is ours in him, and in his strength and might we shall overcome all adverse powers whatsoever. You see then that this is no idle, but a mighty working grace. It works in heaven, and earth, and hell. It works against Satan, it works by love to God, makes us love him and work to him, and makes us industrious to work for others. Faith is the root of the tree, love the branches. Thus faith works mightily and strongly; it is a quickening and an active grace. Those therefore who find it not active, no marvel they want the comfort of it; they must strive to stir it up, and set it a-work to live by it. Those who find they have it, let them improve it to a better use than many do, to swear by it. This shames us in troubles to be unarmed. Where is our shield of faith, when every little poor dart strikes our armour through? This shows we have but a paper shield. We ought therefore to bewail our unbelief, and labour for this grace, which is so active and useful, so much the rather,

because it is most miserable to be in a storm without a shelter. This will help us in all miseries whatsoever, and make us conquerors over all in him who hath loved us. Oh the excellent use of the life of faith! It looks back, and makes use of all God's works, promises, wonders, threatenings, and judgments; and gathers strength, wisdom, courage, instruction from all. It looks and sees all things past, as it were a-working, doing, promising, threatening in present, and is answerably affected; when by strength of fancy it presents the ideas of things past, to work upon us the more, as present, and so is overawed from sinning against God. Sometimes it sees all this world a-fire, and therefore for worldly things and enticements it puts them over so much the more lightly, as perishing things condemned to be burnt. So it is the best prospective in the world; it presents to itself things afar off, as present and at hand, and makes them excellent, great and glorious to the sight afar off. Therefore above all things study we to live this life of faith—Oh it is worth all our pains—and shun infidelity as that which only makes us miserable, causing the guilt of sin to lie on us, and shutting us up under the wrath of God; yea, it seals us up to the day of wrath, turns all our actions to be sinful in God's sight, and is cause of that great condemnation John speaks of; whereas by the contrary, the believing soul lives a comfortable life, is admitted into the glorious liberty of the sons of God, hath a shelter to keep off all storms and tempests whatsoever, and comes by this life of faith to be assured of his part and portion in the love, merits, obedience, sufferings, death, resurrection, ascension, and intercession of the Son of God; in sum, to be assured of its salvation in particular, as Saint Paul was, 'who loved me, and gave himself for me.' But thus much shall suffice for this time. I shall prosecute things more fully in the next.

Salvation Applied

And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who hath loved me, and gave himself for me.—Gal. II. 20.

We have already, out of the words immediately going before, spoken of spiritual life, and of the excellency of it; and, in the third place, of the manner of conveyance, which is by faith; and, fourthly, the spring and fountain of this spiritual life, which is the Son of God, described here by his love and the fruit of it: 'He loved me and, as a fruit of that love, 'he gave himself for me.' Now, to come in the last place to the apostle's particular application, which he expresseth in this word 'me:' 'Who loved me, and gave himself for me; wherein these points offer themselves to our consideration:

First, That God loves some with a peculiar and with a special love: 'Who loved me, and gave himself for me.'

Secondly, That faith answers God and Christ's particular love by a particular application: 'Who loved me.'

Thirdly, That this particular faith in God's particular love is the ground of assurance, which springs from this particular faith.

Fourthly, That this assurance which proceeds from our particular faith in God's particular love, is the spring of all spiritual life, which sets the whole soul a-working. For what is the ground of my living by faith in all the passages of my life, but the apprehension of his love, who loved me, and gave himself for me; and can I then do less than give myself to him? Now to unfold those in order.

1. That Christ loves some with a special, superabundant, and peculiar love; for Christ, when he suffered upon the cross, looked with a particular eye of his love upon all that should believe in him; as now in heaven he hath carried our names upon his breast. As the high priest had on his breastplate written the names of the twelve tribes in precious stones, Exodus xxviii. 21, 30; so Christ, our high priest, hath the names of all his children in his heart, to present them always to God by his intercession, so as when he now appears before God, the church with him appears before God in his heart. The Father sees the church in the heart and breast of Christ. Now as this, I

say, is true in heaven, so upon the cross the church was in the breast of Christ. There was but a certain number for whom Christ savingly laid down his life, John xvii. 9. Paul was in the breast of Christ when he shed his blood: 'Who loved me, and gave himself for me.' So that then Christ loves some with a peculiar, special, and superabundant love. Hero then the question is concerning,

1. General love. 2. General gift.

Quest. Whether Christ loved all, and gave himself for all, because here the apostle saith, 'He loved me, and gave himself for me'?

Ans. 1. I answer briefly, first, that Christ's loving and giving himself was parallel in oven lines with God's love and gift, John vi. 37, 39; for Christ gives himself for none but those which God hath first given him. Christ had his commission, and he came to do his Father's will, not his own, John vi. 38, and will save all whom his Father hath given unto him; as it is John xvii. O, 'Thine they were, thou gavest them me.' Those that the Father gives in election, Christ redeems, and by redemption saves; for redemption, in regard of efficacy, is no larger than God's election. Therefore he joins, 'Christ loved me, and gave himself for me.' His love is only to those whom God gave him, for he looks upon all he died for as they were in his Father's love. There are a company in the world whom God hates: 'Esau have I hated,' Rom. ix. 13. Here love and gift go both together. He gives himself for no more than he loves, and he loves no more than God loves.

Ans. 2. Again, whomsoever Christ did love and give himself for to death, there be other fruits which accompany this. They who have interest in Christ's redemption, they have the spirit of application. Where there is obtaining by Christ anything of God, there, I say, is grace to apply it by his Spirit; and many things go with it. For them that he died for, as the apostle shows, Rom. viii. 11, 'for them he rose again, and for them he sits at the right hand of God.' These go together: 'For if he spared not his own Son, but gave him to death for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?' Rom. viii. 32. Where God gives Christ, he gives the spirit of application with him, Mat. xvii. 13, 2 Thess. iii. 2. But we see that the greatest part of the world have not faith; for it is the faith of the elect, which worldlings not having, nor the grace of application, therefore they have not the favour of God obtained by Christ. So it is written, Rom. v. 10, 'For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.' These go

together. Now the greatest part are not saved by his life, therefore they are not reconciled by his death.

Other places do clear this truth, as Heb. ix. 14, where is showed, that where Christ hath offered up himself for any, there is also a purging of the conscience from dead works to serve the living God. But the most are not purged, therefore they have no interest in Christ's death.

A strong reason is further showed hereof by Christ, John xvii. 9, where he avouches plainly, and makes a main difference between two sorts of people, saying, 'I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine.'

Obj. But hero some may object, Christ's death is of larger extent than his intercession.

Ans. To cut off this objection, Christ says after in the same chapter, ver. 17, 'And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth.' That is, I prepare and sanctify myself to be a sacrifice as a priest; I prepare myself to he a holy sacrifice for such; therefore Christ sanctified himself for them, not for the world. Under the law there was a brazen altar for sacrifice, and the golden altar for incense, which golden altar for incense was effectual for no more than the brazen altar was for sacrifice. And Christ offered himself a sacrifice for all those that he makes intercession for. The point is clear. I will not answer all the objections might be brought, only encounter with some of the main ones, which are brought by the papists against this truth. Saint Paul's meaning, therefore, is not that he loved me with that love wherewith he loved all mankind. The apostle means a more special love, 'He loved me so as he gave himself for me that is, with a more special love than he bears to all mankind. This is a point that tends to God's honour and man's comfort; for God hath the more praise and thanks from his elect, and those that are redeemed by the peculiarness of it, which the more it is, the more they acknowledge themselves bound unto God and Christ. These are they that are elected, these are they for whom the Scriptures are, for whom the world stands and Christ came, Ps. cxvi. 1. They love God and single him out, and the more they do so, God doth single them out to delight in. Peculiarity enhanceth and raiseth favours to higher degrees than otherwise. The fewer that are taken out of the world from the refuse of mankind, the more their hearts are inflamed to love God again. God, as the psalmist says, hath not dealt so with every nation, Ps. cxlvii. 20. When will a man be most thankful to God and give him glory, but when he can say, Thou

hast not dealt so with the rest of the world; what is in me more than in the rest of mankind? I differ nothing from them but in thy peculiar love. Hereupon comes the heart to be knit in love unto Christ again. But against this it will be objected,

Obj. Why doth Christ by the ministry persuade all in the church for to believe in Christ, and for to believe forgiveness of sins, if Christ did not die for them all?

Ans. I answer, that in the church he calls all, that he may cull out his own. The minister speaks promiscuously both to the elect and those that are not, because God will not rob his own children of the benefit, though they are mingled with others to whom the blessed things do not belong; as it is with the rain, it rains as well upon the rocks of the sea, and upon the barren heath as upon the good ground. Why, for any good to the rocks? No, but because, together with it, it rains upon the fruitful ground, which hath the benefit of the rain. So God rains the showers of his ordinances upon all, but the benefit thereof is only to his ground, not to the reprobates. The sun shines upon all, but who hath the comfort of that shining? Those who have eyes to see it only and use it, not the blind. But to them that believe not, they have another use. They have this benefit by Christ's death, that there is mercy offered them, and some gifts of the Spirit. God offers and stirs up good motions in them, but they rebel against them. There be many degrees and means of faith. They use not all the means they ought, neither take all the degrees, therefore they are without all excuse, because he gives more grace, not only the means, but he is ready to give more grace than they are willing to entertain. So it is their rebellion, which is the cause of their damnation. They are said to resist the Holy Ghost, such reprobates in the church, to quench the Spirit, Acts vii. 51, which implies the Holy Ghost is ready to work more in them than they are willing to entertain. Is it not so by experience? There is a company of profane persons, that, out of the abundance of their wicked hearts, and the poison of their breeding, will not vouchsafe to hear at all; others that do come, though for some bye and carnal ends. Happily the Holy Ghost, in hearing, beats upon their consciences and awakes them. But what say their rebellions hearts? Shall I stoop to leave such and such courses that are pleasurable and gainful? Hereupon they resist the work of the Holy Ghost in the ministry, when their hearts tell them there is a readiness in the Holy Ghost, and that he is sent from Christ and the Father to work more effectually in them than they are willing to be wrought upon, and therefore it is they are damned. 'Thy perdition,' saith the prophet, 'is of

thyself, O Israel!' Hosea xiii. 9. Their own consciences will tell them thus much. So it is no matter what cavils they raise of Christ's intention and God's election. Look thou, man, to thine own heart. Doth not thy own heart tell thee thou art a rebel, and livest in profane wicked courses, in neglect of holy duties? Thou carriest thine own sentence and cause of damnation in thy breast. I appeal to the worst, who live in sins against conscience. Here is the ground of thy damnation. There be many ascents and degrees to saving faith. Thou withstandest the beginnings and the motions of the Spirit. If they come in and work upon thy heart any estrangement from sin, thy proud heart begins to rebel, and will not yield. It is the only true obedience which lays itself at the foot of Christ, and is willing to be led and persuaded in anything so far as frailty will permit, and allows itself in no evil course. This is that which brings sound comfort, which they not doing, therefore are without all excuse.

Obj. If this were not so, they might object another day, Christ did not die for me, therefore why should I be damned for not believing?

Ans. Their consciences therefore will tell them, that they used not all means to believe, neither took the degrees of faith; for God's Spirit doth work after a kind in wicked men, as in the three bad grounds, the word was effectual in divers degrees; but when it comes to the upshot, they hated not their sins, were worldly minded; or, the plough had not made furrows deep enough to humble them, to value mercy and Christ above all things, and to hate sin above all. This is enough to justify their condemnation. Howsoever Christ is offered, and there is a command to believe, yet their hearts tell them they do not all they might. They must know that God's secret purpose in electing some, and redeeming some, and leaving others, it is hid from the world, as his secret will, that is not the rule of our obedience, but God's revealed will and commandment. Therefore men must look unto what God commands. If their conscience tell them that they yield not that obedience which they ought and might, but rather resist the motions of God's Spirit, hereupon comes their damnation to be just. They are commanded to believe. What! Not to believe remission of their sins; for know,

1. There is the act of faith; and 2. The fruit of faith.

Now a wicked man is not first commanded to believe the forgiveness of his sin, but in this order, in obedience to subordinate duty before. He is commanded to believe that he shall have benefit by Christ, by yielding obedience of faith to Christ. The act is one thing, and the fruit is another.

Every one is bound to believe and cast himself upon Christ for salvation, but not bound to believe the fruit, unless they have the act.

Obj. But it will be objected, we are not bound to have the first act of faith to believe; if we should, it were in vain, we should believe a lie.

Ans. I say no. The gospel runs, whosoever believes in Christ shall have the fruits of the death of Christ, shall have everlasting life. Thus whosoever believes and casts himself upon Christ, doth the act, shall have the fruit. Away with idle questions; What? Doth the fruit of Christ's death belong to me? Did he die for me? Go thou to the act; if thou hast grace to cast thyself upon Christ, and to assent when he offers and invites thee, it is well. Yield the act of faith, and leave questioning of that, which is then put out of question. Reason not this, whether God hath elected, or Christ hath died for thee. This is the secret will of God. But the commandment is, to believe in Christ. This binds. Therefore, yield to Christ when thou art called and bidden to cast thyself upon him; then thou shalt find, to thy soul's comfort, the fruit of his death.

Caution. Let no man excuse himself by quarrelling against Christ, for not giving himself for all. There is no man condemned, but for not yielding obedience in the act of faith, and doing all that his heart tells him he might, but is unwilling to do. It is for rebellion he perishes: as when a malefactor is condemned, who hath a book given him to read, which he refuses to do. His not reading is the cause of his execution and death, as well as his ill deeds which he hath done: his refusing pardon, that he will not read, with the other. Both are causes of his death, because he doth not read, and because he is a malefactor. So in this case, when a man will not yield the act of faith, though his other sins will damn him, yet, if he would believe and take the mercy offered, his other sins would not damn him. If men would or could believe, no other sins would hurt them; but because they do not, their other sins shall be laid to their charge, and their rebellion, that they will not believe, and take the benefit of God's offer. They refuse mercy, because mercy cannot be had without conditions of obedience; as Christ reproves the Jews, John iii. 19, 'And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.' This is the condemnation, with a witness, the great and main cause of condemnation: they would have heaven, if they might have it with their lusts; but they will not yield to the act of faith, to take Christ as he is offered unto them, upon his own terms, to be ruled by him, for better and for worse. This

they will none of, which is that which damns them. They would single out of Christ what they list.

When Christ sent the seventy disciples forth to preach and heal the sick, notwithstanding they wore to be refused of many, as it is Luke x. 11, yet they were taught by our Saviour, as to wipe off the dust of their feet against them, so also to convince them in this, that the kingdom of heaven was come near unto them. In vain, therefore, do wicked men and our adversaries cavil against God's justice in this, which every man's conscience shall accuse himself at last to be guilty of, and clear God of; in that they would none of wisdom's counsel, shutting their eyes against all instructions, refusing to be reformed. This I thought good to add, to avoid the snarling of wicked, carnal, profane persons.

2. The second point is, that true faith doth answer this particular Jove and gift of Christ, In applying it to itself. True faith is an applying faith. There is a spirit of application in true faith; for God in the Scriptures offers Christ, and Christ offers himself in the ministry to all that believe. Hereupon comes faith to make Christ our own. It doth appropriate Christ to itself in particular. Christ is a garment, faith puts him on; Christ is a foundation, faith builds upon him; Christ is a root, faith plants us in him; Christ is our husband, faith yields consent, and consent makes the match. So then there is a particular truth that strikes the stroke betwixt Christ and us: 'He loved me, and gave himself for me.' The nature of faith is to make generals become particulars, to restrain generals into particulars; for there is a particular cause, which must have a particular restraint. Christ's love is propounded to all in general. Before it do me good I must have a particular restraining faith for to make it my own. Now the papists are enemies to this particular faith, it being opposite to their opinions and authors, save some of the honester that incline to us. They say, that we ought to believe with a catholic general faith, that there is remission of sins for the church, but not 'for me;' for where, say they, is your name set down in Scripture? They are against this special faith, because they know it is the ground of assurance, unto which they are enemies; this assurance also being an enemy to all their fooleries, forgeries, and courses they take to have assurance.

We must know more clearly, that there is a particular faith required of us. A Christian ought to say, 'Christ loved me.' Neither is this by any special revelation; for God's Spirit doth witness ordinarily, first or last, so much to all that are his, except in some cases. Now that you may know this particular

faith is aimed at by God in the Scripture, look what is the end of the ministry and of the sacraments. Are not we ambassadors from God to men, to unfold Christ's love in particular unto them: if they believe, then to tell them, that they may be assured of salvation? Doth not the apostle, Rom. x. 9, speak in particular, that, 'if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.' This is spoken to every man in particular.

And for the sacraments, what kind of faith doth baptism seal, when water is sprinkled upon the child? Doth it seal a general washing away of guilt? No; but a particular washing away of the guilt and filth of the sins of the party baptized. Wherefore are the sacraments added to the word, but to strengthen faith in particular? Therefore every one in particular is sprinkled, to shew the particular washing of our souls by the blood of Christ. What is the reason that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is added to the word, but that every one may be persuaded that it is his duty to cast himself upon Christ, and to eat Christ, and to believe his own particular salvation? It overthroweth the main end of the sacraments, to hold a confused faith in general. Therefore seeing it is the main end of the word and ministry, let us labour for this particular faith, that we may say in special, 'Christ loved me, and gave himself for me.' Nay, 'for me,' if there had been no other men in the world but I. And the rather labour for this, because it is that which distinguisheth us from counterfeit Christians and believers. For wherein is the main difference? It is in appropriation. True faith doth appropriate Christ unto itself, makes Christ a man's own, it being the nature of saving faith to draw the general into particulars, which is meant by eating Christ, drinking his blood, and putting on Christ; all which enforce particular acts of faith. But against this it will be said,

Obj. St Paul had a special revelation, without which no man ought to believe thus much.

Ans. I answer, he had no special revelation, for, Rom. viii. 38, he enlargeth the comfort unto all: 'For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, shall separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.' It is idle to speak of a special revelation, unless we call it so, as it is hid from the world; so every Christian hath a special revelation from the Spirit. For the Spirit, which knows the 'secret things' of God, and which knows his heart, testifies to him that he is a child of God, and so he hath a special

revelation; but not if we distinguish one Christian from another. Every true Christian hath this revelation, because they have the spirit of revelation, for which the apostle prays, Eph. i. 17. 'For if we have not the Spirit of Christ, we are none of his,'Rom. viii. 9. Thus we have seen that God loves some with a peculiar and a special love; and secondly, that they have a special faith to make this love their own.

3. The third point is, that assurance doth spring from this particular faith; so that a Christian man may be assured of the love of Christ. But here divers questions and cases must be answered and explained to clear the point, else our speech shall not be answerable to the experience of God's people, or the truth itself. First, we must know that there is a double act of faith in the believing soul,

1. An act of faith, trusting and relying; and 2. An act of assurance upon that act of relying.

For it is one thing to believe and cast myself upon Christ for pardon of sins, and another thing upon that act to feel assurance and pardon. The one looks to the word more principally; the other is founded upon experience, together with the word. We ought to labour for both, for affluence and consent in the will, to cast ourselves upon Christ for salvation; and then upon believing we ought to find and feel this assurance. But these many times are severed, and sometimes the first is without the second. The first brings us into the state of grace. A man may be in the state of grace, by giving consent to Christ and relying on him for mercy, and yet want assurance of pardon and reconciliation in the second place.

This falls out ofttimes, especially in the new birth, that in those stragglings when little grace strives with corruption, there the Spirit of God is exercised in the act, in yielding the obedience of faith, to cast itself upon the arm of Christ, into the bosom of Christ, and upon God's mercy. As for any feeling, it doth not so much stand upon it at first, as it doth regard the act; after which assurance it comes for a reward, as God sees it good.

Then again, it often falls out in the time of temptation, that the first act of affiance, it is without the act of persuasion or feeling, which requires more experience, when a Christian, in the time of temptation, hath rather experience of corruption and the wrath of God, having no experience of the contrary; yet he yields the first act of affiance with a particular faith, casting

himself upon the mercy of Christ and upon his death, for the comfort of redemption.

Quest. But here a question must be asked, What is the reason that, where the first act of faith is, to cast itself upon the mercy of Christ in the promises, that yet there is not the sense of pardon and reconciliation, nor that full persuasion: why is this many times suspended?

Ans. 1. I answer, many causes there be of it. To name some:

(1.) First, In some the distemper of the body helps the distemper of the sold; I mean a melancholy temper, which is a constitution subject to distrust, fears, and temptations. As some tempers, that are of a bold spirit, are subject to presumption, the devil suiting himself to their temper; so where there is this melancholy abounding, which is prone to fear and distrust, the devil mingling his suggestions with their constitution, causes that those tempers are inclined to fear, where there is no cause of fear. They are careful enough to do their duties abundantly, as God doth discover his will unto them; they cast themselves upon God's mercy, and renounce themselves; humble souls, only, out of distrust, helped by Satan applying himself to their distemper, they are kept in darkness.

(2.) And also it is, many times, from a judgment not rightly persuaded: as when they think they have no faith, because they have it not in so great a measure. And when they are not rightly conceited of the covenant of grace, which requires truth for perfection, and not measure. For Christ will not quench the smoking flax. He despiseth not the day of small things, but cherisheth it. 'Thou hast a little strength,' saith he to the church of Philadelphia, 'and hast kept my word,' Rev. iii. 8; yet they think, out of a spiritual covetousness, that they have none, because they' have not so much as they would, and as stronger Christians have. They misconceit the covenant of grace, where truth goes for perfection. Sincerity is our perfection, which is known by a strife against the contrary, and by a desire of growth in the use of all means. There is not so much as truth where there is not this; where the least is, there is this strife against the contrary, and a desire of growth in a further measure by the use of means.

(3.) Also, they are held perhaps without this persuasion and assurance of the pardon of their sin, because perhaps they are taken up with other cares. They do not value this so much as they should do; whereas this is another manner of gift than the most take it for. God vouchsafes not this sweet

heaven upon earth, the sense of his love in Christ to any, but it is sought for long, and valued highly, that afterwards we may be thankful for it.

(4.) Again, Perhaps they are negligent in holy communion with those that are better than themselves; casting themselves into dead and dark company that want life, who bring them into the same temper with themselves. Many other causes may be reckoned why these acts are severed, that men, casting themselves in the spirit of obedience upon Christ, have not that assurance of the pardon and forgiveness of their sins. Hence we may give an answer to another question.

Quest. Why do some Christians feel more comfort than others do, who have the same means of grace?

Ans. 1. I answer, Because God stirs up in some an higher esteem of it than others; they have more spiritual poverty.

2. Again, There is difference in the ages of Christians; some have had longer experience in the ways of God than others.

3. Again, Men differ in their temper. Some are of a more cheerful temper. Therefore there is a clearer manifestation which helps the work a little, the disposition of the outward man.

4. Again, Men differ in their worldly temper. Men, for want of Christian prudence, cast themselves too much upon the employments of the world, that they suffer the strength of their soul to be carried so one way, that they have no time to gather assurance of salvation. Howsoever, for the main they are conscionable, yet many such are so worn out with the world, as they differ in heavenly-mindedness and want of care of this, so they differ in assurance and want of God's love-

5. Again, As God hath a purpose to employ men, as he hath great and many things for some men to do, so he suffers them to have a greater measure of assurance and pardon of sin, because he intends they shall go through a great deal of business. Those who he intends shall not go through such employments, he vouchsafes not unto them them that portion of assurance; for these are distinct gifts of the Spirit, to give the spirit of faith, to cast ourselves upon Christ, and to give the spirit of assurance. Howsoever the Spirit doth both, as 2 Cor. ii. 14, seq., it teacheth us those good things that we have of God; yet sometimes the Spirit doth not so teach us the good

things of God, as it enables to do the works of the Spirit, because God hath divers employments for Christians.

Quest. Another question which some may move is, Why oftentimes it comes to pass that Christians of greater parts want assurance, and sometimes die without it, when many times a weaker Christian of meaner parts has it? Men of ordinary rank do many times die with more assurance than their great teachers. What is the reason it falls out that poor Christians of mean knowledge and gifts have a heaven upon earth, and enjoy a great deal of comfort when they end their days, men of greater parts dying more concealed?

Ans. I answer, Many reasons may be given. Christians are prone too much to value gifts; and those that have are much prone to be proud of them, and to think that grace and gifts go together, when these are often severed. Men of excellent gifts have many times no grace at all; and are given them for the good of others, not for themselves, being proud and barren all their days, not having any feeling of that they can largely talk of with glory to others; because they value these things, and neglect grace, humility, faith, and broken spirits, which things God values more than all gifts. Therefore you have men far above others in gifts and glory of the world, which want this assurance.

Quest. But put the case they be good Christians, yet often they grow proud, and pulled up with great gifts, for the apostle says, 'Knowledge puffs up,' 1 Cor. viii. 1.

Ans. Again, When there is a great deal of good parts in knowledge, there is oftentimes great inquisition made after things which should not be looked after, and many impertinences, wanting knowledge and experience in that which they should more look after.

Then again, men of greater gifts may out of some error look for comfort too much in sanctification, and in the covenant of works, more than in faith. A poor Christian, perhaps out of right judgment, then he stands in need of comfort, may seek it in faith, in justification, casting himself upon Christ, when another man, thinking to find his comfort more in graces and gifts than in casting himself upon Christ in justification, he may justly be deprived of that comfort; whereas we honour God most, whatsoever our graces are, in casting ourselves upon Christ, and ending our days in mercy, making our appeal to mercy; whereas the graces of sanctification and excellent parts are

excellent for the good of others, but if we place too much affiance in them, it is just with God we should oftentimes go mourning to our graves. Therefore we must set them in a right place, take them as signs and evidences of our comfort, but not forget to rely rightly on our free justification, and the fruits thereof, as the foundation of comfort, which made Saint Paul, Phil. iii. 8, count all things 'but dung and dross in comparison of the righteousness of Christ.'

Then again, God doth it to show his freedom, that to whom he pleaseth he will give more assurance, to shew that he is a free giver. Our salvation is according to his good pleasure, so is the feeling of it; some shall have more, some less. God will sometimes manifest his comforts and feeling more to weak Christians than others, as a father or mother shows the greatest love to the weakest child. God knows that strong Christians have other things to support them with than feelings; they can go back, as holy David doth, to former experiences, and rely upon the word and promise strongly; so he suffers them to support themselves with stronger things than present feelings. Those who are weakest, he vouchsafeth unto them the sweet feeling of his love, as parents dandle and study most to please the sickest and weak children. But we should leave this to God, who gives us what measure he will, and at what time he will. Some he thinks good to keep a long time from feeling this assurance, to humble them for being too bold with sin; and some, likewise, he will keep longer from this assurance, perhaps all the days of their life, because they have been too confident heretofore in touching and meddling with petty sins, which, as pitch and fire, hath burned and defiled them too much; in the mean time supporting them with sufficient grounds of a happy estate, notwithstanding their infirmities; they may be as good Christians after a fall as ever, though perhaps never attain unto that feeling and sense which formerly they enjoyed: for though they have not feeling, yet they may have strong faith, as Christ upon the cross had strong assurance without feeling, when he said, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Thus we see that assurance may he obtained.

Quest. Now we come to a more principal question, How we may know whether we have the act or no, the first act to yield the obedience of faith, for that is the main. Perhaps a Christian may die in the rage of a fever, or in child-birth, and never have strong assurance. Many go to heaven that never have it.

Ans. 1. But for the first, a man may know in his right temper that he performs the act of faith in affiance, by the reflect act of his soul, if it be not hindered, let him return upon himself; as, how do I know I understand a thing when I do conceive it? Why, by a faculty the soul hath to know it understands. So, how doth a soul know that it believes, but by a reflect act of the soul, whereby it knows it believes when it doth believe, especially when the soul is in a right temper? If a natural soul knows it understands when it understands, and loves when it loves, so doth the soul by the Spirit know that it believes when it doth believe. If, as I said, the soul be not distempered, it is the nature of the conscience to bear witness of the act of itself; and usually God's Spirit, together with the conscience, doth discover it, Rom. viii. 16.

2. But the safest course is to go to the fruit. Know thou hast the act of faith by the fruit. To name one now, because in the next point I shall have occasion to speak more of it. The fruit of this act is seen especially in the greatest temptation; for if a man have a spirit of prayer, then to go to God, and have boldness in extremity, certainly he believes; for faith is the cause of prayer, prayer is the breath and flame of faith. Where there is the spirit of prayer, there is always the spirit of faith; where there is boldness to go to God, there certainly is the Spirit, whereby we may be assured that we have the spirit of adoption, howsoever we find not so evident witness that we are the sons of God. Yet if we have liberty and boldness to go to God in extremity, it is a sign there is the spirit of faith; as we may see in David, Ps. xxxi. 22, 'For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplication when I cried unto thee.' He said he was cut off, yet he cried unto God when he was in temptation. Though his flesh yielded, and said he was cut off from God, and that he was not the child of God, yet there was a better principle within him to pray, 'nevertheless I cried unto thee.' So saith Job, 'Though he kill me, yet will I trust in him,' Job xiii. 15.

Job wanted this assurance and feeling, yet notwithstanding, see the act of his faith, 'Though he kill me, I will trust in him.' When in extremity we can trust God, and go boldly to the throne of grace, and not sink in despair, it is a sign that we are in the state of grace, and yield the act of faith. Though we find not that sweet feeling, at length God will be merciful to us; so that after we have yielded the obedience of faith, we shall find the assurance.

Quest. But at what time specially?

Ans. 1. First, Especially when a man hath yielded the act of faith, and cast himself upon God, and a long time lived by faith, then God will seal this believing with the spirit of adoption. When we believe specially against a temptation of distrust, then we usually have the sealing of the Spirit.

Then again, when we have striven with any corruption a long time, God, as a reward of our holding out, will crown our faith and our obedience with a sweet sense of his love. After that Job had strove a long time, at length concluding, 'Though he kill me, yet will I trust in him,' God manifested himself in mercy unto him. The woman of Canaan, after she had striven and wrestled with Christ, at last gets a gracious answer; so when we can subdue our corruptions, and perform holy duties in some strength of grace, in reward of our diligence and care, we have some comfortable revelation of the Spirit, and taste of the life to come more than ordinary, God crowning our diligence with the sweet sense of his love.

And also, when he hath some great employment for us, to encourage us the more, he will give us the more evidence and manifestation of his love, more ravishment; as the disciples which were with Christ in the mount, they did see his glory there, because they were to see him abased afterwards. Those that God means to honour and use in any great employment, oftentimes before he gives them the full assurance of his love.

Again, sometimes in the midst of sufferings, to reward our faithfulness, as Paul in the dungeon was so filled with joy as to sing at midnight; to encourage us, that whatsoever our threatenings and torments shall be in our sufferings for the name of Christ, yet if we yield obedience to God, our comfort shall be more than our discomfort, as St Paul had the spirit of glory, which raised him above his abasement. Thus we see when they are severed, and when God pleases for to vouchsafe the manifestation together with the act.

Now I come to the fourth and last point, indeed the chief of all, that this particular faith in obedience to Christ, with assurance of his particular love, is that which carries us along all our life of faith unto the day of death. 'I live,' saith he, 'this life of faith in the Son of God.' Why, what makes him to do so? Oh I have good cause to love Christ and to depend upon him. Why? 'He hath loved me, and given himself for me;' and I feel so much to my soul's comfort, therefore I will wholly depend upon him, in life, in death, and for ever. And indeed particular special faith, if it be joined with some assurance, it is the ground of living by faith. No man can live a holy life by faith, but

first he must know that God loves him and Christ loves him. Holy actions spring from love, and are directed by love to the right end, which only love moveth us to intend. How can any spirit aim at his glory whom he loves not first? Can any soul, not knowing whether Christ loves it or not, intend Christ's glory as it should do?

Quest. I beseech you, if we speak of doing or suffering, thankfulness or Cheerfulness, especially at the hour of death, whence come all these?

Ans. Come they not from some taste of God's love? When do we love, but when many sins are forgiven? And when are we willing to suffer anything for Christ's sake, but when we know that he hath suffered so great things for us? We count it a glory to suffer anything for Christ, when we know he hath loved us and given himself for us.

Quest. Again, for thankfulness, how can a man be thankful for that he hath no knowledge of? What makes a man thankful for the great work of redemption in Christ, but a particular faith?

Ans. This made St Paul and the rest of the apostles so often to break out, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.' He breaks out into thanksgiving that he, together with other Christians, had the Spirit, which doth persuade them of God and Christ's particular love. Then again, for thankfulness for ordinary blessings, how can a man thank God for any ordinary blessing, if he be not assured that it comes from the love of God in Christ? When he is persuaded of this, then he can give thanks, both for the principal and other lesser favours,

Obj. He may think else, What is all this to me? I am but fatted against the day of slaughter. It is good for me to take my pleasure whilst I may enjoy these things, to think I am but as a traitor, who hath the liberty of the prison. This smothers our thankfulness.

Ans. It is the believing soul that is thankful for mercies, and also cheerful in duties. Whence come Christians to be a voluntary people, zealous of good works? as Tit. ii. 11, the apostle sets zeal betwixt faith and works, looking both ways, saying, 'The grace of God, which bringeth salvation unto all men, hath appeared,' by the first coming of Christ, and giving him to death, 'teaching us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts.' Here faith looks backwards. Then, looking forward, says he, 'Looking for, and waiting for the

appearance of the blessed God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath redeemed us, that we might be a peculiar people, zealous of good works.'

Quest. Whence comes a zeal to good works, but when we look to the grace that hath brought salvation and redemption from our sins, and to the glorious coming of Christ?

Ans. When faith looks both these ways, it is set afire, it makes us zealous, as Heb. ix. 11. When the heart is sprinkled with the blood of Christ in the forgiveness of sins, then we serve the living God, and are a voluntary and a cheerful people when our hearts are enlarged with assurance.

Quest. Further, what makes a man ashamed of his evil life? What breeds those affections of repentance, grief, and shame mentioned Ezek. xxxvi. 31, 32, 'Then shall ye be ashamed,' &c.?

Ans. When God had once pardoned their sins, and given them many favours, then shall ye be ashamed that ye have served me thus and thus, and grieve that ye have departed from me. So that then do Christians come to have those two penal affections of shame and grief, the two ingredients to true repentance. Why? 'Christ hath loved me, and given himself for me.' As if one should say, Hath he done so? Was my sins the cause of his death, and did his love move him? I am ashamed that I have offended so gracious and so sweet a Saviour. It makes a man weep over Christ. It was my sins which caused his death and torments. This particular faith fills the soul with all divine graces, and it follows Christ, and sees that he did all for us. Then a man sees that Christ was born for him: 'To us a child is born, and to us a son is given,' Isa. ix. 6. It follows Christ in his whole life, and so all that he did was for me. His death, 'He died for me;' his sweating in the garden was for me, my sins caused it. So I see his love, and the foulness of my sins. He was thrust through the side for me, and cried upon the cross, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' My sins had an active power there. He rose again for me, he is now in heaven for me, as carrying me in his breast. The sight and consideration of this draws the soul again unto Christ in repentance for sins, and in all holy duties whatsoever. This is the reason why those Christians that have been pulled out of the fire, and converted oftentimes by a violent conversion, are the most fruitful and loving Christians, as St Paul and others; because they know Christ hath forgiven them a mighty debt, a thousand talents; the more which debt appears to be, the more they know they are bound to God, and to sacrifice and give up themselves to Jesus Christ, that hath discharged so great a debt for them.

When they consider his wonderful love to such as they are, they are inflamed with love again; as in the gospel, the woman who had many sins forgiven her, therefore she loved much. The prodigal young unthrift in the gospel, for whom the fat calf was provided, no question he could not satisfy himself in expressions. God sometimes provides fat calves, great measures of comfort, even for prodigals, and they of all shew most love, they cannot tell how' to satisfy him by any painstaking. 'The love of Christ,' saith Paul, 'constrains me, a holy violence moves me, who was a persecutor and a blasphemer,' 2 Cor. v. 14. So the sense of the love of Christ in pardoning of sins will constrain one to a holy violence in the performing of all duties. Why, if any base ends come into a man's mind, in that, is a Christian to regard himself, to seek his own ease, honour, pleasure? No; this consideration, if he have any assurance of the pardon of his sins, will move him to the contrary. Christ died for me; shall I not live to Christ, live to him that gave himself for me? Seek his honour that abased himself for me? So that it quells all base ends, the consideration of Christ's particular love.

So it stirs us up to be at cost for Christ and for his church, at any cost, to sacrifice our Isaacs. He loved me, and gave himself for me; is anything then I can give satisfactory? He gave himself for me, therefore I will give myself for him. This will make a man prodigal, even of his blood, for Christ's sake. When a man is moved to be discontented with his estate, and to doubt of God's providence in particular things, this will help, Christ hath loved me, and given himself for me. Will he not give me all necessaries who hath given himself? So that this stirs up to all duties, cuts the sinews of all spiritual sins, of distrust in God's providence, and all base ends. It stirs me up in particular practice of holy life to go to him for all graces. I have himself, therefore he will give me his Spirit and grace. I have the field, therefore 1 shall have the pearl. He hath given me himself, he will give me therefore all that he hath; his Spirit, graces, and privileges, all shall be mine.

Thereupon it is used in all Paul's epistles as a compelling argument, as elect, and by the mercies of God do this; moving them to all spiritual duties from the love of God in Christ. And, dearly beloved, you are dearly beloved; the love that Christ bears you cost him dear indeed; it is a strong enforcement. Saint Peter's argument to this effect is very strong: 'You are not bought with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Jesus Christ are we redeemed from our vain conversation,' 1 Peter i. 18. You see, then, I give you but a taste of it, what strong motives here are to live a holy life, and all fetched from particular assurance; because Christ loved me, and gave himself

for me. Hereupon, by the way, we may have a strong argument against the papists, who hold we cannot have particular assurance, for that which is brought as an argument to stir up to holy duties must be known of us. The arguments in this case which serve to persuade must be known. We do not persuade another to a duty by those arguments he is ignorant of. Here he speaks to Christians, as taking it for granted that they knew they were elected of God, and dearly beloved in Christ. That which is an argument stirring up to duty must be known better than the duty, because therefore this is an argument that stirs us up to ail kind of duties whatsoever; therefore we may be assured. But here a question may be asked,

Quest. Doth not a holy life and holy actions sometimes proceed from a soul not fully assured? Then what shall we think of those good works that proceed from a Christian without strong assurance? If all obedience in doing and suffering, that is pleasing, comes from faith and assurance, then what shall we think of such works as proceed not from it? If you ask many a good Christian, what assurance have you that Christ hath given himself for you? they will perhaps stagger at it; for a humble brokenhearted Christian is subject to speak worse of himself than there is cause, though he be diligent in good works. What shall we think of such works then, when therewith they are not assured of Christ's love in particular?

Ans. I answer, There can no holy life proceed but from faith; from the first act of it. There must be that; but sometimes we know not our faith, because the reflect act is hindered; we know not we believe when we believe. There may holy duties proceed from a man when he knows not his grace and estate: in which time let him but examine himself, why doth he duties, whether out of love to God or no? Yes. Can he endure God to be evil spoken of? No. Will he allow himself in any known sin? No. In this case, though he dares not say he is assured, yet the things he doth are from some love and desire of glorifying God. Christians do not know their estates often in such cases. They do work from a secret persuasion of God's love, though they know it not. He hath that he thinks he hath not, he works from that he thinks he doth not work from. He works from love to God, when he thinks he doth not, because he thinks he hath not so much as he would have: he works from grace, when he thinks he hath none. A child lives when it knows not that it doth live; a child when it draws nourishment from the mother's breast, doth not know it lives itself, but the lookers on do, because they see the actions of life: so a Christian doth not know that he lives the live of grace, when the lookers on do, because they see spiritual hunger in him, and

attending upon the means. Now he himself doth not see it, because of some spiritual covetousness, temptation, or desertion which is upon him. Yet that is a true and gracious action, which issues from a soul that discovers faith, however itself cannot be assured of its estate, there being for the time a suspension of it, through ignorance or other causes; but certainly in such there is faith in the first act of obedience, and some assurance, where there are actions of spiritual life, though they have not that they covet to have.

The best way is to labour for both, for assurance and for the act itself; for howsoever those who have the act only perform good obedience, yet it is not so large, so thorough, so cheerful as it would otherwise be. We ought to desire both that God would give us a spirit of faith, and discover himself unto us, that our sins are pardoned, and that we are accepted to life, to give us strong assurance, that so we may be more plentiful in the work of the Lord. There is no Christian who hath a good heart but he will labour for the second as well as the first; he will labour to make his calling and election sure by all moans, that God may have more glory, and smell a more sweet sacrifice from him, and that he may have more comfort in this world. Howsoever without assurance much good may be done, yet not so much as when there is full assurance, for then the soul is carried amain in obedience to God; doing and suffering is nothing then.

Use 1. Now for the uses of this, seeing that the persuasion of Christ's love to us in special is the spring of all holy life, this serves, in the first place, to free this doctrine of assurance from scandal. Assurance then is not the ground of presumption or security. These spring not from a particular faith, for a holy life, the clean contrary, springs from it. None can live a holy life but by a particular faith; and whosoever in particular doth believe the forgiveness of his own sins, will live a holy life, and not put himself into former bondage. It is a sign he is not that person for whom Christ gave himself, that doth enthrall himself into his former courses, unless he repent. We see those of the Israelites who had a mind to go back again into Egypt, did all perish in the wilderness; and those in Babylon's captivity who would not come out when they were called, did perish. It is pity they should ever be delivered that are in love with bondage. Those that will serve and be slaves still, it is pity but their ears should be bored to perpetual servitude. Some will live in their sins, and yet think that Christ died for them. No; whom Christ loves in particular, he gives them grace to lead a holy life, and to be freed from the bondage of their former corruptions. Those that are not redeemed from their vain conversation, are not redeemed from hell and damnation,

unless God give repentance. Those both go together. Therefore let it be also a rule of trying and discerning, whether we truly believe that Christ loved us, and gave himself for us, by our care to live to him, and to give ourselves to him back again by a holy life. Wheresoever the one is, there is the other. This is that which may stop the mouths of many, and will shame them at the day of judgment, notwithstanding all their boasting that God is merciful, and Christ died for them. Oh!—their hearts will tell them,—but I have not cared to have the fruit of Christ's death in the governing of his Spirit; I would not have him my king; my conscience tells me I would not have Christ upon those terms: he offered himself to rule me; the minister told me of the danger, but I have preferred some base lust or other, such and such a course, before Christ; I hated to be reformed, I flattered myself with hope of mercy on no ground at all; therefore I never had any benefit by him.

Use 2. To make another use: if particular faith and assurance be the ground of a holy life, let us labour for it by all means; and let those that are in the state of grace, let them come to this fire if they will be kindled: if they find themselves dull to holy duties, let them come to this fire. Are we dead spiritually? Are we not so enlarged as we should be? Why, come and consider of the infinite love of God in giving his Son for thee, and the sweet love of Christ in giving himself for thee; and dwell in the meditation of this love. He not let thy heart go off the consideration of Christ's sweet love, in stooping so low, not only in becoming man, but so low as hardly ever creature was, and all in love. Should not this kindle love in us again? So much the more dearer he should be unto us, the more base he was for us. When we have warmed our frozen hearts with the consideration of his particular love towards us, then we add fire to holy duties. Iron, when it is warm, is fit for any impression; so our cold hearts, though stiff' of themselves, being warmed and fired by the love of Christ, are fit to receive any impression, and to do and to suffer any thing.

When we find ourselves backward to suffer anything for Christ, consider that Christ gave himself; or, if we be not thankful and fruitful enough, consider what was the end of Christ's giving himself, that we should serve him in holiness and righteousness all the days of our lives without fear; and being freed from the fear of death, damnation, and slavish fear, that we should serve him cheerfully in the spirit of adoption and love. I beseech you, in all indispositions of soul, let us make use of this, to come unto Jesus Christ. Experience teacheth any one when they are fittest for suffering, doing of any duty, to resist a sinful temptation to discontent or murmuring, even

when they enjoy the assurance of Christ's love, and can read their own evidence that they are God's children, and the members of Christ. Then they are fit for anything. Therefore we should, as the apostle Peter exhorts us, 'give all diligence to make our calling and election sure,' 2 Pet. i. 10. It is a thing which requires all diligence. And the reason why we have it no more, is because we do not give all diligence to attain it. It requires our utmost endeavour, being of the greatest consequence, by which God hath most honour, and we most comfort, because it makes us most fruitful in our conversation.

Obj. But you will say, what then shall we say unto those who cannot say in particular that Christ loved them and gave himself for them? What course shall they take who have not this particular assurance and faith? What grounds have they to come to Christ if they be willing?

Ans. I answer, Those that have it not should labour to have it by all means whatsoever.

Obj. But what ground have I, who have been a wretched sinner, an unworthy wretch, what ground have I for to meddle with Christ, and to believe that he loved me, and gave himself for me?

Sol. 1. Consider, even the vilest that can hear me have the gospel offered unto them. Again, consider that Christ took thy nature, and how many inducements are there in this, for thee to take degrees of this particular faith, to come to it, that thou mayest be in this estate, to glorify God and to enjoy comfort.

Sol. 2. Hath not Christ taken thy nature, not the nature of angels? Oughtest not thou to think that he loves mankind, and why not thee, if thou wilt come in and cast thyself upon him? He is Jesus, a Saviour; and Christ, anointed of God; and Immanuel, to reconcile God and man together.

Sol. 3. Besides, thou sayest thou art a sinner. Why, but alas! what are thy sins? Is not his righteousness above them? His righteousness is the righteousness of God-man, of a mediator that is God, therefore far above thy sins. Considering then the excellency of his person, believe that the blood of Christ is able to purge thee from all.

Sol. 4. For a further ground for this particular faith, we may think of this inviting of all those who are unworthy: 'Whosoever will, let him come and

drink of this water of life freely,' Rev. xxi. 17; yea, those that think themselves farthest off' he bids them come: 'Come, all that are weary and heavy laden,' &c., Mat. xi. 28. If thou findest sin a burden, then Christ invites thee, and sends his minister to beseech thee to be reconciled.

Those that stand at the staff's end, he desires them to lay aside their weapons and come in.

Sol. 5. If that will not do, he lays his charge and command upon you to believe. If you will not believe, you add this sin unto all the rest. This is his commandment, that you should believe, or else you are rebels to his commandment. Nay, he counts it a sin worse than the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah, a crying sin, not to come in when the gospel is proclaimed. Therefore never pretend your sins are great and many, but because of his offer, invitation, and command, it being without all restraint of person, sin, and time; even now, whatsoever thou hast been and art, seeing at whatsoever time a sinner repenteth there is no restraint of any sin but the sin against the Holy Ghost; if thou therefore come not in and cast thyself upon Christ, to be ruled by him hereafter, thou hast nothing at all to pretend. It is not the greatness of thy sins, but thy willingness to be still in thy sins, which hinders thee, for the greater thy sins have been, the greater will his glory be in forgiving: 'Where sin abounded, there,' saith the apostle, 'grace superabounded so much the more,' Horn. v. 20. Is it not for the honour of the physician or surgeon, to cure great diseases and sore wounds? A mighty God and Saviour loves to do mighty things: 'He loved me, and gave himself for me.' Did Paul find mercy? Who then should despair when such find mercy? He had sinned against the first table by blasphemies, and against the second by oppression and persecution. Who shall despair then when such as he and Manasseh shall find mercy? Therefore in any case come in, and the greater glory Christ shall have by thy coming. Do not flatter thyself with this, as if thy sins and unworthiness were such as God cannot shew mercy to such a wretch as thou art, or at least will not. No, no; deceive not thyself. Examine thine own false heart, and thou shalt find thou art in love with thy sins and wilt not leave them; and this will be alleged at the day of judgment against thee by thine own conscience, that thou wast more in love with thy sins than with the mercies of God in Christ, and therefore didst willingly remain in thy infidelity. This is the true cause, indeed, of thy backwardness, and not the greatness of thy sins. You see then that there is ground sufficient for any sinner to come in and labour for this particular assurance.

Obj. But put the case, I be not one that Christ redeemed, and God elected.

Sol. Away with disputing, and fall to obey. Put this question out of question, by believing and obeying. Come in and stoop unto Christ, and then it will appear that thou art one that Christ died for; for he gives himself for all that believe in him. Do thou thy duty, bring thou thy heart to rest upon Christ, and to be ruled by him, and then thou wilt put this question out of question, that thou art one of God's elect. The devil holds many in a state of darkness by this delusion.

Obj. If I knew that I were elected, or that Christ died for me, then I could believe.

'Secret things belong unto God, revealed things to us,' saith Moses. Thy duty is, when thou art sought for, invited, entreated, and commanded to be reconciled, then to come in and yield obedience, and in yielding thereof, thou shalt find the fruit of Christ's redemption, that thou art one for whom he gave himself. Thus much is for those who want this particular assurance.

Well then, to draw to an end, for those that pretend they have a particular faith and assurance of salvation, by this they shall know it. These things will follow.

1. Then thou hast a care to live by faith in the Son of God daily, and in all estates and conditions; and where this faith and assurance is, it is with care and conscience of duty always. Herein it is distinguished from a false conceit. Where there is no conscience of duty, there is no assurance of particular faith. This particular hath its ground from the general, from the word of God. The word saith that Christ gave himself for all believers; now I know I do believe: he loves all those that love him; and I know I love him, therefore I am beloved of him. Thus true faith goes to the conditions of the word. Those that live in courses contrary to the word have not this faith. 'Be not deceived,' saith the Scripture: 'neither whoremonger, adulterer, nor unclean person, shall inherit the kingdom of God,' 1 Cor. vi. 9. But I am such a one, saith a wicked man, and yet I think to enter into heaven, and that God will be merciful. No; in this case he will not be merciful, because one thus concludes wrongly, by a diabolical persuasion, contrary to the word.

2. Again, This is with conflict. You may know particular application where it is, to be good, because it is with conflict against temptations. A man

never enjoys his own assurance of Christ's particular love, but with a great deal of conflict. There are two grounds that faith lays:

(1.) That general truth, that whosoever casts himself upon Christ shall be saved.

(2.) The particular application hereof—but I cast myself upon Christ, therefore I shall be saved.

This particular application, which is the work of faith, is mightily assaulted, more than the general. The devil is content that a man should believe the former, but he troubles us in the application, 'but I believe.' He hinders, what he may, the reflect act, that we may not say, I know I believe. Thus, wheresoever the sense of Christ's love is, there is a mighty conflict before it comes. The devil labours by all means to hinder application, for he knows that particular faith brings Christ home, which is all in all. But false Christians go on in a smooth course, are not thus assaulted from day to day. They hope well, not considering that whilst the strong man keeps the hold, all things are in peace; whereas there is no Christian but he finds his particular faith strongly assaulted, more than his general: which is the reason why these two equal truths are not equally believed, because Satan doth hinder the application, the minor part assuming more than the general. Those who have no conflict may fear they have no faith at all, God in wrath and justice suffering them to go on in a smooth uninterrupted state. But all who have experience know what this spiritual conflict with an unbelieving heart means, when it comes to application.

3. Again, a man may know his faith to be true by his willingness to search himself, and to be searched by others. He that hath a true sound faith, and particular assurance from thence, is willing oftentimes to search his heart. He would be better and better, labouring to examine himself and to be examined of others. Those who are willing to go on in a still smooth course, because they will not break the peace of their own deluding false hearts, rather thinking all well than to put themselves to the trial, we may know this is but presumption. Where there is true application there is always willingness to search our own evidence; nay, a Christian will be willing, when he cannot find his own evidence, to have the help of other Christians to read his evidence for him, and to tell him of his estate, and is inquisitive, especially when he meets with the skilful in those things.

4. Again, This particular faith it is with a high prizing and admiration of the love of God in Christ, 'who loved me, and gave himself for me.' It is a sign that he hath no interest in this love, that prizes and values other things above it. If one had any assurance of this, he would value it above all other things in the world. He knows that howsoever Christ gives other things, riches, kingdoms, and honours to castaways, that yet Christ gives himself to none but his dear children. Therefore when he knows that he hath interest in Christ, he values him above all things in the world; will part with all rather than with his interest in him, when others go on with a general conceit that Christ died for them and loves them, or howsoever, that yet come what will, they will go on in their pleasures and profits, though their hearts tell them there is something higher in their souls than Christ and his love. You see then that we may all come in who will. There is ground enough to draw them on, if they be not false to their own comfort, and how we may try whether we be assured or not.

Exhortation. I beseech you, therefore, as we desire to do anything that may please God, labour for particular faith and assurance. Would we have our whole course of life to stink before God? I tell you, without this faith it is not possible to please God. Would we have all our life to pass fruitfully, and nothing to run upon our account when we are to die? Oh pray that the Lord would increase our faith; above all, labour for particular faith and assurance, for there is nothing Satan opposes us more in. It is a happy estate, a heaven upon earth. If Satan doth oppose it most, and it be the greatest happiness we can enjoy, it is worth the labouring after.

Let especially those that have ground and cause to be assured, humble broken-hearted Christians, let them by all means not yield to Satan, so much as to obscure the beauty of a Christian life, and to weaken the good things in others; who see them so mopish and cast down as though Christianity were a life of perpetual sorrow, and not rather of perpetual rejoicing, Ps. xxxii. 10, 11. Our blessed Saviour indeed shows that mourners are blessed, but it is chiefly because it tends and ends in joy. There is a command to 'rejoice evermore,' but nowhere is it written, 'mourn continually.' Every one, therefore, ought to express by all means this assurance in the beauty of a holy life. Therefore those who make conscience of holy duties and of their ways, let them not yield to temptations of this kind. If we be in such darkness, let us not trust unto our own judgment, but let us trust the judgment of others. Oftentimes others know more by us than we by ourselves. We ought to yield much to the discerning of Christians in this kind. It is an easy matter when all

things go well with us, in a light current, having some feeling, then to have comfort and to be fruitful; but when we are in our dumps, and in the hour of temptation, then it is not so easy. When a tree bears a great deal of fruit, and abounds with leaves, it is an easy matter to say, This is a fruitful tree; but when in winter the sap falls to the root, is covered with snow and frost, the leaves shaken off, and the root that is unseen lies hid, then it requires some judgment and former experience to say, This tree hath life, and is fruitful, though now there appears none. So a Christian may be in such an estate, that he requires the judgment of some others to look upon him. When in such a case, he must go to former times, for God's love is constant, always like himself.

And go to the secret working of grace; when outwardly there appears little, go to the pulses. As, if we would know whether a man who is in a swoon hath life and breath, we go to feel the pulses, to see if there be any breath remaining; so in a case of desertion, or seeming deadness of spirit, try which way goes the soul in the desires of it. Is there not a desire to please God? Are there not groans and endeavours with those desires? Are not those desires restless, and thy soul unsatisfied? Thou dost not content thyself with a little faith, but thou desirest more and more, and thou art ashamed, because thou hast so little. This is the pulses beating, and the breathings of a living soul. Yield not to Satan, who tells thee there is no ground for thee to be assured of thy estate. Where we find these evidences of a living soul, we ought to believe there is true life there; which I speak to those, who, without cause, are carried to doubt of their estates.

Obj. And do not tie Christ to thy conditions: If I had feeling and joy, I could believe, and be cheerful; if God would send a messenger from heaven, an interpreter, one of a thousand unto me, or if I had those supernatural suavities that some others have found, and those joys; or were not corruption so busy with me, and I so prone to be overtaken by them.

Sol. But I say unto thee, know this for thy comfort, that whilst thou art clothed with flesh, two fountains will have two streams; that which is born of the flesh will be flesh, and which is born of the Spirit will be spirit still. Inform thy judgment, mistake not, neither say thou wilt not be comforted unless thou find such a thorough mortification of thy corruption, as admits no strong combustion.

Quest. Shall St Paul, that chosen vessel, have cause to cry out, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' Rom. vii. 24, and canst thou think to be freed from them?

Arts. No; deceive not thyself. Thy comfort stands in this, with St Paul, not to allow the evil that thou doest; that sin shall not have dominion over thee, as the apostle speaks, thou not being under the law, but under grace; for saith lie in another place, 'The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these two are contrary, so that ye cannot do the things which ye would,' Gal. v. 17. Comfort thyself rather from this self-combat, and thence even gather thy assurance, that now sin and thou are not one lump; that a heavenly light hath discovered this thy darkness unto thee; only be sure, sin hath no quiet possession in thee. Complain of thyself, and of thy corruptions, unto thy Christ as fast as they come; lay the burden upon the strongest, and then fear not the issue: that which thou allowest not of, complainest of, and repentest of, shall not, cannot undo thee, but the Spirit at last shall have a final victory. So much for thy corruptions.

And for thy joy and feeling: tie not thy Saviour to thy conditions and qualifications; look to thy desires, thy constant walk, not thy straying fits and thine infirmities; remember that this is Christian perfection, not to live in any gross sin, nor allow of any smaller sin; and for thy imperfections, look up unto that infinite fulness of thy Saviour, and storehouse of all grace, whence we receive grace for grace: 'who is made unto us of God the Father, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption,' 1 Cor. i. 80. And then, whatsoever thy emptiness be, a part of his riches being fetched and applied by the hand of faith, will make thee up complete with the best. And know, that as in the state of innocency under the first Adam, his comfort came from within himself upon his obedience or disobedience, so now under the second Adam, the true and substantial ground of thy comfort is without thyself, in thy justification, and application of his all-sufficient merits and righteousness to thy trembling soul.

Walk on therefore in the obedience of faith, having a respect unto all God's commandments, and then assure thyself the promise is so, thou shalt not be ashamed. Labour as much as thou canst for an higher measure of sanctification and mortification, for this will assure and confirm thy justification the more it is; but with these cautions.

Caution 1. Be not discouraged at thy small measure whatsoever, if in truth, so as to fly off from applying the riches of thy Saviour and sweet

husband unto thee; in whom, whatsoever thy poverty be, if married to him, thou art complete and rich with the best; for the weaker thou art, thou hast so much the more need of a stronger helper to uphold and sustain thee: it being the law of marriage for the wife to be endowed with all the husband's riches, who is to pay her debts, whatsoever she be, being once married unto him.

Caution 2. Again, Whatsoever pitch of sanctification or mortification thou obtainest, rest not in that, but on the all-sufficiency of thy blessed Lord Jesus, who is thine, and so with him all his obedience, righteousness, and merits of his life, death, and resurrection; for there is nothing so exact in thee, but in the time of temptation the devil will find a hole in it, and so make his advantage thereof for thy discouragement; whereas it is clear, 'the prince of this world being come,' as our Saviour says, 'found nothing in him,' John xiv. 30.

Caution 3. And for the remainder, in those eclipses which damp thy spirit in this thy pilgrimage, by desertion, afflictions, or howsoever, know that precious faith, that it may shine the more, must be tried. Make then a virtue of necessity, buckle thyself to this business of most importance; strive to obey whatsoever thou feelest; in sense of thy misery believe thy happiness in Christ; in sense of God's anger believe his love, and that he will not be angry for ever. Faith, where it is, is of a victorious nature. Therefore, as in contraries thou wouldst have an evidence of any goodness in thee, in contraries strive against contraries. When thou feelest nothing but matter of discouragement, know the commandment is to believe, and thy duty is to obey. No service can be performed comfortably without some persuasion. Strive then to get all the arguments thou canst of a good estate; and when thou thyself art not able get others to road thy evidences for thee, believe the judgments of others who can tell thee, that these things found in thee come not from a corrupt and false heart.

And withal, pray for the spirit of revelation, as St Paul doth, Eph. ii. 17. Pray that God would vouchsafe thee his Spirit, to discover unto thee that love he bears thee, and the riches thou hast in Christ; to shew thee the height, and breadth, and depth, and length, with all the dimensions of his love in Christ more and more; that so the more we grow in the sense and feeling of his love to us, the more we may be inflamed to love him again; for we cannot love him unless we find him loving us first. So beg of him to give us the spirit of revelation. And attend upon the means that doth beget faith,

which is especially the word, which is called the word of faith, and look to the examples of others, how God hath brought them from a wicked course of life into a sweet state of grace. Take benefit likewise by the example of those we live with. Use all means to take notice of Christ's particular love. It is the main thing we should labour after in this world. Can we know how long we have to live in this world? What will make us die willingly, but when we know that Christ will have a care of our souls? What made David to commend his soul into God's hands, but this, 'Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth?' Ps. xxxi. 5. What will make us die in the faith cheerfully? Why, Lord, thou hast redeemed my soul; when at the hour of death we can commend our soul to Christ, Take my soul, blessed Saviour: thou hast redeemed me, thou hast loved me, and given thyself for me; look upon that soul in mercy that thou hast sprinkled with thine own blood. Strive we then for this particular faith, without which we cannot resign up our souls comfortably unto Christ at the last.

A Fountain Sealed

And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption.—Eph. IV. 30.

Whether the words be a command ensuing from authority, or counsel from wisdom, or a caveat from God's care of our souls, it is not material, considering both counsel and caveats of the great God have both force of a command, with some mixture of the sweetness of love. The apostle, as his manner is, from the largeness of his spirit, riseth from a particular dissuasive from corrupt communication in the verse before, to this general advice of not grieving God's Spirit by sin, especially against conscience enlightened. And this dissuasive from evil is enforced from a dangerous effect of grieving the Spirit of God; and the danger of grieving ariseth from this, that it is the Spirit of God, and God himself, whom we grieve, and a holy Spirit: holy in himself, and holy as the cause of all holiness in us; and he that, after he hath wrought holiness in us, sealeth and confirmeth us in that act of grace, until the day of our glorious redemption. So that the grounds of not grieving are from the greatness and goodness of the person whom we grieve, and from the greatness and constancy of the benefits we have by him. To speak something of the person: the Holy Spirit is called a Spirit, not only by nature, as being a spiritual essence, but in regard of his person and office; he is both breathed from the Father and the Son, as proceeding from them both; and by office, breatheth into all that God hath given Christ to redeem and him to sanctify. He is so the Spirit of God in proceeding from God, as that he is God, which whoso denieth deny their own baptism; being as well baptized into the name of the Holy Ghost as into the Father and the Son. And no less a person than God is needful to assure our souls of God's love, and to change our nature, being in an opposite frame. Who can reveal to us the mind of God but the Spirit of God? And herein we may see the joint forwardness both of the Father and Son and Holy Ghost: when both Father and Son join in willingness to send so great a person to apply unto us, and to assure us of that great good the Father hath decreed, and the Son performed for us.

That attribute the Spirit delights in is that of holiness, which our corrupt nature least delights in and most opposeth. Holiness is the glory and crown of all other excellency, without which they are neither good in themselves, nor comfortable to us. It implies a freedom from all impurity, and a perfect

hatred of it; an absolute perfection of all that is excellent. What is it then to grieve such an Holy Spirit, before whom the heavens themselves are impure, and not only the devils tremble, but the angels cover their faces? What shall we think then of them which do not only neglect, but despise, yea, oppose this holiness, and endure anything else? What is hated in the world with keen and perfect hatred but holiness, 'without which yet we shall never see God,' Heb. xii. 14, nor enter into that pure place into which we all profess a desire to enter? There was planted in man by nature a desire of holiness, and a desire of happiness. The desire of happiness is left still in us, but for holiness, which is the perfection of the image of God in us, is both lost, and the desire of it extinguished; and that men might the better drive it out of the world under a form and show of it, they oppose the truth of it, and that with the greater success, because under that great colour the devil and his vicar carry all their devilish policies under a show of holiness. We see in popery, everything is holy with them but that which should be holy, the truth of God and the expression of it. The Man of Bin himself must have no worse title than 'His Holiness.' A show of devised holiness pleaseth man's nature well enough, as being glorious for appearance, and useful for ends. But the truth of it being cross to the whole corrupt nature of man, will never be entertained until nature be new moulded by his Holy Spirit in the use of holy means, sanctified by himself for that end. It is this that makes a man a saint, and civil virtues to be graces; which raiseth things that are otherwise common to an higher degree of excellency. This is that to a Christian which reason is to a man. It gives him a being and a beauty different from all other. It makes every action we do in obedience to God a service, and puts a religious respect upon all our actions, directing them to the highest end.

Now that which the apostle dissuades from is from grieving so holy a Spirit. These truths are presupposed.

First, That the Holy Ghost is not in us personally as the second person is in Christ man, for then the Holy Ghost and we should make one person; nor is the Holy Ghost in us essentially only, for so he is in all creatures; nor yet is in us only by stirring up holy motions, but he is in us mystically, and as temples dedicated to himself. Christ's human nature is the first temple wherein the Spirit dwells, and then we become temples by union with him. The difference betwixt his being in Christ and us, is, that the Spirit dwells in Christ in a fuller measure, by reason that as a head he is to convey spirit into all his members. Secondly, the Spirit is in Christ entirely without anything to oppose. The Spirit always finds something in us that is not his own, but ready

to cross him. Thirdly, the Spirit is in us derivatively from Christ. As a fountain we receive grace at second hand, answerable to grace in him. The Holy Ghost was in Adam before his fall immediately, but now he is in Christ first, and then for Christ in us, as members of that body whereof Christ is the head. And it is well for us that he dwells first in Christ, and then in us. For from this it is that his communion with us is inseparable, as it is from Christ himself, with whom the Spirit makes us one. The Holy Spirit dwells in those that are Christ's after another manner than in others in whom he is in, in some sort by common gifts, but in his own he is in them as holy, and as making them holy; as the soul is in the whole body in regard of divers operations, but in the head only as it understandeth, and from thence ruleth the whole body. So the Holy Ghost is in his in regard of more noble operations, and his person is together with his working, though not personally. And though the whole man be the temple of the Holy Ghost, yet the soul especially; and in the soul the very spirit of our minds, as most suitable to him, being a Spirit. Whence the apostle wishes 'the grace of Christ to be with our spirits,' 2 Tim. iv. 22. The best of spirits delight most in the best of us, which is our spirits. In the temple the further they went all was more holy, till they came to the holy of holies. So in a Christian the most inward part, the spirit, is, as it were, the 'holy of holies,' where incense is offered to God continually. What a mercy is this, that he that hath the heaven of heavens to dwell in will make a dungeon to be a temple, a prison to be a paradise, yea, an hell to be ail heaven. Next to the love of Christ in taking our nature and dwelling in it, we may wonder at the love of the Holy Ghost, that will take up his residence in such defiled souls.

2. The second thing presupposed is, that the Holy Spirit briny in us, after he hath prepared us for an house for himself to dwell in, and to take up his rest and delight in, he doth also become unto us a counsellor in all our doubts; a comforter in all our distresses; a solicitor to all duty; a guide in the whole course of our life, until we dwell with him for ever in heaven, unto which his dwelling here in us doth tend. He goeth before us as Christ did in the 'pillar of the cloud and fire' before the Israelites into Canaan, being a defence by day, and a direction by night. When we sin, what do we else but grieve this guide?

3. The third ground is, that we, the best of us, are prone to grieve this Holy Spirit. What use were there else of this caveat? We carry too good a proof of this in our own hearts. We have that which is enmity to the Spirit within us, sin; and an adversary to the Spirit and us, Satan. These joining

together and having intelligence, and having correspondence one with another, stir us up to that which grieves this good Spirit.

. 4. The fourth thing presupposed is, that we may and ought, by Christian care and circumspection, so to walk in an even and pleasing course, that we shall not grievously offend the Spirit, or grieve our own spirits. We may avoid many lashes and blows, and many an heavy day which we may thank ourselves for. And God delighteth in the prosperity of his children, and would have us walk in the comforts of the Holy Ghost; and is grieved when we grieve him: that then he must grieve us to prevent worse grief. The duo and proper act of a Christian in this life is to please Christ, and to be comfortable in himself, and so to be fitted for all services.

These things premised, it is easy to conceive the equity of the apostle's dissuasive from grieving the Holy Spirit. For the better unfolding of which, we will unfold these four points. First, What it is to grieve the Spirit? Secondly, is Wherein we specially grieve the Spirit? Thirdly, How we may know when we have grieved the Spirit? Fourthly, What course we should take to prevent this grief?

1. For the first: The Holy Ghost cannot properly be grieved in his own person, because grief implies a defect of happiness in suffering that we wish removed. It implies a defeat in foresight, to prevent that which may grieve. It implies passion, which is soon raised up and soon laid down. God is not subject to change, It implies some want of power to remove that which we feel to be a grievance. And therefore it is not beseeming the majesty of the Spirit thus to be grieved. We must therefore conceive of it as befitting the majesty of God, removing in our thoughts all imperfections. First, then, we are said to grieve God when we do that which is apt of itself to grieve; as we are said to destroy our weak brother when we do that which he taking offence at, is apt to mislead him and so to destroy him. Secondly, We grieve the Spirit when we do that whereupon the Spirit doth that which grieved persons do; that is, retireth and sheweth dislike and returns grief again. Thirdly, Though the passion of grief be not in the Holy Ghost, yet there is in his holy nature a pure displeasure and hatred of sin, with such a degree of abomination, as though it tend not to the destruction of the offender, yet to sharp correction; so that grief is eminently in the hatred of God in such a manner as becomes him. Fourthly, We may conceive of the Spirit as he is in himself in heaven, and as he dwells and works in us; as we may conceive of God the Father, as hidden in himself and as revealed in his Son and in his

word; and as we may conceive of Christ as the second person and as incarnate. So likewise of the Holy Ghost as in himself and as in us. God, in the person of his Son, and his Son as man and as minister of circumcision, was grieved at the rebellion and destruction of his own people. The Holy Spirit as in us grieveth with us, witnesseth with us, rejoiceth in us and with us; and the Spirit in himself and as he worketh in us hath the same name; as the gifts and graces and the comforts of the Spirit are called the Spirit; even as the beams of the sun shining on the earth are called the sun, and when we let them in or shut them out, we are said to let in or shut out the sun. We may grieve the Spirit, when we grieve him as working grace and offering comfort to us. The graces of the Spirit have the name of the Spirit whence they come, as the Spirit of love and wisdom. Again, our own spirits, so far as sanctified, are said to be the Spirit of God. So the Spirit of God, not in itself, but in Noah, did strive with the old world, 1 Pet. iii. 19. And so we grieve the Spirit, when we grieve our own or other men's spirits, so far as they are sanctified by the Spirit.

Now the Spirit, as in us, worketh in us according to the principles of man's nature, as understanding and free creatures, and preserveth the free manner of working proper to man; and doth not always put forth an absolute prerogative power, but dealeth with us by way of gentle and sweet motions and persuasions, and leaveth it in our freedom to embrace or refuse these inferior works of the Spirit. And our hearts tell us it is in our power to entertain or reject the motions, which, when we do in our own apprehension, we churlishly offend the Spirit, as willing to draw us to better ways; and we cannot otherwise judge of this but as grieving. God in his dealing with men puts his cause into our hands, that by our prayers and otherwise we may help or hinder him against the mighty. And Christ puts himself into our hands in his ministers and in the poor, counts himself regarded or neglected in them. So the Holy Spirit puts, as it were, his delight and contentment in our power, and counts when we entertain his motions of grace or comfort we entertain him, and when we refuse them we grieve him. And the Holy Ghost will have us interpret our refusing of his motion to be a refusing of him; and not only a refusing of him, but of the Son, and of the Father, whose Spirit he is. Oh, if we did but consider how high the slighting of a gracious motion reaches, even to the slighting of God himself, it would move us to give more regard unto them. As we use these motions, so would we use the Spirit himself if he were in our power. They are not only the ambassadors, but the royal oil-spring of the Spirit in us; and when we offer violence to them, we kill as much as in us lieth the royal seed of the Spirit.

Obj. It may be objected, when we do anything amiss, we intend not the grieving of the Spirit.

Ans. It is true, unless we were devils incarnate, we will not purposely and directly grieve the Spirit; but when we sin, we will the grieving of him in the cause. No man hates his own soul, or is in love with death; yet men will willingly do that which, if they hated their own souls, and loved death, they could not do worse. 'Why will you perish, you house of Israel?' Jer. xxvii. 13, saith God. They intend no such matter as perishing. God's meaning is, why will you go on in such destructive courses as will end in perishing. If we could hate hell in the cause of it and way to it, as we hate it in itself, we would never come there.

2. For the second point, wherein we especially grieve the Spirit; grief ariseth either from antipathy and contrariety, or from disunion of things naturally joined together. In greater persons especially, grief ariseth from any indignity offered from neglect or disrespect, and most of all from unkindness after favour showed. Thus the Holy Ghost is grieved by us. What more contrary to holiness than sin, which is the thing, and the only thing that God abominates, yea, in the devil himself. But, then, add to the contrariety in sin the aggravations from unkindness, and this makes it more sinful. What greater indignity can we offer to the Holy Spirit than to prefer base dust before his motions leading us to holiness and happiness? What greater unkindness, yea, treachery, to leave directions of a friend to follow the counsel of an enemy; such as when they know God's will, yet will consent with flesh and blood, like Balaam, who was swayed by his profit against a clear discovery of God's will. We cannot but make the Spirit of God in us in some sort ashamed to think of our folly in 'leaving the fountain, and digging cisterns, Jer. ii. 13; in leaving a true guide, and following the pirate. Men are grieved especially when they are disrespected in their place and office. It is the office of the Spirit to enlighten, to soften, to quicken, and to sanctify. When we give content to Satan, it puts the Holy Ghost out of office. The office of the Holy Ghost is likewise to be a comforter. It cannot therefore but grieve the Holy Spirit, when 'the consolations of the Almighty' are either forgotten, or 'seem nothing' unto us in the pettishness of our spirits; when, with Rachel, 'we will not be comforted,' who, instead of wrestling with God by prayer, wrangle with him by cavilling objections. They take pleasure to move objections, instead of a holy submission to higher reasons that might raise them to comfort, and take Satan's part against the Holy Spirit and their own spirit, and against arguments that are ministered by those that are more

skilful in the ways of salvation than themselves. How little beholding is the Holy Spirit to such, who please themselves in a spirit of opposition; and yet so sweet is this Holy Spirit that after long patience, he overcomes many of these with his goodness, and makes them at length with shame lay their hands upon their months and be silent. Yet that is one reason they stick so long in temptations, and are kept so long under 'the spirit of bondage.' Those likewise cannot but grieve the Comforter, that leave his comforts and seek for other comforters; that think there is not comfort enough in religion, but will bow down to the world; such as linger after the liberties of the flesh, after 'stolen waters,' as if God kept house not good enough for them. It is a great disparagement to prefer husks before the provision of our Father's [house], and to die—like fish out of their proper element—if we want carnal comforts. But above all, they grieve the Spirit most that have had deepest acquaintance with the Spirit, and have received greatest favours from the Spirit. When the Holy Ghost comes in love, and we have given way to him to enlighten our understandings; and when in our affections we have tasted of the good things of God, that the promises are sweet, and the gospel is good; when we have given such way to the Spirit, then to use him unkindly, this grieves the Spirit. Where the Holy Ghost hath not only set up a light, but given a taste of heavenly things, and yet we, upon false allurements, will grow to a distaste, it cannot but grieve the Spirit. And this makes the sin 'against the Holy Ghost' so desperate, because there hath been a strong conviction and illumination. Therefore, of all sins, the sins of professors of religion grieve the Spirit most; and of all professors, those that have most means of knowledge, because their obligations are deeper, and their engagements greater. The deeper the affection hath entered, the greater the grief must needs be in unloosing. The offence of friends grieves more than the injuries of enemies. And therefore the sins that offend God most are committed within the church. Where is the greatest sin of all, the sin against the Holy Ghost, committed, but within the church, and where there is the greatest light and the greatest means? Sins against knowledge grieve most, especially if there be a malicious opposing, for there can be nothing to excuse it. The malice of the will maketh the sin of the deeper die, and it is contrary to the Spirit, as it is a Spirit of goodness; and hence is it that presumptuous sins so much grieve the Spirit; for by such sins we abuse the sweetest attribute of God's Spirit, his goodness, and be therefore evil because he is good, and turn his grace into wantonness, the sin of this age. Sins against knowledge are either such as are (1.) Directly against knowledge, as when we will not understand what we should do, because we will not do what we understand. Such put out the candle that they may sin with the more freedom. This kind

of ignorance doth not free from sin, but increaseth it. Some men will not hear the word, nor read good books, lest their consciences should be awaked. This affected ignorance increaseth the voluntariness. Again, when we maintain untruths for any advantage, knowing them to be untruths, as many learned papists cannot but do. What a great indignity is it to the Spirit of God to 'sell the truth,' which we should 'buy,' yea, with the loss of our lives, and to prefer the pleasing of a base man, or some gain to ourselves, before a glorious beam of God!

(2.) Other sins, if we know them to be sins, are sins against knowledge, not so directly, but collaterally. Yet this will be the chief aggravation, when our consciences are once awaked, not so much that we have sinned, as that we have sinned against the light; when the will hath nothing to plead for itself. It would, because it would, though it knew the contrary. Involuntariness takes away something of the heinousness of sin. When there is ignorance, perturbation, or passion, there is less sin and less grieving of the Spirit. But when there are none of these, but a man will sin because he will, accounting it a kind of sovereignty to have his will, this will prove the most miserable condition. For not to have the will regulated by him that is the chiefest good, is the greatest perverseness, and will end in desperation.

Quest. Why are voluntary sins so great, and so much grieve the Spirit of God?

Ans. When there is passion there is some colour for sin, as profit, pleasure, fear to displease, &c. When there is ignorance, there is a want of that that might help the understanding; but when there are none of these, and a man willingly sins, he is more directly carried against the command and will of God. There is nothing puts him on. Yet he accounts it so small a matter that he will do it without any provocation, out of a slight esteem of the good pleasure and will of God.

As common swearers, can they plead ignorance? They know the commandment, 'God will not hold them guiltless that take his name in vain,' Exod. xx. 7. Can they plead perturbation? They do it oft in a bravery, when they are not urged. There is no engagement in that sin of profit or pleasure, but a voluntary superfluity of pride. They would have you to know that they are men that care not for God himself; lot God and his ministers take it as they will. Though I have no pleasure or profit by it, yet I will have my liberty. The heart that hath been thus wicked will hardly admit of comfort when it stands in need of it.

We are not said to be ill, because we know ill, but because we will and consent to ill. It is the will that makes up the bargain; sin were not sin else. God hath given us the custody of our own souls, and as long as we keep the keys faithfully, and betray not our souls to Satan, so long we possess our own souls and our comforts. But when he suggests, Do this, or speak this, and we consent, he takes full and free possession of us, as much as in us lies; and God in judgment saith 'amen' to it. God saith, Take him, Satan. Since he will not have my Spirit to rule him, it is fit he should have a worse. The more willingness, the more sinfulness, and the less defence; and God's justice cannot better be satisfied than by punishing them most against their wills, who sinned most with their will. The clearer the light is, and the more advantages it hath, the more we sin.

In this respect it is that sins against the second table grieve more than sins against the first, because here the conscience is more awakened. These be sins against a multiplied light, against the light of nature, light of the word and Spirit; and such sins are contrary to human society. They dissolve those bonds that nature, even by the common relics it hath left, studies to maintain. Though corrupt nature hath no good in it, for we deserved to be like devils, yet God intending to have civil society, out of which he usually gathers his church, preserveth in man's nature an hatred of sins that overthrow society. Such sins, therefore, being committed against more light, wound more; as in case of murder, notorious perjury, theft, &c.

Therefore God oft gives up men, upon breach of the first table, to breaches of the second, that so they may come to more grief and shame, as being the breakers of both tables. Men never fall into the breach of the second table, but upon breach of the first. No man despiseth man's law, but he despiseth God's law first. No man breaks the law of nature, but he despiseth the God of nature. Profane atheistical persons, that glory in the breach of the third commandment by swearing, God meets with them by giving them over to gross abominable sins of the second table; which vexeth them more, though they should not, than sins against the first table; exposing them, besides inward grief, to open shame. Then God opens conscience to tell them, not only that they are to blame for their gross sins, but for the root of them, atheism, profaneness, looseness, which are sins against the first table. This is an aggravation of sins against knowledge, when our knowledge hath been helped and strengthened by education, by example of others running into our eyes, which is a more familiar teaching than that of rule, and strengthened also by observation and experience of ourselves, and the

former strength we have had, against the sin we now commit; and sweetness we have found in the resisting of it. None are worse than those that have been good and are naught, and might be good, and will be naught, when there is more deliberation and foreknowledge of the dangerous issue, and this also joined with the warning of others. As Reuben said unto the rest of his brethren, 'Spake I not unto you,' &c., so may God's Spirit and conscience say to men, Did not I acquaint you with the danger of sin? You are now in misery and terrors of conscience, but did you not slight former admonitions, and helps, and means? Conscience is an inferior light of the Spirit: to do things against conscience is to do them against the Spirit. God spake to me, and I heeded him not. How doth God speak? When conscience speaks, and saith, This is good, this is bad, then God speaks. Conscience hath somewhat divine in it. It is a petty god. It speaks from God. Especially when the Spirit joins with conscience, then God speaks indeed; then there is light upon light.

Upon divers respects some sin may grieve more or less than another. As the Holy Ghost is a Spirit, so spiritual sins grieve most—as pride, envy—imprinting upon the soul as it were a character of the contrary ill spirit. Carnal sins, whereby the soul is drowned in delight of the body, may more grieve the Spirit in another respect; as defiling his temple, and as taking away so much of the soul. Love and delight carry the soul with them; and the more deeply such sins enter into the creature, besides the defilement, the less strength it hath to spiritual duties. Grace is seated in the powers of nature. Now carnal sins disable nature, and so sets us in a greater distance from grace, as taking away the heart, Hos. iv. 11. Hereupon the apostle sets being 'filled with wine,' contrary to being 'filled with the Spirit,' Eph. v. 18. And hence it is the apostle forbids, in the former words, 'unclean communication.' The Holy Spirit is a Spirit of truth, hates hypocrites, being painted sepulchres; but as a spirit of purity hates foul livers, and foul-mouthed speakers, as 'open' sepulchres. They cannot therefore but much grieve the Spirit, that feed corrupt lusts, and study to give contentment, and pay tribute to the flesh, to which they owe no service and are no debtors, and by sowing to the flesh, from which we can reap nothing but corruption, Gal. vi. 8. When our thoughts are exercised to content the outward man, to contrive for the things of the world only, this is to pay tribute of the strength and vigour of our affections to the utter enemy of God's Spirit, and our own souls. When our thoughts run deeply into earthly things, we become one with them.

Who will think himself well entertained into an house, when there shall be entertainment given to his greatest enemy with him, and shall see more regard had, and better countenance showed, to his enemy than to him? When the motions of corrupt nature are more regarded than the motions of the Spirit? The 'wisdom' of the Spirit, 'which is from above, is first pure,' James iii. 17, and maketh us so, and raiseth the soul upward to things above. Christians indeed have their failings; but if a true Christian examine himself, his heart will say, that every day he intends the glory of God, and the good of the state he lives in. He hath a larger heart than a base worldling, that keeps within the sphere of himself, spending all his thoughts there, and consults only with flesh and blood, with profit and pleasure, to hear what they say. Such baseness cannot but grieve the Spirit, as contrary to our hopes and heavenly calling, which are glorious.

It is a dangerous grieving of the Spirit, when, instead of drawing ourselves to the Spirit, we will labour to draw the Spirit to us, and study the Scriptures to countenance us in some corrupt course, and labour to make God of our mind, that we may go on with the greater liberty; when men get to themselves teachers after their own lusts, as many do, especially if they be in place—Ahab shall not want his four hundred false prophets;— when men cut the rule and standard to fit themselves, and not fit themselves to it (6). You have some that are resolved what to do, and yet will be asking counsel; and if they have an answer to their minds then they rest; if not, then their answer is, This is your judgment, but others are of a contrary opinion. And thus they labour to make the Spirit of God in his ministers to serve their turn. So did the Jews in Jeremiah's time, Jer. xlii. 2, seq.

Some will father those sinful affections that arise from the flesh, and are strengthened by Satan, upon the Holy Spirit, counting wrath that is kindled from hell to be fire of holy zeal coming from heaven. Thus the enemies of religion think they do God service in their massacres. Such are those that wickedly oppose the ways of God, and yet are ready to say, 'Glory be to the Lord.' Such men study holiness in the show, that they may overthrow it in the power, and will countenance an ill course by religion.

Such also are faulty who lay the blame of an uncomfortable life upon religion; when men are therefore uncomfortable, because they are not religious enough. 'The ways of wisdom are the ways of pleasure,' Prow. iii. 17.

In these times, being the second spring of the gospel, we must take heed of sins against the gospel. Benefits, the greater they are, being neglected or abused, bring the greater judgment. The office of the Holy Spirit is, by the ministry, to lay open the riches of Christ, and the glory of God's grace in him. By neglecting so great salvation, and by thinking this favour of God to be a common favour, we sin against both Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and in that they desire most to be glorified. Such therefore as say to the clouds, 'Drop not,' and to the winds, 'Blow not,' and to the prophets, 'Prophesy not;' that study to keep out the light and sin against it, as discovering them, and awakening them, and hindering them from taking that solace in carnal courses of the world; as opening the eyes of others to know them further than they would be known, and so to lose that respect they would have in the hearts of men: this cannot but grieve the Spirit of God, and move him to take away that truth that we are so far from thinking a blessing, that we are weary of it, and fret against it.

The office of the Spirit is to set out Christ, and the favour and mercy of God in Christ. When we slight Christ in the gospel, the ordinance and organ of working good in us, the Holy Ghost is slighted and grieved. Bad is our condition by nature; and what a deal of misery do we add to this bad condition! Are we not all the children of wrath? And have we not since we were born added sin unto sin? Do we not grow in sin as we do in years? Is not God just? and hell terrible? Now God out of infinite mercy having provided a way to free us from the danger of sin; and not only so, but to advance us to life everlasting; and that we should not be ignorant of that he hath done for us, he hath set up an ordinance wherein the Holy Ghost discovers his love. When we slight this, and account it but an ordinary favour, nay, rather a burden, and think the opening of divine mysteries things that may he spared, that there is too much preaching; and what needs all this ado?—this grieves the Spirit, whose office is to lay open 'the unsearchable riches of Christ,' Eph. iii. 8, the infinite and glorious mercy and goodness of God in Christ, wherein God hath set himself in all his attributes to triumph and be glorified. We grieve all the sacred Trinity. God the Father is grieved to see his mercy slighted; God the Son to see his blood accounted common; and God the Holy Ghost, whose office it is to discover these things. This is the common sin of the times and kingdom, which threateneth judgment more than anything else. When the gospel, the blessed truth of salvation, is published, 'the axe is laid to the root of the tree,' Mat. iii. 10, the instrument of destruction; if men slight the mercies of God, entertain not Christ, walk not worthy of the gospel, they shall feel the stroke of his sharp anger. The

blood-red horse followeth the white horse, Rev. vi. 4. The white horse is the publishing of the gospel. When God sets himself to glorify himself, in mercy, in the greatest benefits, and we account them nothing, or but common favours, God removes the candlestick; the red horse of blood and destruction follows. And indeed what man will endure his greatest favours and kindnesses to be slighted?

Now a degree in grieving the Spirit this way is, when men will not be thoroughly convinced of their own sinful condition, and of the infinite love and mercy of God in Christ, in the pardoning of them. If God by his Spirit in the ministry, or in a particular reproof, come to men and discover their natural condition, and tell them they are worse than they take themselves to be, they will oppose it and study revenge, as St Paul saith: 'Am I become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?' Gal. iv. 16. This must needs grieve the Spirit.

Again, The Holy Spirit is grieved when ye have a corrupt judgment of things, not weighing them in the right balance, nor value them according to their worth. When we esteem any knowledge rather than divine knowledge, any truths but truths that concern Christ, when men look upon grace as contemptible, and prefer other things above it; make a tush at holiness—Give us, say they, gifts and parts—alas, what are all gifts and parts without a gracious heart? Have not the devils greater parts than any man? Are they not called dam ones, from the largeness of their understanding? If parts and gifts were best, the devils were better than we.—What an indignity is this to the Holy Spirit, to think it better to be accounted witty and politic, than to be holy and gracious!

Again, Those sins wherein there is plotting and contriving exceedingly grieve the Spirit, because they are done in cold blood. David deeply wounded his conscience, and grieved the Spirit, in plotting the death of Uriah, which was the diminution of the credit of David, that the Scripture saith, he was good in all things, except in the matter of Uriah, 1 Kings xv. 5. Why? Because therein he grieved the Spirit most, in plotting and contriving the cruel murder of so good a man. How can they think they have the Spirit of God, that plot and undermine men's estates, to have their wills in unjust courses? or if they have the Spirit, can this be without grieving it? for the Spirit will perpetually suggest the contrary.

Again, We grieve the Holy Spirit when we commit such sins as we might avoid, such sins as we have some helps against and least provocation unto. It

is a general rule, Quanto major facilitas, &c. The more the facility of not sinning, the greater the sin. Therefore, when we are tempted to sin, consider what conscience saith: I have been an hearer of the word; what hath the Spirit of God revealed and discovered unto me? He hath showed that this is a sin. Whom do I grieve by the commission of it? The Spirit of God, and wound my own conscience. And then consider, will that that I sin for countervail this? Do I not buy my sin too dear? Sins are dearly bought with the grieving of the Spirit of God. Therefore, wisely think beforehand what sin will cost.

Men grieve the Spirit by cavilling against the truth. The heathen man could say, It is an ill custom to be cavilling against religion, whether in good earnest or in jest. Yet we have a sect, a generation of men, that are of all religions, of no religion; men of a contradictory spirit, that always take the opposite part, that cavil at the truth to shew their parts. This is too ordinary among the wits of the world.

This grieves the Holy Spirit also, when men take the office of the Spirit from him; that is, when tee will do things in our own strength and by our own light, as if we were gods to ourselves. Man naturally affects a kind of divinity. It was the fault of Adam. And till God drive him out of himself by his Spirit, and by afflictions, he sets much by his own parts and wit, and thereupon neglects prayer and dependence on God, as if the Spirit had nothing to do with his regiment. When men set upon actions in the strength of natural parts, perhaps they may go on in their course as civil men, but never as Christians, to have comfort of their actions, because they will be guides and gods to themselves. If a man belong to God, God will cross him in such ways wherein he refuseth to honour God and to give him his duo place. He shall miscarry, when, perhaps, other men shall have success, though it be to harden them to destruction. This is a subtle way by which Satan abuseth men. The life of a Christian is dependent on an higher principle than himself, to rule and guide him.

Another way whereby we commonly grieve the Spirit of God is, when the mind is troubled with a multitude of business; when the soul is like a mill, where one cannot hear another, the noise is such as takes away all intercourse. It diminisheth of our respect to the Holy Spirit when we give way to a multitude of business; for multitude of business begets multitudes of passions and distractions; that when God's Spirit dictates the best things that tend to our comfort and peace, we have no time to heed what the Spirit

adviseth. Therefore we should so moderate our occasions and affairs, that we may be always ready for good suggestions. If a man will be lost, let him lose himself in Christ and in the things of heaven; for if we be drowned in the world, it will breed discomfort.

Lastly, Omission or slight performance of dudes grieve the Spirit. The Spirit, as he comes from the Father and the Son, from God, so he is great in himself, being God: 'Offer this to thy king,' saith Malachi, i. 8, when he saw them come negligently and carelessly to the worship of God. When people hear drowsily, and receive the sacrament unpreparedly, this grieves the Spirit, because it comes from irreverence and disrespect. And the reason why so many are dead-hearted, is because they make no conscience of omissions, of drowsiness, of negligent cold performances. Such Christians, what do they differ from carnal men in duties, for they will hear, pray, receive sacraments. He is the best Christian that is the most reverent Christian, the most careful Christian, most jealous over his own heart. Usually those are the richest in grace. Even amongst good men, those that are most careful and watchful over themselves, they go away enriched with the greatest blessing. Therefore let us hear, and so hear; let us receive, and receive 'thus:' 'So let us oat of this bread,' &c., 1 Cor. xi. 28. The Scripture fixeth a reverent respect before duty, suitable to the majesty of the great God whoso business we are about.

Besides grieving God's Spirit in ourselves, there is an heavy guilt lies upon us for grieving the Spirit in others, which is done many ways.

First, By neglecting the grace of God in them, or despising them for some infirmities which love should cover. Contempt is a thing which the nature of man is more impatient of than of any injury. Those that are given this way to wrong others are punished with the common hatred of all.

We likewise grieve the spirit of others by sharp censures, and the greater our authority is, the deeper is the grief a censure inflicteth. Many weak spirits cannot enjoy quiet, while they are exercised with such sharpness. They think themselves excommunicated out of the hearts of those in whoso good liking they desire to dwell.

Again, Those that are above others grieve the spirits of those under them by unjust commands; as when masters press their servants to that which their conscience cannot digest, and so make them sin, and offer violence to that tender part.

Again, We grieve the spirit of others, when those that are inferior shew themselves untractable to those above them in magistracy or ministry, when they make them spend their strength in vain. Thus the Spirit of God in Noah strove with the old world, 1 Pet. iii. 19. Our duty is, therefore, to walk wisely in regard of others; and if it be a duty to please men in all things lawful in the way of humanity, much more ought we to please Christians in those things wherein we do not displease God, as being joined in communion with them in the same spirit. Yet here we must remember that it is one thing to cross the humour and offend the pride of another; and another to grieve the Spirit in him. No cures can be wrought without grief in that kind; and if we grieve not their spirits when such humours prevail in them, we shall grieve our own for neglect of duty.

And in the last place, this causeth another grief, when those that are good watch not over their wags. The Spirit is grieved for the reproaches of religion that come from the wicked; for what say they? Doth religion and the Spirit teach you this? Thus Christians make the name of God to be ill spoken of; and this grieves the Spirit, and will grieve them if they belong to God. Oh, wretch that I am, that I should open the mouths of others, and grieve the Spirit of God, not only in myself, but in others, because he is grieved by me!

Scandalous courses; either by unreasonable use of our liberty, without respect to the weakness of others, or by actions that are in themselves evil or of ill report. By such actions we grieve the spirit of others. An ill example always either grieveth or infecteth. The spirit of Lot was grieved for the unclean conversation of the Sodomites, which no question hastened their ruin, 2 Peter ii. 7.

How shall we know' when we grieve the Spirit? We may know that by the sins before mentioned as the cause of grief. Again, the Spirit will bring report of its own grief. We may know when we have offended a friend, when he leaves our company; so we may know we have discontented the Spirit by spiritual desertions, both in respect of assistance in the performance of duties, and resisting temptations, and bearing afflictions; as also in respect of comfort, as when we find a strangeness and dulness of disposition, unless it be from some natural distemper of body, we may fear all is not well.

When we find a proneness to divert to other comforts, and to bold correspondency with carnal persons, and delight not as formerly in the communion of saints, but find an indifferency for any acquaintance; when we drive hardly, and our wheels fall oft'; when conscience will not let us omit

good duties, and yet we want the oil of the Spirit to make us strong and nimble in the performance of them, whereupon they come not off with that acceptance to God or our own spirits: these indispositions shew we have not used the Spirit well, whom otherwise we should find a Spirit of strength, a Spirit of comfort, a quickening Spirit.

The issues of grieving the Spirit will prove very dangerous, for the Spirit may justly leave us to our own spirits and deceitful hearts, which, as they are arch-flatterers, so will prove arch-traitors to us, and so let in a worse guest into our souls. The ill spirit is always ready presently to take possession, who, by joining with the stream of our corruptions, may please us for a time, but will destroy us for ever.

When we grieve the good Spirit of God, and cause him to leave us, our soul is left as a hell; for what is hell but the absence of God in his favour and mercy?

Again, We cannot grieve the Spirit of God in doing anything against it but it will grieve as again, and, being a Spirit, may fill our spirits with that grief that may make our conditions a kind of hell upon earth. Few reprobates feel those terrors here that the godly oft do by their bold adventures; for besides the terrors of the natural conscience, they have the Spirit to set them on, and that Spirit which had so well deserved of them before, which cannot but increase the horror and shame. In hell itself this will be the. bitterest torment, to think of refusing mercy, mercy pressed and offered with all love. A careless spirit oft proves 'a wounded spirit,' and that, 'who can bear?' Prov. xviii. 14, until he that woundeth healeth again, by giving grace to afflict ourselves, and wait his good time to take pity of us. That which we say of conscience is true. It is our best friend, and our worst enemy. If a man's conscience be his friend, it will make all friendly to him. It will make God his friend, affliction his friend; nothing can sit at the heart to grieve him. But if a man's conscience turn his enemy, there need no other enemies be sought out. He hath enough in his own heart, his own tormenting conscience tearing itself. This may be as truly said of the Spirit of God, who is above conscience. If we make him not our best friend, we are sure to have him our worst enemy, that sets all other enemies upon us. Displeasure is as the person is. 'It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God,' Heb. x. 31. 'Who knows the power of his wrath?' Ps. xc. 11. It is a powerful wrath. No creature hath power over the spirit immediately, but this Spirit of spirits, who can fill the soul, the whole soul, and every corner of it. Being adequate

to the soul, as large as the soul and larger, he can fill it with wrath that shall burn to hell; and who shall take off the wrath of God when the Spirit of God sets it on once?

Quest. Whence is it that we grieve the Spirit?

Ans. Because there is a cursed principle in us, always active, which is not perfectly subdued in this life. Death is the accomplishment of mortification; but while we are here, this corruption in us will alway be working. 'The flesh lusteth against the Spirit,' Gal. v. 17. The flesh is an active busy thing. It bestirs itself. Now, when contraries are so near as the flesh and Spirit, in the same soul, they must needs thwart and grieve one another continually.

Quest. It may be demanded how far forth a child of God may grieve the Spirit, and yet remain the child of God?

Am. In answer to this know, that we must not judge of sin by the matter in which, but by the spirit from which, sin is committed. There is no sin so gross but the saints of God may fall into it; but yet the child of God is hindered by a contrary law of the Spirit from yielding full consent before, or taking full delight in a sin, or allowing or persisting after. And though, in regard of ingratitude, the sin of a godly man admits of a greater aggravation than the sin of others, yet setting that aside, the sin itself of a godly man is less, for his temptations be stronger, and Satan's malice more eager against him, and his resistance of sin greater, all which doth abate the heinousness of the guilt. The more resistance from within argues a stronger party from within in the godly; the force of sin is broken from within. Take a godly man at the worst, there is some work of the Spirit in him, that in some measure is answerable to the counsels and motions of the Spirit without him. The Holy Spirit hath some hold in him, by which he doth recover him. A wicked man proceeds from grieving to quenching, and from quenching to resisting. The Spirit hath no party, no side in him; and therefore, when the Spirit is gone, farewell. They are glad that then they can follow their pleasures and sins without check.

Sometimes God leads his children to heaven through some foul way, by which he lets them see what need they have of washing by the blood and Spirit of Christ, which otherwise perhaps they would not so much value, when they grieve the Spirit, and the Spirit thereupon grieves them, and that grief proves medicinal. The grief which sin breeds, consumes the sin that bred it. We are in covenant with so wise and powerful a God, that overrules

even sin itself to serve his purpose in bringing his to heaven. They have that in them whereby they hate the sin they do, and love the goodness they do not; whereas others hate the good in some respects they do, and love the ill which they dare not commit. Howsoever they are drawn into sin, yet they will never break the conjugal bond betwixt Christ and their souls, so far as that sin should reign in them as a commanding lord, they will not forsake their oath of allegiance to serve willingly a contrary king. They may presume sometimes upon Christ, thinking they have a balm ready to cure the wound again,—as some, to shew the virtue of their oils, do make wounds in themselves,—the deceitfulness of sin seducing them. But God ever chastiseth this boldness, and taketh such a course with them, that it ends in taking the greater shame to themselves, and by so much as they have been more presumptuous. The loss of comfort, and the sense of sorrow they feel, makes them say from experience, that there is nothing gotten by sin, and that it proves bitterness in the end.

Again, Though they are kept from sins, in some sense, presumptuous, yet they are always kept from that 'great offence.' Though they may commit a sin against the Holy Ghost, yet they can never commit the sin against the Holy Spirit, because this is a sin of malice after strong conviction; expressed in words dipped in malice by,'a tongue set on fire by hell,' James iii. 6, and in actions coming from an opposite spirit, and tending to opposition, and to bitter persecution, if their malice be not greater than their power. And it ends always in impenitency, by reason they despise that grace, and cast away that potion whereby they should recover. Their pride will not stoop to God's way.

Thirdly, After such fearful relapses, darkness in the understanding and rebellion in the will increaseth, sin grows stronger, and they weaker and weaker to resist.

Fourthly, Satan being once cast out by some degree of illumination and reformation, brings 'seven devils after, worse than himself,' Mat. xii. 45. When they see their former courses stand not with their lusts and hopes, they take a contrary course, and so fall to bitterness in the end.

There is a double miscarriage about this sin.

(1.) Some are too headlong in their censures of others; whereas the greater the sin is, the greater caution should be in fastening it upon any,

especially whose spirits we are not thoroughly acquainted withal, considering so many things must meet in this sin.

(2.) The second miscarriage is, in an ungrounded censure of ourselves. There be three things that fear frees us from the danger of. First, Fear lest the time of our conversion be past, because we have so often grieved the Spirit; whereas if their time were past they would be given up to a careless security. A second is, fear of some judgment, which God stirs up in the heart to prevent the judgment that we may not feel that we fear; because fear stirs up care, and care stirs up diligence to avoid what we fear. A third is, fear lest we have committed the sin against the Holy Ghost, which shows we have not committed that sin. It is never committed but without fear and with delight. In these cases we need fear them least that fear themselves most.

The fourth point is, What course we should take to prevent this grieving of the Spirit.

1. Let us give up the government of our souls to the Spirit of God. It is for our safety so to do, as being wiser than ourselves, who are unable to direct our own way. It is our liberty to be under a wisdom and goodness larger than our own. Let the Spirit think in us, desire in us, pray in us, live in us, do all in us; labour ever to be in such a frame as we may be tit for the Spirit to work upon; as Nazianzen saith of himself, 'Lord, I am an instrument for thee to touch'. A musical instrument, though in tune, soundeth nothing unless it be touched. Let us lay ourselves open to the Spirit's touch. Thus Saint Paul lived not, but Christ lived in him, Gal. ii. 20. This requires a great deal of self-denial, to put ourselves thus upon the guidance of the Spirit. But if we knew what enemies we are to ourselves, it would be no such hard matter.

2. Secondly, Study to walk perfectly in obeying the Spirit in all things; which requires much circumspection in knowing and regarding our ways; and then we shall find the Spirit ready to close with us, and tell us, 'This is the way, walk in it,' Isa. xxx. 21. And upon obedience we shall find the Spirit encouraging us by a secret intimation, that this or that is well done. Thus Paul was said to be 'bound in Spirit,' Acts xx. 22. The Spirit so put him on, that he could not withstand the motions, until the execution of it. We must take especial heed of slighting any motion, as being the Spirit's messenger. They are God's ambassadors, sent to make way for God into our hearts; therefore give them entertainment. Many men, rather than they will be troubled with holy motions, stifle them in the birth, as harlots, that to avoid

the pain of child-birth, kill their fruit in the womb. Let us take heed of murdering these births of the Spirit. But seeing Satan will oft interrupt good motions by good motions, that he may hinder both,

Quest. How shall we know from whence the motions come?

Ans. 1. When two good motions arise, seeming diverse, the Spirit of God carries strong to one—and that is from God—more than to the other. Good motions are either raised up in us, or sent unto us by the Spirit. Loth these, if they be raised by the Spirit, will carry us to God. They will rise as high as the spring is whence they come. What ariseth from ourselves endeth in ourselves.

2. Those motions that the Spirit stirs up from within come from sanctified judgment and estimation of what they are moved to. Other motions are hasty, and gone before they have their errand. Holy motions are constant (as strengthened from constant grace within), till they seethe issue of what they are moved to. Other motions are like lightning, and sudden flashes, that leave the soul more dark and amazed than before. Holy motions are answerable to the duties of our calling. Other motions oft lead us out of the compass of our calling.

3. The Spirit moveth in the godly: first, by dwelling in them, and working in them gracious abilities; and then draws forth those abilities to good actions. But the Spirit dwelleth not in others, nor produceth any sanctified abilities in them, but only moveth them sometimes to good actions, without changing of them.

4. The Holy Spirit's motions are seasonable. Other motions oft press upon us to disturb an holy duty. The breath of the Spirit in us is suitable to the Spirit's breathing in the Scriptures; the same Spirit doth not breathe contrary motions.

5. Motions of the Spirit, when they come in favour, carry their own evidence with them, as light doth. The motions of the Spirit are sweet and mild, and lead us gently on. They are not ordinarily violent raptures, removing the soul from itself, but leave in the soul a judgment of them, and of other things.

6. Again, The Spirit moveth us so to duties of religion as agree with civil honesty and charity to our neighbours. Those therefore know not what spirit

they are of, who, under a pretence of zeal, will be uncivil and cruel, showing they are not led by that Spirit that appeared in the shape of a dove. Loth tables in this are one, that they come from one Spirit; and 'the second is like the first,' and requires love. And because all graces and duties come from the same Spirit, therefore one duty never crosses another; but the wisdom of the Spirit moves to all holy duties in their several and suitable places.

7. Motions, for the matter good, yet may be carnal in regard of self-confidence from whence they come. That which Peter resolved upon was good, but, confidence in himself marred it. Those motions which the Spirit stirs up are carried along in relying upon assisting grace. So much for that question.

3. Again, If we would not grieve the Spirit, let us take heed of being wanting to the Spirit's direction. The flesh here will make a forward objection, 'We can do no more than we can.'

Ans. The Spirit is always beforehand with us, preventing us with some knowledge and some ability, which if we join with the Spirit in putting forth, the Spirit is ready to concur with us, and lead us further. And our conscience will tell us so much, that if we do otherwise it is not for want of present assistance or privity, that the Spirit will deny us strength if we put ourselves upon it. Our own hearts, though deceitful, will tell us that we do what we do out of willingness, preferring some seeming good before the motion of the Spirit. Herein we carry in our conscience that which will quit God and condemn ourselves. There is not the worst man, whose heart runs away from God, but God follows him a great while with sweet motions, though such be the invincible stubbornness of the heart, that it will not yield. This will take away all excuse, as Saint Austin argues well. If I had known, saith a wicked man, I would not have done thus. Saith he, the pride of thy heart suggests that. Hadst thou not motions and admonitions that told thee the danger of it? If the Spirit, even in the worst actions, concur so far as they are actions and motions, may we not think that he is much more ready to concur with holy motions stirred up first by himself? If the Spirit be willing to concur in natural actions, much more in spiritual, whereunto itself is the first mover. The Spirit leaves not us till we leave the Spirit.

4. When the Spirit suggests good motions, turn them presenting into holy resolutions. Is this my duty, and that which tends to my comfort? Certainly I will do it. Let not these motions die in us. How many holy motions are kindled in hearing the word, and receiving the sacraments, &c.,

which die as soon as they are kindled for want of resolution! Therefore let us not give over till these motions be turned into purposes, and those good purposes ripened to holy actions, that they be not nipped in the blossom, but may bring forth perfect fruit. Let us labour to improve these talents to the end for which they are sent. Are they motions of comfort? Let us use them for comfort. Are they motions tending to duty? Let us make conscience to do our duty: let not our despairing hearts cross the Spirit in his comforts, nor stand out stubbornly as enemies against our duty, for that is to cross God, and to nip his motions in the bud.

5. Let the Spirit have full scope, both in the ordinances, and in the motions stirred up by the ordinances. This is the way to make the ordinances and the times glorious, but the liberties of the gospel are contrary to the liberties of the flesh. It turneth all things upside down, and men out of themselves. Hence is it that there is nothing so much opposed by the spirit of the world, as the purity and power of the gospel, which is a sufficient prejudice of an ill condition that all such men are in. But there is another spirit in gracious men. They are the children of light, and love it. If we would not grieve the Spirit, we must be willing to bring ourselves under all advantages of the Spirit's working; as conversing with those that are spiritual, and especially attending on those ordinances wherein the Spirit breatheth; wherein we may meet the Spirit. The walks of God's Spirit are, in the means of salvation, hearing the word preached, and holy communion one with another. The word and Spirit go together. Therefore if we will have the comforts of the Spirit, we must attend upon the word. Men grieve the Spirit by neglecting the word, and holy conference, &c. It is with the word and Spirit as with the veins and arteries. The veins have arteries, that as the veins carry the blood, the arteries carry the spirits to quicken the blood. The word is dead without the Spirit, and therefore attend on the word. And then wait on the Spirit to quicken the word, that both word and Spirit may guide us to life everlasting. Motions of this kind come from the Spirit; as it is said of old Simeon, that he came by the motion of the Spirit into the temple, Luke ii. 27. John was 'in the Spirit on the Lord's day,' Lev. i. 10. Our manna falls most then. Christ's Spirit and word dwell together in the heart. Therefore the apostle useth the dwelling of Christ in us and the word indefinitely. Faith wrought by the word lays hold upon Christ, and brings him into the soul, and keeps him there. It is a blessed thing when the Spirit in the ordinance and the Spirit in our hearts meet together. This is the way to feed and cherish the Spirit in us, and to put oil as it were into our lamp; because the Spirit, as it is in us, is thus nourished, even as the fire, though in its own element, feedeth

upon nothing; yet with us here below it is maintained with fuel, otherwise dieth and goeth out. Take heed of slighting any help of faith that God affords us, as wicked Ahaz, Isa. vii. 3, seq. God offered him, for the strengthening of his faith, a sign from heaven, or from earth, or any other creature. Oh no! he would not tempt God. He seemed a pious man; he would not tempt God; but what saith the prophet? 'Is it little for you to despise me? but you will grieve God;' insinuating, that when we despise those helps God hath given, we grieve the Spirit of God. Those that neglect the word and sacrament, what do they despise? A poor minister? and neglect bread and wine? No. They despise God himself, who knows better than ourselves what need we have of these helps.

6. Again, When we find the Spirit not assisting and comforting as in former times, it is fit to search the cause, which we shall find some slighting of holy motions, or the means of breeding of them; or yielding to some corruption which we are more especially addicted unto, or some sin unrepented of, which we take no notice of. It is good, therefore, to search our souls to the bottom. There may be some hidden corruption lying in the soul, which may undermine our grace and comfort; there may be a privy thief that robs us of all. And besides beloved and secret sins, it is good to bethink ourselves of old sins, which perhaps hitherto we have but outwardly thought of; and God is willing by some deadness and trouble of spirit, to mind us of renewing of sorrow for them. For want of strict accounting with ourselves, God calls us to these arrearages and back-reckonings, as we see in Joseph's brethren,Gen. 1. 15. If we find not that sweetness of communion with the Spirit that formerly we enjoyed, bethink ourselves when and wherein we lost it, that we may meet the Spirit again in these ways wherein we found him before we lost him, and take heed of those courses, in the entrance of which we found the Spirit leaving us.

7. Again, Take heed of little sins, which we count lesser sins perhaps than God doth. We weigh sin in our own balance, and not in his, whereas no sin is to be accounted little; for if it were once set upon the conscience, and the wrath opened due unto it, it would take all comfort from us. And therefore we must judge of sin as the Spirit doth, if we would not grieve the Spirit. As the communion of the Spirit is of all the sweetest, so the preserving of it requires most exact watchfulness and thorough understanding of ourselves. Take heed of the beginning of sin. When any lust ariseth, pray it down presently; say nay to it; let it have no consent; be presently humbled; otherwise we are endangered by yielding to grieve, by grieving to resist, by

resisting to quench, by quenching, maliciously to oppose the Spirit. Sin hath no bounds but those which the Spirit puts, whom therefore we should not grieve. And let us look to the head and spring of sins, whereby we grieve the Spirit of God; not to the sin so much as to the root. We are angry with ourselves for being passionate, but what is the cause of passion? It comes from pride. Jonah was a passionate man; in that measure that he was passionate he was proud. He was loath to be shamed when he had said, 'Nineveh shall be destroyed,' Jonah iv. 11. He thought upon the sparing of them he should be discredited; and he preferred his credit before the destruction of a populous city. So there is much depraving and detraction in the world; and thereupon brawls and breaches. What is the cause? A spirit of envy, and ofttimes a spirit of pride. So men run into the danger of others by wronging them. What is the cause? Worldliness, base earthly-mindedness. Men think not of the root of sin, but dwell upon the act done. We should,be led from the remote streams to the spring and source of all, and bewail that especially.

This care will be helped by spiritual wisdom, whereby we may discern both wherein we have grieved the Spirit, and wherein for the time to come we may. We cannot maintain friendship in perfect and sweet terms with any whose dispositions we know not; what will please or displease them. Therefore we should study the nature and delight of the Spirit, and wherein we are prone both to forget ourselves and the Spirit. We esteem not much the friendship of those who are so much friends to themselves, as they pass not much whether friends be contented or discontented. The Spirit dwells most largely in that heart that hath emptied itself of itself. The Israelites felt not the sweetness of the manna till they had spent their flesh-pots and other provision of Egypt. The nature of God's Spirit is holy; as it is holy, so [it] delighteth only in holy temples. Those, therefore, that set up any 'idol of jealousy' in their souls against God, that do not 'preserve their vessels in holiness,' cannot think of any communion with the Spirit. The Spirit is jealous of our affections, and will have nothing set up in the heart above God. Though the Spirit stoops to dwell in us, yet we must not forget the respect due to so great a superior, but reverently entertain whatever comes from him. Reverence and obedience is the carriage duo to a superior, and where the distance is not kept a breach will follow. We should reverence ourselves for the Spirit's sake, and think ourselves too good for any base lust to lodge in. The heart that the Spirit hath taken for itself should turn off all the contrary motions with abomination. What should pride and envy and passion do in an heart consecrated to the Spirit of meekness and holiness?

Upon any breach we must look by renewing repentance and faith in Christ, to renew our peace with God, before we can expect the grace and comfort of the Spirit. For as the Spirit cometh from the Father and the Son, and is procured by the death and satisfaction of the Son to the Father, without which we could never have expected the gift of the Spirit, so still we must have an eye to this satisfaction by Christ, and reconciliation through it, before we can recover communion with the Spirit, as being the best fruit of the love of God reconciled through Christ. We see David in the 51st Psalm first importunes God for mercy again and again, and then 'for the Spirit,' and for 'the joy of salvation.'

And take heed that nothing come in nor go out of our souls that may grieve the Spirit of God. Some things come in to us that grieve the Spirit, the corruptions we receive from others. Some things come out of our hearts that grieves God's Spirit, as corrupt thoughts and speeches. That indeed is the scope of this place, 'Let no corrupt communication come out of your mouths,' &c., and then follows, 'And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.' And after again he saith, 'Let all bitterness, and wrath, and clamour be laid aside,' insinuating that one way of grieving the Spirit is by ill and corrupt language. We can never talk with company that is not spiritual, but they will either vex and grieve us, or taint and defile us, unless it be in such exigencies of our calling as requires our converse with them. But I speak of a voluntary choice of such as favour not good things. Many men, to please their own carnal spirits, and the carnal spirits of others, they vent that that is against conscience, and against that that is higher than conscience, a more divine principle, the Holy Spirit of God; loose carnal speakers are people void of the power of religion.

Obj. Let no man say, Here is ado, indeed! duty upon duty. This will make our life troublesome.

Ans. The life of a Christian is an honourable, a comfortable, sweet life. Indeed, it requires the most care and watchfulness of any life in the world, being the best life. It is begun here, and accomplished in an everlasting life in heaven. Nothing in this world, neither our estates nor our favour with great persons, can be preserved without watchfulness; and shall we think to preserve the chief happiness of our souls without it, having so many enemies without and within, that labour to draw us into a cursed condition?

Therefore, to stir us up to the practice of these duties, that we may give contentment to so sweet a guest, consider what reason we have to regard the Spirit and his motions, from the good we have by them.

The Holy Spirit of God is our guide. Who will displease his guide, a sweet comfortable guide, that leads us through the wilderness of this world? As the cloud before the Israelites by day, and the pillar of fire by night, so he conducts us to the heavenly Canaan. If we grieve our guide, we cause him to leave us to ourselves. The Israelites would not go a step further than God by his angel went before them. It is in vain for us to make toward heaven without our blessed guide. We cannot do, nor speak, nor think anything that is holy and good without him. Whatsoever is holy and pious, it grows not in our garden, in our nature, but it is planted by the Spirit.

There is nothing in the world so great and sweet a friend that will do us so much good as the Spirit, if we give him entertainment. Indeed, he must rule. He will have the keys delivered to him; we must submit to his government. And when he is in the heart, he will subdue by little and little all high thoughts, rebellious risings, and despairing fears. This shall be our happiness in heaven, when we shall he wholly spiritual, that 'God shall he all in all.' We shall he perfectly obedient to the Spirit in our understandings, wills, and affections. The Spirit will then dwell largely in us, and will make the room where he dwelleth sweet and lightsome and free, subduing whatsoever is contrary, and bring fulness of peace and joy and comfort. And in the mean time, in what condition soever we are, we shall have suitable help from the Spirit. We are partly flesh and partly spirit. God is not all in all; the flesh hath a part in us. We are often in afflictions and under clouds. Let us therefore prize our fellowship with the Spirit. For are we in darkness? He is a Spirit of light. Are we in deadness of spirit? He is a Spirit of life. Are we in a disconsolate estate? He is a Spirit of consolation. Are we in perplexity, and know not what to do? He is a Spirit of wisdom. Are we troubled with corruptions? He is a sanctifying, a subduing, a mortifying Spirit. In what condition soever we are, he will never leave us till he hath raised us from the grave, and taken full possession of body and soul in heaven. He will prove a comforter when neither friends, nor riches, nor any thing in the world can comfort us. How careful should we be to give contentment to this sweet Spirit of God!

No Christian is so happy as the watchful Christian that is careful of his dirty, and to preserve his communion with the Holy Spirit of God; for by

entertaining him, he is sure to have communion with the Father and the Son. It is the happiest condition in the world, when the soul is the temple of the Holy Spirit; when the heart is as the 'holy of holies,' where there be prayers and praises offered to God. The soul is as it were an holy ark; the memory like the pot of manna preserving heavenly truths. It is an heavenly condition. A man prospers to heavenward when the Spirit of God is with him. You know Obed-Edom, when the ark was in his house, all thrived with him, 2 Sam. vi. 12; so while the Spirit and his motions are entertained by us we shall be happy in life, happy in death, happy to eternity. For it it is he 'By which you are sealed to the day of redemption.'

The apostle sealeth this grave admonition by an argument taken from the Spirit's sealing of them 'to the day of redemption.'

We are all by nature in bondage to sin and corruption. We are all redeemed from sin by the first coming of Christ, and are to be redeemed from corruption by the second.

There is a day appointed for this glorious work. In the mean time, God would have us assured of it aforehand. This assurance is by 'sealing.' And this sealing is 'by the Spirit.' None else need do it, no meaner person can do it.

And what respect is due to the Spirit for doing so gracious a work? That we grieve him not; and not only so, but that we endeavour so to please him, as he may with delight go on with this blessed work that it hath pleased him to take upon him.

As the duty is spiritual, so the arguments that enforce it are spiritual; and the argument here is fetched from that which hath a most constraining force; love expressed in the sweetest fruit of it, and the stability of it, 'sealing,' and 'sealing to the day of redemption,' as if the apostle should reason thus: God the Father hath ordained you to salvation by the redemption of Christ his Son; and that you might have the comfort of it in the way to it against all discouragements you may meet with, the Holy Ghost hath assured you of it, and set his seal upon you as those that are set apart for so great salvation; that the sense of this love might breed love in you again, and love breed a care out of ingenuity, not to offend so gracious a Spirit.

The Holy Spirit by which you are sealed.

The Holy Ghost delighteth to speak in our own language. We cannot rise to him, therefore he stoopeth to us.

This 'sealing' is either sealing of persons, or of good things intended to the persons. Sealing is not only a witnessing to us, but a work upon us and in us, carrying the image of him that sealeth us; whereby we are not only assured of the good promised to us, but fitted for the receiving of it. God prepareth no good for any but whom he prepares and fits for that good. There is not only an outward authorizing of the great grants we have by promise, oath, and sacrament, but an inward by the Spirit persuading of our interest in them, and working that which doth authorize us to lay claim unto them, after the use of a seal, both in confirmation and representation, and resemblance of him that sealed.

The persons sealed are, first, Christ, and then those that are given to Christ.

I. Christ is sealed,

1. By the Father. Christ was ordained by him to be a saviour in our nature, predestinate to be the head of the church. Wherefore he often saith he came to do his Father's will: 'Him hath the Father sealed,' John vi. 27, anointing him, calling him, setting him forth, sanctifying him by the Spirit, and every way fitting him with all grace to be a saviour.

2. He was sealed by the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in flesh, abased and exalted for us; so as his flesh is the flesh of the Son of God, and his blood the 'blood of God,' Acts xx. 28.

3. Sealed by a testimony from heaven of all three persons: by the Father, 'This is my well-beloved Son;' by the Holy Spirit descending like a dove; by himself to his human nature dwelling in all fulness in it. Christ is sealed by miracles done upon him and by him; by his baptizing and installing into his office, and by giving himself up to shed his blood for sin, by which blood the covenant is established and sealed.

4. In being justified in the Spirit, being raised from the dead, and 'declared thereby to be the Son of God mightily with power,' Rom. i. 4; and then advanced to the right hand of God, that through him our faith and trust might be in God, 2 Peter iii. 14; and appearing there for ever for us, sheweth not only his ability and willingness to save us, but that it is done already. We

may see all whatever we can look for to ourselves performed in our head to our comfort.

II. As Christ was sealed and fitted for us, so we are sealed and fitted for Christ. There is a privy seal in predestination. This is known only to God himself: 'The Lord knoweth who are his,' 2 Tim. ii. 19. And this knowledge of God of us is carried secret, as a river under ground, until his calling of and separating us from the rest of men, when first by his Spirit he convinceth us of what we are in ourselves, and of our cursed condition, and thereby layeth us low by sorrow and humiliation for sin as the greatest evil. And then a pardon is more to us than a crown; then we will wait for mercy and continue so, and beg for mercy and that upon Christ's own condition, by denying and renouncing anything of our own; then Christ is Christ unto us. Indeed, after this, it pleaseth Christ by his Spirit to open 'a door of hope,' and give some hints of mercy; and to let in some beams of love, and withal to raise up the soul by a spirit of faith, to close with particular mercy opened and offered by the Spirit, whereby the soul sealeth to the truth of the promise: John iii. 33, 'He that believeth hath set to his seal that God is true.' It is strange that God should stoop so low as to receive, as it were, confirmation by our belief, but thus God condescends in the phrase of Scripture, as we are said to help God: 'Curse ye Meroz, because they came not to help the Lord,' See., Judges v. 23. God stoops to be helped by us, and to have his truth, and power, and goodness ratified and confirmed by us. When we believe the promise of God in Christ—though it be by the help of the Spirit—we seal God's truth. And then God honoureth that sealing of ours by the scaling of his Spirit: 'After you believed you were sealed,' saith the apostle, Eph. i. 13; that is, the gracious love of Christ was further confirmed to them. God honours no grace so much as faith. Why? Because it honours God most of all others. It gives God the honour of his mercy, and goodness, and wisdom, and power, and of his truth, especially he that believe sin God by believing, seals that God is true; and God honours that soul again by sealing it to the day of redemption. God hath promised, 'Those that honour me, I will honour,' John xii. 26; therefore, 'He that believeth hath the witness in himself,' 1 John v. 10. That grace promised belongeth to him, for he carries in his heart the counterpane of the promises, he that confesseth and believeth shall have mercy. I believe, saith the soul, therefore the promise belongs to me. My faith, answering God's love in the promise, witnesseth so much to me. The Spirit not only revealeth Christ and the promises in general, but in attending upon the ordinances, by an heavenly light, the Spirit discovers to us our interest in particular, and saith to the soul, God is thy salvation, and enableth

the sold to say, I am God's. 'I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine,' Cant. ii. 16. 'Christ loved me, and gave himself for me,' Gal. ii. 20. Whence came this voice of Saint Paul? It was the still voice of the Spirit of God, that, together with the general truth in the gospel, discovered in particular Christ's love to him. It is not a general faith that will bring to heaven, but there is a special work of the Spirit, in the use of means, discovering and sealing the good will of God to us, that he intends good unto us; and thereupon our hearts are persuaded to believe in God, and to love God as our God, and Christ as our Christ.

This is excellently set down in the sweet communion of marriage. The Spirit is the paranymphos, the procurer of the marriage, between Christ and the soul. Now it is not sufficient to know that God and Christ bear good will to all believers (though that be the ground and general foundation of all, and a groat preparative to the special sealing of the Spirit); but then the Spirit comes and saith, Christ hath a special good will to me, and stirs up in me a liking to him again, to take him upon his own conditions, with conflict of corruptions, with the scorns of the world, &c. Whereupon the mutual marriage is made up between Christ and us. This work is the 'sealing of the Spirit.'

Many are the privileges of a Christian from this his sealing, as the use of a seal in man's affairs is manifold.

1. Seals serve for confirmation and allowance. To that purpose measures are sealed. God is said to seal instruction, Job xxxiii. 16. Confirmation is either by giving strength, or by the authority of such as are able to make good what they promise, and also willing; which they shew by putting to their seal, which hath as much strength to confirm him to whom the promise is made, as he hath will and power to make it good that hath engaged himself. Amongst men there is the writing, and the seal to the writing. When the seal is added to the writing there is a perfect ratification. So there are abundance of gracious promises in the Scriptures. Now when the Spirit comes and seals them to the soul, then they are sure to us; the Spirit puts the seal to the promises.

2. The use of it likewise is for distinction from others that carry not that mark. So the sealing of the Spirit distinguisheth a Christian from all other men. There is a distinction between men, in God's eternal purpose, but that concerns not us to meddle with, further than to know' it in general.

God 'knoweth who are his,' 2 Tim. ii. 19, and who are not his; but in time the Holy Spirit distinguisheth and ranks men as they were distinguished before all worlds, and as they shall be at the day of judgment. The beginning of that distinction that shall be afterward is in this life.

A seal maketh the impression of an image; the prince's image useth to be in his seal. So is God's image in his, which destroyeth the old image and print that was in us before. Holy and good men by this work of the Spirit are distinguished,

(1.) From civil men by the work of holiness, which mere civil men have not at all, but despise.

(2.) And, secondly, from seeing good men by the depth of that work. The Spirit of God works a new nature in them, whereby they are distinguished. Now nature in every creature is carried to one thing more than to another. There is a distinct propension in a good man to God, to grace and goodness; his aims and bent are distinct; and thereupon he hath a greater enlargement of heart suitable to his great aims. He looks above the world and worldly men. They are narrow, low, base-spirited men, the best of them.

(3.) Again, Things by nature work from within. Herein painted hypocrites are distinguished from a true substantial Christian. He works from a principle within. Another man is moved as the automata, things, of motion, clocks, and the like engines of wit, that move from a weight without that poiseth them. If they do any good it is from somewhat without that swayeth their aims and ends, and not from an inward principle. Nature works from an inward principle; light things go upward and heavy things downward, naturally; artificial things are forced. Thus good men are distinguished from those that are seemingly holy; there is a new nature wrought in them.

(4.) Again, Nature is constant. What is done naturally is done constantly. Heavy bodies go always downward, and light bodies upward. Every creature works according to his nature. An holy man is exercised in holiness constantly, because he doth it from an inward principle, from a work and stamp within. Different things may seem the same; as wild herbs may have the colour and form of those that are planted in the garden, but there is difference in the virtue of them. The seeming graces and actions of an hypocrite, they have no virtue in them; as there are some drugs without virtue, dead things. But there is a distinguishing virtue in the faith of a Christian, whereby he overcomes the world and his lusts; whereby he doth all

duties, prays and hears, and is fruitful in his conversation. In all his graces there is a comforting, strengthening virtue. True gold hath the virtue to comfort and strengthen the heat that alchemy gold hath not. True grace hath a working, comforting virtue. Another man's formal artificial actions have no virtue in them; neither is it intended, they being only put on to serve a turn. Two men may do the same things, and yet there be a grand difference: the one doing them from the seal of the Spirit, from a deeper die and stamp of the Spirit; the other if from the Spirit, yet it is but from a common work at the best. Some dyes cannot bear the weather, but alter colour presently; but there are others that, having something that give a deeper tincture, will hold. The graces of a true Christian hold out in all kinds of weathers, in winter and summer, prosperity and adversity, when superficial counterfeit holiness will give out. Thus we see the seal of the Spirit serves for distinction.

3. The use of a seal is likewise for appropriation. Merchants use to seal their wares they would not have others have any right unto.

A Christian is God's in a more peculiar manner than others. There is not only a witness of the Spirit that God is his; but the Spirit works in him an assent to take God again. There is a mutual appropriation: 'I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine,' Cant. ii. 10. When the soul can say, 'Thou art my God,' it is not frustrate, because God saith before, 'I am thy salvation,' Ps. xxxv. 3. Where the Spirit seals, God appropriates.

'God chooseth the righteous man to himself,' Ps. iv. 3. And we may know this appropriation by appropriating God again: 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and what have I in earth in comparison of thee?' Ps. lxxiii. 25. There is no action that God works upon the soul, but there is a reflect action by the Spirit to God again. If God choose and love us, we choose and love him again. God appropriates us first. We are his and we are Christ's. We are God's, because he hath given Christ for us. We are Christ's, because he hath given himself for us. We are, as the apostle saith, a people of acquisition, 'a people purchased,' Acts xx. 28—purchased at a dear rate by the blood of Christ. Those that are Christ's, the Spirit appropriates them. This appropriation is by sealing.

4. Again, We use to set our seal only upon that we have some estimation of. 'Set me as a seal,' saith the church in the Canticles, 'upon thy right hand,' viii. 6; have me in thy eye and mind as a special thing thou valuest.

The witness and work of the Spirit shows God's estimation of us. The Scripture is abundant in setting forth the great price that God sets on his children. They are his children, his spouse, his friends, his portion, his treasure, his coin. He sets his mark, his likeness on them. They are things hallowed and consecrated. They are first fruits. 'Israel is a holy thing,' Jer. ii. 3. Their titles shew the esteem that God hath of them. He values them more than all the world besides, which are as chaff and dross: 'The righteous man is more excellent than his neighbour,' Prov. xii. 26. As there is a difference of excellency between precious stones and other common stones, between fruitful and barren trees, so there is amongst men. And in this regard, God sets a higher esteem upon some; and thence it is that they have those honourable and glorious titles in Scripture, of 'sons,' 'heirs,' 'kings,' and 'co-heirs with Christ;' when others are termed 'dross and dung,' and thorns,' and have all the base terms that may be.

Now this estimation, by 'sealing,' is known to us by the grace God works in us. Common gifts and privileges and favours of the world are no seal of God's estimation. If God should give a man kingdoms and great monarchies, it seals not God's love to him at all; but when God makes a man a spiritual king to rule over his base lusts, this is a seal of God's valuing him above other men. Therefore we should learn how to value others and ourselves, not by common things that castaways may have, but by the stamp of God set on us by the Spirit, which is an argument that God intends to lay us up as coin for another treasury, for heaven. It is the common grand error of the limes to be led with false evidences. Many think God loves them, because he spares them and follows them with long patience, and makes them thrive in the world. Alas! are these fruits of God's special love? What grace hath he wrought in thy heart by his Spirit? 'He gives his Spirit to them that pray,' Luke xi. 13; insinuating that next the gift of his Son, the greatest gift is the Spirit, to fashion and fit us to be members of his Son. This is an argument of God's love and esteem.

5. Seals likewise are used for secrecy, as in letters, &c. So this seal of the Spirit is a secret work. God knoweth who are his. They are only known to him and to their own hearts: 'The white stone is only known to him that hath it, and the hidden manna,' Rev. ii. 17. None so infallibly can know the state in grace, as those that have the gracious work themselves. Holy men in some degree are known one to another, to make the communion of saints the sweeter. There is a great deal of spiritual likeness in Christians; 'face answereth to face,' Prov. xxvii. 19, that one hath strong confidence of the

salvation of another. But the undoubted certainty of a man's estate is known only to God and his own soul; nay, sometimes it is hidden from a man's self. There are so many infirmities and abasements and troubles in the world, that this life is called a 'hidden life' in Scripture: 'Our life is hid with Christ in God,' Col. iii. 3. It is unknown to the saints themselves sometimes, and the world alway: 'They neither know him that begets, nor them that are begotten,' 1 John v. 1.

O. Hence, likewise, the use of a seal is to shew that things should be kept inviolable. Hereupon the church is as a 'sealed fountain,' Cant. iv. 12. Sealing shows a care of preservation from common annoyance. Hereupon likewise it is that sealing is the securing of persons or things sealed from hurt. No man will violate a letter, because it is sealed. The tomb where Christ was buried was sealed, and the prison doors upon Daniel, that none might meddle with them. So the Spirit of God, by this work of sealing, secures God's children; as the blood sprinkled upon the posts of the doors of the Israelites secured them from the destroying angel. In Ezek. ix. 4, there was a mark set upon those that were to be preserved that secured them; and in Rev. vii. 3, the 'sealed ones' must not be hurt. So where this seal of the Spirit is, it is an argument that God means to preserve such a one from eternal destruction, and from prevailing dangers in this world. They are God's sealed ones. No man can hurt them without wrong to God himself. 'Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm,' Ps. cv. 15. And likewise from devouring sins and dangerous apostasy. A man that is truly sealed by the Spirit of God he never becomes a member of antichrist, a stigmatized papist —for antichrist hath his seal too—he is kept from soul-murdering errors; he hath this security upon him by the work and witness of God's Spirit. Whatsoever the use is, or can be, of a seal in man's affairs, that God will have us make use of in his heavenly intercourse betwixt him and us.

Whereby you are sealed.

Now there are divers degrees of the Spirit's sealing.

1. Faith; 'He that believes hath the witness in himself,' 1 John v. 10. He carries in his heart the counterpane of all the promises. This grace is first planted in the heart, and answereth to God's love and purpose towards us of giving eternal life. The seal and first discovery of election is manifested to us in our believing. Acts xiii. 48, 'As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.' This believing is also a seal to us, in that it is of those gifts that

'accompany salvation,' Heb. vi. 9, of which God never repents him by calling back again. It is a 'seed that abideth for ever.'

2. The work of sanctifying grace upon the heart is a seal. Whom the Spirit sanctifieth he saveth. 'The Lord knoweth who are his,' 2 Tim. ii. 19. But how shall we know it? By this seal: 'Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity,' not only in heart and affection, but in conversation, and that shall he a seal of his sonship to him. None are children of God by adoption, but those that are children also by regeneration; none are heirs of heaven but they are new born to it. 'Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath begotten us anew to an inheritance immortal,' &c., 1 Peter i. 4. This seal of sanctification leaves upon the soul the likeness of Jesus Christ, even grace for grace.

But because in time of desertion and temptation we are in a mist, and cannot read our own faith and our own graces, it pleaseth Christ after some trial and exercise to shine upon his own graces in the heart, whereby we may know we believe and know we love; until which time, the heart sees nothing that is good, and seems to be nothing but all objections and doubtings. We may be sometimes in such a state as Paul and his company was in the ship, Acts xxvii. 20, when 'they saw neither sun nor stars many days together;' almost past all hope. So a Christian may for many days together see neither sun nor star; neither light in God's countenance nor light in his own heart; no grace issuing from God; no grace carrying the soul to God; though even at that time God darts some beam through those clouds upon the soul. The soul again, by a spirit of faith, sees some light through those thickest clouds, enough to keep the soul from utter despair, though not to settle it in peace.

In this dark condition, if they do as St Paul and his company did, cast anchor even in the dark night of temptation, and pray still for day, God will appear, and all shall clear up; we shall see light without and light within; the day-star will arise in their hearts.

Though by reflecting upon our souls we are able to discern a spirit of faith, God may hide himself from the soul in regard of comfort. Nay, a Christian may know himself to be in the state of grace, and yet be in an afflicted condition. As in Job's case, he knew his Redeemer lived, and he resolved to trust in him, 'even though he killed him,' Job xiii. 15; he knew he was no hypocrite; He knew his graces were true; and for all the imputations of his friends, they could not dispute him out of his sincerity: 'You shall not take my uprightness from me,' Job xxvii. 6. Yet for the present he saw no

light from heaven till it pleased God to reveal himself in special favour to him. There is always peace and joy in believing; yet not in that degree which gives the soul content, until by honouring God in believing, and waiting still his good time, he honoureth us with further sense of his favour, and poureth forth his Spirit to us, manifesting his special love towards us; and this is a further degree of sealing of us, confirming us more strongly than before.

The reason why we can neither have grace to believe, nor know we believe, nor when we know we believe enjoy comfort without a fresh new act of the Spirit, is because the whole carriage of a soul to heaven is above nature. Where the Spirit makes a stand, we stand and can go no further. We cannot conclude from right grounds without some help of the Spirit; some doubts, some fears will hinder the application to ourselves, even as those that live in some damnable sin cannot but grant that those that live in such a sin shall never inherit heaven; and their conscience tells them they live in such a sin, yet self-love blinds them so, that they will not conclude against themselves that they shall be damned; so true believers cannot conclude for themselves without divine light and help.

It pleaseth God thus to keep every degree and act of sealing in his own hand, to keep us in a perpetual dependence upon him, and to awe us that we should not grieve the Spirit of grace, and cause him to suspend either act of grace or comfort.

Joy and strong comfort come from a superadded seal of the Spirit. The works of the Spirit are of a double kind: either in us, by imprinting sanctifying grace; or upon us, by shining upon our souls in sweet feelings of joy. What the Spirit worketh in us is more constant, as a new nature which is always like itself and worketh uniformly; but comfort and joy are of the nature of such privileges as God vouchsafeth at one time and not at another, to some and not to others.

This degree of sealing in regard of joy hath its degrees likewise; sometimes it is so clear and strong, that the soul questioneth not its state in grace ever after, but passeth on in a triumphant manner to that glory it looks for. Sometimes after this sealing there may be interrupting of comfortable communion so far as to question our condition; yet this calling into question comes not from the Spirit, which, where it once witnesseth for us, never witnesseth against us, but it is a fruit of the flesh not fully subdued, it is a sin itself, and usually a fruit of some former sin. For howsoever we should not doubt after a former witness of the Spirit, yet there will be so much

weakening of sense of our assurance, as there is yielding to any lust. The knowledge of our estate in grace and comfort thereupon, though it may be weakened by neglect of our watchfulness, yet still it hath the force of an argument to assure us when the Spirit pleaseth to direct us to make use of it, because God's love varies not as our feelings doth; and a fit doth not alter a state. The child in the womb stirs not always, yet it lives; and that may be gathered from the former stirrings.

This degree of sealing by way of witness and comfort, is appropriated to the Holy Spirit. Every person in the blessed Trinity hath their several work. The Father chooseth us and passeth a decree upon the whole groundwork of our salvation. The Son executeth it to the full. The Spirit applieth it, and witnesseth our interest in it by leading our souls to lay hold upon him, and by raising up our souls in the assurance of it, and by breeding and cherishing sweet, communion with Father and Son, who both of them seal us likewise by the Spirit. This joy and comfort is so appropriated to the Spirit, as it carrieth the very name of the Spirit, and is one of the three witnesses on earth, that witnesseth not only Christ to be a Saviour, but our Saviour, 1 John v. 7. The three witnesses on earth are, the 'Spirit, water, and blood.' For the better conceiving of which place, we must know that the great work of Christ's redemption and justification was typified in the Old Testament by blood; and the great work of our sanctification typified by their washing. To answer which types, when Christ's side was pierced, there came forth both blood and water, showing that Christ came not only by blood to justify us, but by water to sanctify us. Hereupon blood and water have the power to be witnesses. The blood of Christ being sprinkled on the heart by the Spirit, doth pacify the conscience in assuring it that God is pacified by blood, as 'being offered by the eternal Spirit,' Heb. ix. 14. This quieting power sheweth that it was the blood of God, and shed for me in particular.

The witness of water is from the power the Spirit hath to cleanse our nature, which no creature can do, but the Spirit of God. Change of nature is peculiar to the Author of nature. If we feel, therefore, our natures altered, and of unclean become holy, in some measure we may know we are the children of God, as being begotten by the Spirit of Christ, conforming us to his own holiness. Our spirit as sanctified can witness to us that we are Christ's.

But oft it falls out, that our own spirits, though sanctified, cannot stand against a subtle temptation strongly enforced. God superadds his own Spirit.

Guilt often prevails over the testimony of blood; that of water, by reason of stirring corruptions, runneth troubled. Therefore the third, the immediate testimony of the Spirit, is necessary to witness the Father's love to us, to us in particular, saying, 'I am thy salvation,' Ps. xxxv. 3, 'thy sins are pardoned,' Mat. ix. 2. And this testimony the word echoeth unto, and the heart is stirred up and comforted with joy inexpressible. So that both our spirits and consciences, and the Spirit of Christ joining in one, strongly witness our condition in grace, that we are the sons of God.

In this threefold testimony, the order is this: blood begets water; satisfaction by blood procures the Spirit from God, as a witness of God's love; and by feeling the power of blood and water, we come to have the Spirit witnessing and scaling our adoption unto us, to establish us in the state of grace against storms of temptation to the contrary. The Spirit persuadeth to look unto blood, convinceth the heart of the efficacy of it, and then quieteth the soul, which giveth itself up to Christ wholly and to whole Christ; and thence feels his heart established against carnal reason, so as he can and doth oppose Christ's blood to all the guilt that doth arise. And this witness of the Spirit comforting the soul is the most familiar, and affects most.

If we feel it not, as oft we do not, then rise upward from want of this joy of spirit to water, and see what work we find of the Spirit in cleansing our souls; and if we find these waters not to run so clearly as to discern our condition in them, then go to the witness of blood, and let us bathe our souls in it, and then we shall find peace in free grace procured by blood; for ofttimes a Christian is driven to that pass, that nothing can comfort him, within or without him, in heaven or earth, but the free and infinite mercy of God in the blood of Christ, whereon the soul relieth when it feels no comfort, nor joy of the Spirit, nor sees no work of sanctification. Then it must rest on the satisfaction wrought by the blood of Christ, when the soul can go to God and say, 'If we confess our sins, thou art just to forgive them; and the blood of Christ shall cleanse us from all sin,' 1 John i. 9. Therefore, though I feel not inward peace, nor the work of the Spirit, yet I will cast myself upon thy mercy in Christ. Hereupon we shall in God's time come to have the witness of water and the Spirit more evidently made clear unto us.

The Spirit it is that witnesses with blood, and witnesses with water, and by water, whatsoever of Christ's is applied unto us by the Spirit. But, besides witnessing with these witnesses, the Spirit hath a distinct witness by way of enlarging the soul; which [is] joy in the apprehension of God's fatherly love

and Christ's setting the soul at liberty. The Spirit doth not always witness unto us our condition by force of argument from sanctification, but sometimes immediately by way of presence; as the sight of a friend comforts without help of discourse. The very joy from sight prevents the use of discourse.

This testimony of the Spirit containeth in it the force of all, word, promise, oath, seal, &c. This is greater than the promise, as a seal is more than our hand, and as an oath is more than a man's bare word. The same that is said of God's oath in comparison with his bare promise, may be said of this sealing in comparison of other testimonies. That as God was willing more abundantly to clear to the heirs of promise their salvation, he added an oath, Heb. vi. 18; so for the same end he added this his Spirit as a seal to the promise, and to the other testimonies. Our own graces indeed, if we were watchful enough, would satisfy us. The fountain is open as to Hagar, but she seeth it not, &c., Gen. xxi. 17, seq. Howsoever the Spirit, if that cometh, it subdueth all doubts.

As God in his oath and swearing joineth none to himself, but sweareth by himself, so in this witness he taketh in no other testimony to confirm it, but witnesseth by himself. And hence ariseth 'joy unspeakable and glorious,' 1 Pet. i. 8, and 'peace which passeth all understanding,' Philip, iv. 7; for it is an extract of heaven when we see our being in the state of grace, not in the effect only, but as in the breast and bosom of God.

Quest. But how shall we know this witness from an enthusiastically fancy and illusion?

Ans. This witness of the Spirit is known from the strong conviction it bringeth with it, which weigheth and overpowers the soul to give credit unto it. But there be, you will say, strong illusions. True. Bring them therefore to some rules of discerning. Bring all your joy, and peace, and confidence to the word. They go both together. As a pair of indentures, one answers another. In Christ's transfiguration upon the mount, Moses and Elias appeared together with Christ. In whatsoever transfiguration and ravishment we cannot find Moses and Elias and Christ to meet—that is, if what we find in us be not agreeable to the Scriptures—we may well suspect it as an illusion.

That you may know the voice of the Spirit of God from the carnal confidence of our own spirits, inquire,

1. What went before.

2. What accompanieth it.

3. What followeth after this ravishing joy.

1. The word must go before it, in being assented unto by faith, and submitted unto by answerable obedience: 'In whom, after you believed' the word of promise, 'you were sealed.' So that if there be not,

(1.) First, A believing of the word of promise, there is no sealing: 'The God of peace give you joy in believing,' 1 Thes. v. 23. There must be a believing, a 'walking according to rule,' Gal. vi. 10, or else no joy nor peace will be unto us. If we cannot bring the word and our hearts together, it is not God's, but Satan's sealing, a groundless presumption, and it will end in despair. As Christ came by water and blood, so doth this testimony; it cometh after the other two. First, the heart is carried to blood, and from thence hath quiet; then followeth water, and our nature is washed and changed; and then cometh this of the Spirit. Though it be not grounded on their testimony,' but is above theirs, yet they go before. Where we thus find the work, we may know it to be right by the order of it.

(2.) It cometh after deep humiliation and abasement. Though we know ourselves to be the children of God in some such measure, as we would not change our condition for all the world, yet we would have more evidence; we would have further manifestation of God's countenance towards us; we are not satisfied, but wait. After we have long fasted, and our hearts melted and softened, then God poureth water upon the dry wilderness, and then it comes to pass, through his goodness and mercy, that he comforts and satisfies the desires of the hungry soul. God will not suffer the spirit of his children to fail.

(3.) Likewise, after self-denial in that which is pleasing to us. It is made up with inward comfort. If this self-denial be from a desire of nearer communion with God, God will not fail them in that they desire. There are wretches in the world that will deny their sinful nature nothing. If they have a disposition to pride, they will be proud; if they have a lust to be rich, to live in pleasures, to follow the vanities of the times, they will do so; they will not say nay to corrupt nature in any thing. Will God vouchsafe to give any true joy or comfort of spirit to such ones? No. Those that let loose their natures without a check shall never taste of this hidden manna. But when we deny

ourselves, deny to hear or see that which may feed corruption, when we deny to take delight in that, that we might if we would go the course of the world, there is a proportionable measure of joy and peace and comfort in a higher kind made good to the soul. God is so good, we shall lose nothing for parting with anything for his sake.

(4.) It is usually found, after conflict and victory, as a reward. 'To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the hidden manna,' Rev. ii. 17. God's children, after strong conflict with some temptation or inward corruption, especially that which accompanieth their disposition and temper, when they have so conflicted as that at last they get the better, they find by experience sweet enlargement of spirit. To strive against them is a sign of grace, but to get victory over them, even to subdue our enemies under us that rise up against us, this bringeth true peace and joy.

(5.) After we have put forth our spiritual strength in holy duties, God crowns our endeavours with increase of comfort. A Christian that takes pains with his heart, and will not serve God with that which cost him nothing, enjoys that which the spiritual sluggard wishes for, and goes without. God is so just that those men which have striven to live according to the principles of nature, have found a contentment proportionable to their endeavours; some degree of pleasure attends every good action, as a reward before a reward.

2. Besides these things that go before this joy and testimony, there are, secondly, some things that do accompany it, if it he right, as,

(1.) This spiritual comfort enlargeth our hearts to a desire after an high prizing the ordinances, so far is it from taking us off from a dependence upon them. In the word and other means it found comfort from God, therefore it delights to be meeting God still in his own ways. The eye of the soul is strengthened to see further into truths, and is enabled more spiritually to understand the things it knew before, as in many of the same truths that wise men understand, they understood them when they were young as when they were old, but then more clearly. So all truths are more clearly known by this. The Spirit by which we are sealed is the Spirit of illumination, not that it reveals any thing different from the word, but giveth a more large understanding and inward knowledge of the same truths as were known before.

A (2.) A liberty and boldness with God, for 'where the Spirit is, there is a gracious liberty;' that is, further enlargements from the law, guilt of sin, and the fear of the wrath of God, that we can come with some boldness to his throne and to him as our Father; a freedom to open our souls in prayer before him. This stands not so much in multitude of words, or forms of expressions, but a son-like boldness in our approaches in prayer. The hypocrite, especially in extremity, cannot pray; his conscience stops his mouth. But where the Spirit sealeth, it giveth this liberty, freely to open and spread our case before him and call upon him, yea, under the evidence of some displeasure.

(B.) There cloth likewise ordinarily accompany this sealing of the Spirit, Satan's malice and opposition; who, being cast from heaven himself, envies this heaven upon earth in a creature of meaner rank by creation than himself. We must not think to enjoy pure joy hero without molestation. If there he danger of exalting above measure, we must look for some messenger of Satan.

B. After this witness it leaves the soul more humble; none more abased in themselves than those that have nearest communion with God, as we see in the angels that stand before God and cover their faces, so Isa. vi. 2, set]. Job, after God had manifested himself unto him, abhorred himself in dust and ashes, Job xlii. 6. It brings with it a greater desire of sanctification and heavenly-mindedness. As Elias ascended up into heaven, his cloak fell by degrees from him; the higher our spirits are raised, the more we put off affections to earthly things.

(2.) Again, The end of this further manifestation of the Spirit being encouragement to duty, or suffering in a good cause, the soul by this witness of the Spirit finds increase of spiritual mettle. It finds itself steeled against opposition. Whilst this wind filleth their sails, they are carried on amain, and are frighted with nothing that stands in their way. See how the believers triumph upon the Spirit's witnessing to their spirits that they are the sons of God, Rom. viii. 16-33, &c.

God usually preserveth such comforts for the worst times: 'Give wine to those that be of heavy heart,' Prov. xxxi. 6. The sense of this love of Christ is better than wine. This refreshing Paul had in the dungeon, and he sung at midnight. After this witnessing, therefore, look for some piece of service to do, or trial to undergo.

Much must be left to God's fatherly wisdom in this, who knows whom to cheer up, and when and in what degree, and to what purpose and service; and remember always that these enlargements of spirit are as occasional refreshings in the way, not daily food to live upon. We maintain our life by faith, not by sight or feeling. Feasting is not for every day, except that feast of a good conscience, which is continual; but I speak of grand days and high feasts. These are disposed as God seeth cause.

(3.) Where this sealing of the Spirit is, there followeth also upon it a lifting up of the head in thinking of our latter end. It makes one think of the times to come with joy, as the Holy Ghost here mentioneth the day of redemption, as a motive to them to take heed that they did not grieve the Spirit; intimating they should think of the day of redemption with a great deal of joy and comfort. The saints are described in Scripture to be those that 'look for the appearing of Christ,' 2 Pet. iii. 12. They are Christ's, and in him their reckonings and accounts are even. And therefore with delight they can often think and meditate upon the blessed times that are to come.

There be divers degrees of sealing, arising from divers degrees of revelation. God first reveals his good will in his promises to all believers. This is the privilege of the church, especially in these latter times. Then by his Spirit reveals those saving truths to those that are his, by a divine light. So that by argument drawn from the power they feel from truths, in searching secrets, in casting down, in raising up, in staying the soul, they can seal to them that they are divine.

The same Spirit that reveals the power of the word to me, reveals in particular mine own interest in all those truths upon hearing them.

Whereupon they are written in my heart, as if they had been made in particular to me: the comfortable truths in the word are transcribed into my heart answerable to the word; as that God in Christ is mine, forgiveness mine, grace mine: whereupon adoption in Christ is sealed; which God still sealeth farther to my soul by increase of comfort, as he seeth cause for encouragement. The same Spirit that manifesteth in me the word I hear and read to be the truth of God, from the power and efficacy of it: the same Spirit teacheth to apply it, and in applying of it consoleth me.

Therefore we ought to desire to he sealed by the Spirit, in regard of an holy impression; and then that the Holy Spirit would shine upon his own graces, so as we may clearly see what is wrought in us above nature; and

because this is furthered by revealing his love in Christ in adoption to us, we must desire of God to vouchsafe the Spirit of revelation, to reveal the mysteries of his truth unto us, and our portion in them in particular, and so our adoption; and in the mean time to wait and attend his good pleasure in the use of all good moans. Thus we waiting, God will so far reveal himself in love to us, as shall assure us of his love, and stir up love again; and the same Spirit that is a Spirit of revelation will be a Spirit of sanctification, and so adoption. Dignity, and fitting qualities suitable to dignity, go both together.

In that grand inquiry about our condition, there is a great miscarriage when men will begin with the first work of the Father in election, then pass to redemption by Christ: I am God's, and Christ hath redeemed me; and never think of the action of the third person in sanctification, which is the nearest action upon the soul, as the third person himself is nearest unto us; and so fetch their first rise where they should set up their last rest. Whereas we should begin our inquiry in the work of the third person, which is next unto us; and then upon good grounds we may know our redemption and election.

The Holy Spirit is both a Spirit of revelation and of sanctification together, as hath been said; for together with opening the love of the Father and the Son, he fitteth us by grace for communication with them.

People out of self-love will have conceits of the Father's and Son's love severed from the work of the Spirit upon their hearts, which will prove a dangerous illusion. Although the whole work of grace by the Spirit arise from the Father's and Son's love, witnessed by the Spirit, yet the proof of the Father's love to us in particular, ariseth from some knowledge of the work of the Spirit; the error is not in thinking of the Father's and Son's love, but in a strengthening themselves by a pleasing powerless thought of it against the work of grace by the Spirit, which their corruption withstands. So they will carve out of the work of the Trinity what they think agreeable to their lusts, whereas otherwise, if their heart were upright, they would for this very end think of God's love and Christ's, to quicken them to duty and to arm them against corruption.

To the day of redemption.

1. There is a double redemption: redemption of the soul by the first coming of Christ to shed his blood for us; redemption of our bodies from corruption by his second coming. We have not the perfect consummation

and accomplishment of that which Christ wrought in his first coming till his second coming. Then there shall be a total redemption of our souls, and bodies, and conditions. There is a double redemption, as there is a double coming of Christ, the first and the second; the one to redeem our souls from sin and Satan, and to give us title to heaven; the other to redeem our bodies from corruption, when Christ shall come 'to be glorious in his saints,' 2 Thes. i. 10. As likewise there is a double resurrection, the first and the second, and a double regeneration, of soul and body.

In sickness and weakness of body, or when age hath overtaken us that we cannot live long here, and the horror of the grave, the house of darkness, is presented to us; Oh let us think there will be a redemption of our bodies as well as of our souls! Christ wall redeem our bodies from corruption, as he came to work the redemption of our souls from sin and death; and he that will redeem our bodies out of the grave, he will redeem his church out of misery, he will call the Jews; he that will do the greater will do the inferior. When we hear of this, let us think with comfort of all the promises that are yet unperformed.

2. Secondly, Full redemption is not yet. What need I bring Scripture to prove it. It is a point that every man's experience teacheth. Alas! let our bodies speak: we are not free from sickness and diseases; nay, what is our life but a going to corruption? The sentence is passed upon us, 'earth returneth to earth,' Gen. iii. 19. Till death we are going to death; so besides sickness and weakness hero, we must die, and after death be subject to corruption. The apostle in this respect calleth our body 'a vile body,' Philip, iii. 21. As for our souls, though they be freed from the guilt and damnation of sin, yet there are remainders of corruption that breed fear and terror; and though they be freed from the rule of Satan, yet not from his molestation and vexations by temptations. In a word, our whole state and condition in this world is a state and condition of misery; we are followed with many afflictions, so that there is not yet perfect redemption, whether we look to body-, soul, or state; the body being subject to diseases, the soul to infirmities, the state to misery.

But there is a 'day' appointed for it.

By a 'day' we are not to understand the time measured by the course of the sun in twenty-four hours, but in the Scripture meaning, a day is a set time of mercy or judgment. As there was a solemn day, 'the fulness of time,' Gal. iv. 4, for the working of the first redemption, so there is a solemn time set for the second redemption, when all the children of God shall be gathered;

those that lie in the dust shall be raised and for ever glorified. It is the day of all days; that day that by way of excellency is called 'that day,'f in the Scriptures, and 'the day of the Lord,' Mat. xii. 8—the day that we should think of every day, especially in sickness, and trouble, and crosses, and molestations, from the wicked world, and in sense of the remainders of corruption. There is a day of redemption to come that will make amends for all. The frequent thoughts of that day would comfort us, and keep us from shrinking in any affliction and trouble; it would move us to a carriage and conversation answerable to our hopes, and also it would help to fit us, it would infuse a desire of qualification to be prepared for that great day.

But how little of our time is spent in thoughts this way! If we could oft think of the day of redemption, our lives would be otherwise, both in regard of gracious as also of comfortable carriage. Should we be disconsolate at every loss and cross, at sicknesses and the thought of death, when we shall be turned into our first principle, the earth, if we did think of the day of redemption, when all shall be restored again, all the decays of nature, and the image of God be perfectly stamped? The thought of this would make us go willingly to our graves, knowing that all this is but a preparation for the great 'day of redemption.' The first day of redemption, when Christ came to redeem our souls, and to give us title to heaven, it was in the expectation of all good people before Christ. They are said 'to wait for the consolation of Israel,' Luke ii. 25. That was the character to know those blessed people by. And what should be the distinguishing character of gracious souls now, but to be such as wait for the coming of Christ? How oft in the epistles of St Paul is it? 'There is a crown of righteousness for me, and for all that wait for the appearing of Christ,' 2 Tim. iv. 8.

There was a year of jubilee among the Jews every fifty years. Then all that were in bondage were set at liberty. So at this blessed jubilee, this glorious day of redemption, all that are in bondage of death and under corruption shall be set at everlasting liberty. No question but the poor servants that were vexed with hard masters, they thought of the jubilee; and those that had their possessions took away, they thought of the jubilee, the day of recovering all. So let us oft think of this everlasting jubilee, when we shall recover all that we lost, for ever to keep it, and never to lose it again as we did in the first creation. Let us oft think of this day. It will infuse vigour and strength into all our conversation. Indeed, to the ungodly, it is not a day of redemption, but a 'day of judgment,' and the 'revelation of the just wrath

of God,' when their sins shall be laid open, and receive a sentence answerable.

Alas! there is such a deal of atheism in the world—and the seeds of it in the best, unless it be wrought out daily—that we forget the God of vengeance and the day of vengeance. Would men go on in sins against conscience if they thought of this last day? It is impossible. Such courses come from this abominable root of atheism and unbelief; for had they but a slight faith, it would be effectual to alter their course in some measure. Therefore the Scripture gives them the name of fools, though they would be thought to be the only wise men. 'The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God,' Ps. xiv. 1. And what follows? 'Corrupt are they, and abominable.' The cause of all is, the fool hath said in his heart. He will needs force it upon his heart that there is no God, hell, nor heaven, nor judgment. Thence come abominable courses.

Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

From the consideration of all that hath been formerly spoken of, the sealing of the Spirit to the day of redemption, there ariseth these four conclusions:

First, That we may attain unto a knowledge that we are in that state of grace.

Secondly, That upon knowledge of our state in grace for the present, we may be assured of our future full redemption.

Thirdly, That this assured knowledge is wrought by the Spirit.

Fourthly, That the consideration of this assurance wrought by the Spirit is an effectual argument to dissuade from grieving the Spirit.

1. For the first, we may know we are in the state of grace, first, because the apostle would not have used an argument moving not to grieve the Spirit from a thing unknown or guessed at. It is an ill manner of reasoning to argue from a thing unknown.

2. Again, Sealing of us by the Spirit is not in regard of God, but ourselves. God knoweth who are his, but we know not that we are his but by sealing.

3. The scope of the Scriptures indited by the Spirit is for comfort. The apostle saith so directly; and what comfort is in an uncertain condition, wherein a man knows not but be may be a reprobate? Wherefore came our Saviour into the world and took our nature upon him? Why became be a curse for us? Why bath be carried our nature into heaven, and there appears for us till be bath brought us home to himself, but that be would have us out of all doubt of his love after once by faith we have received him? Whence proceeded those commandments to believe, those cheeks of unbelievers, the commendation of them that did believe, those upbraidings of doubting, as springing from unbelief? To what use are tho sacraments, but to seal unto us the benefits of Christ, if upon all this we should still doubt of God's love, especially when, besides the sealing of the promises to us, we are sealed ourselves by the Spirit of promise?

Obj. This is true if we know we do believe.

Ans. It is the office of the Spirit, as to work faith and other graces, so to reveal them to us. Every grace of God is a light of itself coming from the Father of lights; and it is the property of light not only to discover other things, but itself too; and it is the office of the Spirit to give further light to this light, by shining upon his own grace in us. An excellent place for this is 1 Cor. ii. 12, 'We have received the Spirit that is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.' 'In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every thing be confirmed.' One witness is, 'the spirit of man,' which knows 'the things that are in man,' 1 Cor. ii. 11; the other witness is 'the Spirit of God, witnessing to our spirits that we are the children of God,' Rom. viii. 11. Here is light added to light, witness added to witness, the greater witness of the Spirit to the less of our spirits. The apostle joins them both together: 'My conscience bears me witness through the Holy Ghost,' Rom. ix. 1.

Obj. Man's heart is deceitful.

Ans. But the Spirit of God in man's heart is not deceitful. It is too holy to deceive, and too wise to be deceived in this point of assurance. We plough with the Spirit's heifer, or else we could not find out this riddle, Judges xiv. 18. Where there is an object to be seen, and an eye to see, and light to

discover the object to the eye, sight must needs follow. In a true believer, after he is enlightened, as there is grace to be seen, and an eye of faith to see, so there is a light of the Spirit discovering that grace to that inward sight. In the bottom of a clear river, a clear eyesight may see anything. Where nothing is, nothing can be seen. It is an evidence that the patrons of doubtings have little grace, in them, and much boldness in making themselves a measure for others. Those that are base-born know their mothers better than their fathers. The Church of Rome is all for the mother, but the babes of Christ know their father. The remainder of corruption will indeed he still breeding doubts, but it is the office of the Spirit of faith to quell them as they arise. We are too ready in time of temptation to doubt. We need not help the tempter by holding it a duty to doubt. This is to light a candle before the devil, as we use to speak.

Quest. May not there be doubtings where there is true faith? May not a true believer be without assurance?

Ans. There be three ranks of Christians: First, Some that are yet under the spirit of bondage, that like little children do all for fear. Secondly, Those that are under the spirit of adoption, and do many things well, but yet are not altogether free from fear. These are like those children that are moved with reverence to obey their parents, and yet find their commands somewhat irksome unto them. The third are such as, by the love of God shed into their hearts by the Spirit of adoption, are carried with large spirits to obey their Father; and herein like unto those children that not only obey, but take a delight in it, upon a judgment that both obedience and the thing wherein they obey is good. This we ought to labour for. But we find many Christians in the second rank. Many truly believe in Christ by some light let into their hearts by the Spirit of adoption, who are not yet fully assured of the love of Christ. There is the act of faith and the fruit of faith. The act of faith is to cast ourselves upon God's mercy in Christ; the fruit of faith is in believing to be assured of this. We must know that faith is one thing, assurance another. They may have faith, and yet want a double assurance: first, assurance of their faith, being not able to judge at all times of their own act; likewise, secondly, assurance of their state in grace, as in time of desertion and temptation. A soul at such a time casts itself upon Christ, as knowing comfort is there to be had, though he be not sure of it for himself; and this the soul doth out of obedience, though not out of feeling, as the poor man in the gospel, 'Lord, I believe: help my unbelief,' Mark ix. 24. The soul oftentimes out of the deep, cries, and in the dark, trusts in God; and this is

the bold adventure of faith, the first object whereof is Christ held out in a promise; and not assurance, which springeth from the first act when it pleaseth God to shine upon the soul; and is a reward of glorifying God's mercy in Christ by casting the soul upon his truth and goodness. Assurance is God's seal, faith is our seal. When we set to our seal by believing, he sets to his seal, assuring us of our condition. We yield first the consent and the assent of faith; and then God puts his seal to the contract. There must be a good title before a confirmation, a planting before a rooting and establishing, the bargain before the earnest. Some would have faith to be an overpowering light of the soul, whereby undoubtedly they believe themselves to be Christ, and Christ to be theirs; which stumbleth many a weak yet true Christian; for this is rather the fruit of a strong faith than the act of a weak, which struggleth with doubting until it hath gotten the upper hand. True it is, there must be so much light let into the soul as the soul may rely upon Christ; and this light must be discovered by the Spirit; and such a light as shows a special love of Christ to the soul. And again, it is true that we are not to take up our rest in the light until the heart be further subdued; as many are too hasty to conclude of a good condition upon uncertain signs, before they have attained unto fuller assurance; but yet we must not deny faith where this strong assurance is wanting, so far as to conclude against ourselves, if there be desires putting on, to endeavour with conflict against the rising of unbelief, with a high prizing of the favour of God in Christ, so as to value it above all things. Degrees do not vary the kind; weakness may stand with truth, but where truth is there will be an incessant desire of future sealing.

2. The second conclusion: We may, upon the knowledge of our present estate in grace, he assured for the time to come, for this sealing is to the 'day of redemption;' that is, till we be put into full possession of what we now believe; and besides, sealing is for securing for the time to come; and our Saviour's promise is, that though he departed from them, yet the Comforter should abide with them for ever, John xiv. 16. And why are we certain of the favour of God to our comfort for the present, but that we doubt not of it for the time to come?

Faith and love, and these graces, they never fail finally; therefore when the Scripture speaks of faith, it speaks of salvation by it for the present; as if a man should be in heaven presently so soon as he believed. 'We are saved by faith,' say the Scriptures, Eph. ii. 8. We are not yet saved, but the meaning is, we are set by faith into a state of salvation. Being put into Christ by faith, we 'are risen with Christ, and sit in heavenly places with him,' Eph. i. 3. Faith

makes the things to come present; and faith believes that 'neither things present, nor things to come, shall be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ,' Rom. viii. 39. So that our assurance is not only for the present, but for the time to come. We are sealed 'to the day of redemption,' and who can reverse God's seal, or God's act or deed? Grace is the earnest-penny of glory. God hath made a covenant, and given earnest. He will not lose it. The earnest is never taken away, but filled up. If we be assured of grace for the present, we may be sure it shall be made up full in glory hereafter. If the Spirit of Christ be in us, the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead will raise us up likewise, and not leave us until we be in full redemption: 'We shall awake filled with his image,' Rom. viii. 11, seq., and Ps. xvii. 15.

No opposition shall prevail. God hath set us a seal on his right hand to keep us; ay, and on his breast (as the high priest had the twelve tribes) to love us, and on his shoulder to support us. The marked and sealed ones in Ezek. ix. 4, and Rev. vii. 2, were secured from all destruction. If we be in Christ our rock, temptations and oppositions are but as waves; they may dash upon us, but they break themselves.

Quest. Why then do we pray for the forgiveness of sins?

Ans. We pray for a clear evidence of what we have; secondly, as the end is ordained, so the means must be used. God doth and will pardon sin; and therefore we must pray for pardon, as a means ordained. Thirdly, Prayer doth not prejudice the certainty of a thing. Christ prayeth for that he was most sure of: John xvii. 24, 'I pray for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine.'

Pregnant for the proof of this point is that of Peter: 'We are begotten again to a lively hope,' a hope of that life which maketh lively, 1 Peter i. 3-5. Oh but we are weak! True, but 'we are kept by the power of God.' An inheritance is not only kept for us, but we are kept for it.

Obj. But Satan is strong, and his malice is more than his strength.

Ans. True. But we are kept as by a garrison. We have a guard about us.

Obj. All this is true while faith holdeth out, but that may fail.

Ans. No. We are kept by the power of God 'through faith.' God keepeth our faith, and us by faith.

Obj. But the time is long between us and salvation, and many dangers may fall out.

Ans. Be it so that the time is long, yet we are 'kept unto salvation,' even until the 'day of redemption;' for the Spirit, by virtue of the covenant, puts the fear of God into our hearts, that we shall never depart from him. God doth not promise what we shall do of ourselves, but what he will do in us and by us. Thus the Holy Ghost putteth a shield into our hands to ward off all objections; and helps us to subdue the reasonings that are apt to rise within us against this blessed hope. So that this happy condition is not only sure to us, but God hath assured us of it. God's gracious indulgence is such, he sees here we go through a wilderness and are molested every way; therefore he would have us assured of a blessed condition to come. So good is God, he doth not only find out a glorious way of redemption by the blood of his Son God-man, but he acquaints us with it in the days of our pilgrimage, partly that we may glorify him, that he may have the praise beforehand of what good he intends us; for assurance of that blessed condition will stir up our spirits to bless God. What the thing itself would work, faith works the same in some measure. Therefore Saint Peter, 1 Pet. i. 3, 4, 'Blessed be God,' saith he, 'who hath begotten us again to a lively hope of an inheritance immortal, undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in the heavens.' Why doth he bless God before we have it? Because we are as sure of it as if we had it. What is revealed beforehand is praised for beforehand. God would have us assured, that he may have glory.

Partly to comfort us: for faith is effectual to work that comfort that the thing present would do in some measure. What comfort would the soul have if it should see heaven open and itself entering into it, if redemption were at hand? The same faith works in some measure. What is more sure than the thing itself? What more comfortable than faith in it?

When the Israelites were in the wilderness, going to Canaan, they had many promises that they should come to Canaan, and many extraordinary helps to lead them thither—the pillar, and cloud, and angel; and God, out of indulgence condescending to their weakness, gave them some grapes of Canaan. He put it into the mind of the spies to bring of the fruits. So God gives us some work of his blessed Spirit, whereby he would have us assured and sealed to the day of redemption.

3. The third conclusion is this, that the Spirit doth seal vs. This cannot be otherwise; for who can establish us in the love of God, but he that knows the mind of God towards us? and who knows the mind of God but the Spirit of God?

Then am I sealed, when I do not only believe, but by a reflecting act of the soul know I do believe; and this reflection, though it be by reason, yet it is by reason enabled by the Spirit. Our spirits by the Spirit only, can discern of spiritual acts. It is not for us to know things above nature; without a cause, above nature. None can know the meaning of our broken desires, so as to help us in our infirmities, but that Spirit that stirred up those desires. Again, none knows the grievances of our spirits, but our own spirits and the Spirit of God, who knows all the turnings and corners of the soul.

Who can mortify those strong corruptions that would hinder us in the way to heaven, but the Spirit clothing our spirit with power from above? Who purifieth the conscience, but he that is above conscience? Who can raise our spirits above all temptations and troubles, but that Spirit of power that is above all?

The strength and vigour of any creature is from the spirits; and the strength of the spirits of all flesh is from this Spirit, whose office is to put spirit into our spirit.

As God redeemed us with his blood, so God must apply this blood, that conscience may be quieted. He only can subdue the rebellion of our spirits, and soften our hearts, and make them fit for sealing. The Spirit only can so report the mercy of God to our souls, as to persuade and work our hearts to this assurance, otherwise) we would never yield. For partly the greatness of the state is such that none but God can assure; and partly the misgiving and unbelief of our heart is such that none but God can subdue it. The thing being so great, and our deservings so little, being unworthy of the things of this life, much more of that eternal happiness, this cannot be done without the high and glorious Spirit of God.

How earnest and desirous then is both the Father and the Son to save us, that pleased to send such an orator and ambassador as is equal with themselves to persuade us, to assure us, to tit us for salvation! And how gracious is the Spirit that will vouchsafe to have such communion with such poor sinful spirits as ours! And should not this work upon our hearts a care not to grieve the Holy Spirit? And so we come to the fourth conclusion.

4. The fourth conclusion is, that the sealing of the Spirit unto salvation should he a strong prevailing argument not to grieve the Spirit; that is, not to sin, for sin only grieves the Spirit. 'The grace of God,' saith Paul to Titus, 'that bringeth salvation,'Tit. ii. 11, 12. Christ appeared; and what is Christ but grace? Christ appeared, and the free favour of God in Christ, whereby we are assured of salvation, 'which teacheth us'—what to do?—'to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.' Even the consideration of the benefits of Christ that are past, such as came with Christ's first coming; but that is not all: ver. 13, 'Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.' The second coming of Christ enforceth likewise the same care of holiness 'Our conversation is in heaven,' Philip, iii. 20, and not as theirs, spoken of in the former verse, whose end is damnation, whose belly is their god, who mind earthly things. No. We mind heavenly things. And these heavenly desires, from whence sprung they but from the certain 'expectation of our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile bodies?' &c., Philip, iii. 21; that is, shall redeem us fully, even our bodies as well as our souls.

1. It is an argument of force whether we he not yet sealed, or he sealed. If not sealed, then grieve not him whose only office is to seal, entertain his motions, give way to him, that he may have scope and liberty of working. Set no reasons against his reasons. Hearken to no counsel against his counsel. Stand not out his persuasions any longer, but yield up your spirits to him, lest he put a period to his patience. He is long-suffering, but not always-suffering. If he give us up to our own spirits, we shall only be witty to work out our own damnation. We are not given up to our own spirits but after many repulses of this Holy Spirit; and at length, what now will not serve for an argument to persuade us shall be used hereafter as an argument to torment us. The Spirit will help our spirits to repeat, and recall all the motions to our own good that we formerly put back. We should think, when conscience speaks in us, God speaks; and when the Spirit moves us, it is God that moves us; and that all excuse will be cut off: answer will be, Did not I tell you of this by conscience, my deputy? Did not I move you to this good by mine own Spirit? Take heed of keeping out any light; for light, where it doth not come in and soften, hardens; none so hard-hearted as those upon whom the light hath shined. There is more to be hoped from a man that hath only a natural conscience, than from him whose heart and spirit hath been long beaten on; there is more to be hoped from a heathen Pilate than a proud Pharisee. Those that will not be sealed to their salvation, it is just with God that they

should be sealed up to their destruction. The soul without the Spirit is darkness and confusion, full of self-accusing and self-tormenting thoughts. If we let the Spirit come in, it will scatter all and settle the soul in a sweet quiet.

2. For those that have been sealed by the Spirit, and yet not so fully as to silence all doubts about their estate: those should, out of that beginning of comfort which they feel, study to be pliable to the Spirit for further increase. The Spirit sealeth by degrees. As our care of pleasing the Spirit increaseth, so our comfort increaseth: our light will increase as the morning light unto the perfect day. Yielding to the Spirit in one holy motion will cause him to lead us to another, and so on forwards until we be more deeply acquainted with the whole counsel of God concerning our salvation. Otherwise, if we give way to any contrary lust, darkness will grow upon our spirits unawares, and we shall be left in an unsettled condition, as those that travel in the twilight, that cannot perfectly find out their way. We shall be on and off, not daring to yield wholly to our lusts, because of a work of grace begun; nor yield wholly to the Spirit, because we have let some unruly affection get too much strength in us; and so our spirits are without comfort, and our profession without glory.

We shall lie open to Satan if he be let loose to winnow our faith; for if our state come to be questioned we have nothing to allege but the truth of our graces, and if we have not used the Spirit well we shall not have power to allege them, nor to look upon any grace wrought in us, but upon those lusts and sins whereby we have grieved the Spirit; they will be set in order before us, and so stare us in the face, that we cannot but fix our thoughts upon them. And Satan will not lose such an advantage, but will tempt us to call the work of grace in question, which though it be a true work, yet, for want of light of the Spirit to discern it, we cannot see it to our comfort; whereas, if the Spirit would witness unto us the truth of our state and the sincerity of our graces, we should be able to hold our own, and those temptations will vanish.

3. For those that the Holy Spirit hath set a clearer and stronger stamp upon, that do not question their condition, they of all others should not grieve the Spirit.

(1.) A Spirit of ingenuity will hinder them, and stir up a shame in them to requite so ill such a friend. Nothing so ingenuous as grace. What is commendable in nature is in greater perfection in grace. How doth the conscience of unkindness to a friend that hath deserved well of us trouble

our spirits, that we know not with what face to look upon him? And will not unkindness to the Spirit make us ashamed to lift up our face to heaven?

(2.) Benefits are bonds, and the greater favour the stronger obligation. Now what greater favour is there than for the Spirit to renew us according to the image of God our glorious Saviour, who carried the image of Satan before? And by this to appropriate us unto God, to be laid up in his treasure, as carrying his stamp; and by this to be separated from the vile condition of the world, although we carry in us the seeds of the same corruption that the worst doth, differing nothing from them but in God's free grace and the fruits of it; for God to esteem so of us, that have no worthiness of our own, but altogether persons not worthy to be loved, as to make our unworthiness a foil to set out the freeness of his love in making us worthy, whom he found not so; for the Spirit by scaling of us to secure us in the midst of all spiritual dangers, and to hide us as his secret ones, that that evil one should not touch us to hurt us: these, as they are favours of an high nature, the more care they require to walk worthy of them. We cannot but forgot ourselves, before we yield to anything against that dignity the Spirit hath sealed us to.

(3.) Nature, helped with ordinary education, moveth every man to carry himself answerable to his condition: a magistrate as a magistrate, a subject as a subject, a child as a child; and we think it disgraceful to do otherwise. And shall that which is disgraceful to nature not be much more disgraceful to nature renewed and advanced by the Spirit? And indeed, as we should not, so we cannot grieve the Spirit so far forth as we are renewed, 1 John iii. 9. Our new nature will not suffer us to dissemble, to be worldly, to be carnal, as the world is. We cannot but study holiness, we cannot but be for God and his truth, we cannot but express what we are and whose we are.

It is impossible a man should care for heaven, that doth not care for the beginnings of heaven. He cannot be said to care for full redemption and glory, that doth not care for the Spirit of grace. Fulness of grace is the best thing in glory. Other things, as peace and joy and the like, they are but the shillings forth of this fulness of grace in glory.

Again, When the Spirit assureth us of God's love in the greatest fruits of it, as it doth when it assureth this redemption, that love kindles love again, and love constrains us by a sweet necessity to yield cheerful and willing obedience in all things. There is nothing more active and fuller of invention than love, and there is nothing that love studies more than how to please. There is nothing that it fears more than to discontent. It is a neat affection,

and will endure nothing offensive, either to itself or the spirit of such as we love; and this love the Spirit teaches the heart, and love teaches us not only our duty, but to do it in a loving and acceptable manner. It carries out the whole stream of the soul with it, and rules all whilst it rules, and will not suffer the soul to divert to by-things, much less to contrary.

Again, These graces that are conversant about that condition which the Spirit assureth us of, as faith and hope, are purging and purifying graces, working a suitableness in the soul to the things believed and hoped for; and the excellency of the things believed and hoped for have such a working upon the soul that it will not suffer the soul to defile itself. Our hopes on high will lead us to ways on high. Therefore whilst these graces are exercised about these objects, the soul cannot but be in a pleasing frame.

It hath been an old cavil, that certainty of salvation breeds security and looseness of life. And what is there that an ill-disposed soul cannot suck poison out of? A man may as truly say the sea burns, or the fire cools. There is nothing quickens a soul more to cheerful obedience than assurance of God's love, and that our 'labour should not be in vain in the Lord,' 1 Cor. xv. 58. This is the Scripture's logic and rhetoric, to enforce and persuade [to] a holy life, from knowledge of our present estate in grace.

'I beseech you by the mercies of God,' saith St Paul, Rom. xii. 1. What mercies? Such as he had spoken of before,—justification, sanctification, assurance, that all shall work together for good, that nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ. All duties tend to assurance, or spring from assurance.

God's intendment is to bring us to heaven by a way of love and cheerfulness, as all his ways towards us in our salvation are in love. And this is the scope of the covenant of grace, and for this end he sends the Spirit of adoption into our hearts, that we may have a child-like liberty with God in all our addresses to him. When he offers-himself to us as a Father, it is fit we should offer ourselves to him as children; nature teaches a child, the more he desires his father's love, the more he fears to displease him. And he is judged to be graceless that will therefore venture to offend his father, because he knows he neither can or will disinherit him. Certain it is, the more surely we know God hath begotten us to so glorious an inheritance, the more it will work upon our bowels, to take all to heart that may any way touch him. This wrought upon David. When the prophet told him God hath done this and this for thee, and 'would have done more if that had been too little,' 2 Sam.

xii. 8, it melted him presently into an humble confession. Those that have felt the power of the Spirit of adoption on their hearts, will both by a divine instinct, as also by strength of reason, be carried to all those courses wherein they shall approve themselves to their Father. Instinct of nature strengthened with grounds will move strongly.

To conclude this discourse, let Christians therefore be careful to preserve and cherish the work of assurance and sealing in them.

Means. 1. What God doth for us, he doth by grace in us. He will preserve us that we shall not fall from him by putting the grace of fear into us, Jer. xxxii. 40. He will keep us, but by what means? 'The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard our hearts,' Phil. iv. 7. God maketh our calling and election sure in us, by stirring our hearts up to be diligently exercised in adding one grace unto another, and in growing in every grace, as 2 Pet. i. 5. Therefore we must attend upon all spiritual means of growth and quickening: so shall you have a further 'entrance into the kingdom of Jesus Christ, 2 Pet. i. 11; that is, you shall have more evident knowledge of your entrance into the kingdom of grace here, and likewise into the kingdom of glory hereafter. Those that do not so shall have no comfort either from the time past, for they shall forget that they were purged from their sins; or from thoughts of the time to come, for they shall 'not be able to see things far off.'

2. If assurance be in a lesser degree, yet yield not to temptations and carnal reasonings. If our evidences be not so fair, yet we will not part with our inheritance. Coins, as old as groats, that have little of the stamp left, yet are current. We lose our comfort many times, because we yield so easily, because we have not such a strong and clear seal of salvation as we would. To be borne down that we have none at all, is a great weakness. Exercise, therefore, the little faith thou hast, in striving against such objections, and it will be a means to preserve the seal of the Spirit.

3. Because this sealing is gradual, we should pray, as Paul, Eph. i. 17, for a spirit of revelation, that we maybe more sealed. The Ephesians were sealed, for whom Paul prays, and so the Colossians; yet [he prays] that God would reveal to their spirits more their excellent condition. There are 'riches of assurance,' Col. ii. 2. The apostle would have them to labour not only for assurance, but for the riches of it. That will bring rich comfort, and joy and peace. Times of temptations and trial may come, and such as, if we have not strong assurance, we may be sorely troubled and call all in question. This may

be the sad condition of God's own children; and from this, that in times of peace they contented themselves with a lesser degree of this assurance and sealing.

4. Lastly, Be watchful over your own hearts and ways, that according to what you have now learned you grieve not the Spirit, for by it you are sealed intimating, that if [in] anything we withstand and grieve the Spirit, we shall in so doing prejudice ourselves, and suffer in the comfort and evidence of our scaling.

The Fountain Opened; Or, the Mystery of Godliness Revealed

And, without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up to glory.—1 Tim. III. 16.

There are two things that God values more than all the world besides—the church and the truth. The church, that is the 'pillar and ground of truth,' as it is in the former verse. The truth of religion, that is the seed of the church. Now the blessed apostle St Paul being to furnish his scholar Timothy to the ministerial office, he doth it from two grounds especially: from the dignity of the church, which he was to instruct and converse in; and from the excellency of the mysteries of the gospel, that excellent soul saving truth. Hereupon he doth seriously exhort Timothy to take heed how he conversed in the church of God, in teaching the truth of God. The church of God, it is 'the house of God,' a company of people that God cares for more than for all mankind besides, for whom the world stands, for whom all things are. 'It is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth.' And for the truth of God, that must be taught in this church, that is so excellent a thing, that we see the blessed apostle hero useth groat words, high styles, lofty expressions concerning it. As the matter is high and great, so the holy apostle hath expressions suitable; a full heart breeds full expressions. As no man went beyond St Paul, in the deep conceit of his own unworthiness and of his state by nature, so there was no man reached higher in large and rich thoughts and expressions of the excellency of Christ, and the good things we have by him; as we see here, setting forth the excellency of the ministerial calling, being to deal with God's truth towards God's people, he sets forth evangelical truth gloriously here. 'Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God manifested in the flesh,' &c.

In those words, then, there is a preface; and then, a particular explication. There is a fountain or spring, and the streams issuing from it, the root and the branches. There is, as it were, a porch to this great house. Great buildings have fair entrances; so this glorious description of the mysteries of the gospel, it hath a fair porch and entry to it. 'Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness.'

Then the fabric itself is parcelled out in six particulars:—

God manifested in the flesh.

Justified in the Spirit.

Seen of angels.

Preached unto the Gentiles.

Believed on in the world.

Received up to glory.

First, For the preface, whereby he makes way to raise up the spirit of Timothy, and in him us, unto a reverent and holy attending to the blessed mysteries that follow.

'Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness.'

In this preface, there is first the thing itself, 'godliness.'

Then the description of it, it is a 'mystery.'

And the adjunct, it is a 'great mystery.'

And then the seal of it, it is a great mystery 'without all controversy;' by the confession of all, as the word ὁμολογουμένως signifies. There are none that ever felt the power of godliness, but they have confessed it to be a 'great mystery.'

Godliness is a 'mystery,' and a 'great mystery;' and it is so under the seal of public confession. To observe somewhat from each of these.

'Godliness.'

1. Godliness is either the principles of Christian religion, or the inward disposition of the soul towards them, the inward holy affection of the soul. The word implieth both: for godliness is not only the naked principles of religion, but likewise the Christian affection, the inward bent of the soul, suitable to divine principles. There must be a godly disposition, carrying us to godly truths. That godliness includes the truths themselves, I need go no further than the connection. In the last words of the former verse, the church is 'the pillar and ground of truth;' and then it follows, 'without

controversy, great is the mystery'—he doth not say of truth, but—'of godliness;' instead of truth he saith godliness.

The same word implies the truths themselves, and the affection and disposition of the soul toward them. 'Truths,' to shew them that both must alway go together. Wheresoever Christian truth is known as it should be, there is a supernatural light. It is not only a godly truth in itself, but it is embraced with godly affections. These blessed truths of the gospel, they require and breed a godly disposition; the end of them is godliness; they frame the soul to godliness. Thus we see the truths themselves are godliness, carrying us to God and holiness. That I need not much stand on. But that there must be an affection answerable, and that this truth breeds this, is a little to be considered. Why is religion itself called faith, and the grace in the soul also called faith? To shew that faith, that is, the truth revealed (as we say the 'apostles' faith'), it breeds faith, and must be apprehended by faith. Therefore one word includes both the object, the thing believed, and likewise the disposition of the soul to that object. So here 'godliness' is the thing itself, the principles of religion; and likewise the disposition of the soul that those truths work, where they are entertained as they should be. Hence follows these other truths briefly.

1. First of all, That no truth breeds godliness and piety of life but divine truths; for that is called 'godliness,' because it breeds godliness. All the devices of men in the world cannot breed godliness. All is superstition, and not godliness, that is not bred by a divine truth.

2. Again, hence, in that divine truth is called godliness, it shows us, if we would be godly we must be so from reasons of Christianity; not, as I said, by framing devices of our own, as graceless foolish men do; as we see in popery, it is full of ceremonies of their own devising. But if we will be godly, it must be by reasons and motives from divine truth. That breeds godliness. It is but a bastard godliness, a bastard religion, that is from a good intention, without a good ground. Therefore the word implies both the tenet, the doctrine, and the frame of soul answerable to that doctrine. Good principles, without an impression of it on the soul, is nothing. It will but help us to be damned; and godliness, without a frame of doctrine, is nothing but superstition. Godliness in doctrine frames the soul to godliness in conversation. There are many that, out of a natural superstition (which is alway accompanied with a poisonful malicious disposition against the truth of God), they will have devices of

their own; and those they will force with all their power. But if we will be godly, it must be from reasons fetched from divine truth.

3. Again, hence we may fetch a rule of discerning when we are godly. What makes a true Christian? When he nakedly believes the grounds of divine truth, the articles of the faith, when he can patten them over—doth that make a true Christian? No. But when these truths breed and work 'godliness.' For religion is a truth 'according to godliness,' not according to speculation only, and notion. Wheresoever these fundamental truths are embraced, there is godliness with them; a man cannot embrace religion in truth, but he must be godly. A man knows no more of Christ and divine things, than he values and esteems and affects, and brings the whole inward man into a frame, to be like the things. If these things work not godliness, a man hath but a human knowledge of divine things; if they carry not the soul to trust in God, to hope in God, to fear God, to embrace him, to obey him, that man is not yet a true Christian; for Christianity is not a naked knowledge of the truth, but godliness.

Religious evangelical truth is 'wisdom;' and wisdom is a knowledge of things directing to practice. A man is a wise man, when he knows so as to practise what he knows. The gospel is a divine wisdom, teaching practice as well as knowledge. It works godliness, or else a man hath but a human knowledge of divine things. Therefore, he that is godly, he believes aright and practiseth aright. He that believes ill can never live well, for he hath no foundation. He makes an idol of some conceit he hath, besides the word; and he that lives ill, though he believe well, shall be damned too. Therefore a Christian hath godly' principles out of the gospel, and a godly carriage suitable to those principles. And indeed, there is a force in the principles of godliness, from God's love in Christ, to stir up to godliness. The soul that apprehends God's truth aright cannot but be godly. Can a man know God's love in Christ incarnate, and Christ's suffering for us, and his sitting at the right hand of God for us, the infinite love of God in Christ, and not be carried in affection back to God again, in love and joy and true affiance, and whatsoever makes up the respect of godliness? It cannot be. Therefore it is not a cold, naked apprehension, but a spiritual knowledge, when the soul is stirred up to a suitable disposition and carriage, that makes godliness. Now this godliness is 'A mystery.'

What is a mystery?

The word signifies a hidden thing. It comes of muein, which is, to shut or stop the mouth from divulging. As they had their mysteries among the heathen, in their temples, which they must not discover, therefore there was an image before the temple with his finger before his mouth, showing that they must be silent in the discovery of hidden mysteries. Indeed, the mysteries of the heathens were so shameful, that they did well to forbid the discovery of them. But I speak only to unfold the nature of the word, which is to shut, or keep secret.

1. A mystery is a secret, not only for the present, but that it was a secret, though it be now revealed; for the gospel is now discovered. It is called a mystery, not so much that it is secret, but that it was so before it was revealed.

2. In the second place, that is called a mystery in the Scripture which, howsoever it be clear for the manifestation of it, yet the reasons of it are hid. As the conversion of the Gentiles, that there should be such a thing, why God should be so merciful to them, it is called a mystery. So the calling of the Jews, it is called a mystery, though the thing be revealed. Yet that God should be so wondrous merciful to them, that is a mystery. When there is any great reason that we cannot search into the depth of the thing, though the thing itself be discovered, that is a mystery; as the conversion both of Jews and Gentiles.

3. In the third place, a mystery in Scripture is taken for that that is a truth hid, and is conveyed by some outward thing. Marriage is a mystery, because it conveys the hidden spiritual marriage between Christ and his church. The sacraments are Histories, because in the one, under bread and wine, there is conveyed to us the benefits of Christ's body broken and his blood shed; and in the other, under water, a visible outward thing, there is signified the blood of Christ.

In a word—to cut off that which is not pertinent—mystery in Scripture is either the general body of religion, or the particular branches of it. The general body of religion is called a mystery in this place. The whole Christian religion is nothing but a continued mystery, a continuation of mysteries, a chaining together of mystery upon mystery.

And then the particular branches are called mysteries, as I said before. The conversion of the Jews, and likewise of the Gentiles, before it was accomplished, it was a mystery. So the union between Christ and the church

is a great mystery, Eph. v. 25; but the whole gospel is here meant, as Christ saith, Mark iv. 11, 'The mysteries of the kingdom of God,' that is, the description of the gospel. What is the gospel? The mystery of God's kingdom, of Christ's kingdom-—a mystery discovering how Christ reigns in his church, and a mystery of bringing us to that heavenly kingdom. So, then, the whole evangelical truth is a mystery.

For these reasons:

1. First of all, Because it was hid and concealed from all men, till God brought it out of his own bosom: first to Adam in paradise, after the fall; and still more clearly afterwards to the Jews; and in Christ's time more fully to Jews and Gentiles. It was hid in the breast of God. It was not a thing framed by angels or men. After man was fallen to that cursed state, this plot, of saving man by Christ, came not into the head of any creature, to satisfy justice by infinite mercy; to send Christ to die, that justice might be no loser. It could come from no other breast but God's. It must be a divine heavenly wisdom. Therefore it was a plot devised by the blessed Trinity, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. It was hid in the secret closet of God's breast. Christ brought it out of the bosom of bid Father. 'No man hath seen God at any time; Christ the only begotten Son, in the bosom of the Father,' John i. 18, he discovers the Father, and his meaning to mankind. Who ever could have thought of such a depth of mercy unto fallen man, when God promised the blessed seed, Gen. iii. 15, if God himself had not discovered it? Therefore this reconciling of justice and mercy, it is a mystery of heavenly wisdom that the creature could never think of, as it is excellently set down, 1 Cor. ii., through the whole chapter.

2. Again, It is a mystery; because when it was revealed, it was revealed but to few. It was revealed at the first but to the Jews: 'God is known in Jewry,' &c., Ps. xlviii. 8. It was wrapped in ceremonies and types, and in general promises, to them. It was quite hid from most part of the world.1,

3. Again, When Christ came, and was discovered to the Gentiles, yet it is a mystery even in the church, to carnal men, that hear the gospel, and yet do not understand it, that have the veil over their hearts. It is 'hid to them that perish,' 2 Cor. iv. 3, though it be never so open of itself to those that believe.

4. In the fourth place, It is a mystery, because though we see some part and parcel of it, yet we see not the whole gospel. We see not all, nor wholly.

'We see but in part, and know but in part,' 1 Cor. xiii. 9. So it is a mystery in regard of the full accomplishment.

5. Yea, and in the next place, it is a mystery, in regard of what we do not know, but shall hereafter know. How do we know divine truths now? In the mirror of the word and sacraments. We know not Christ by sight. That manner of knowledge is reserved for heaven. So here we know as it were in a kind of mystery. We see divine things wrapped up in the mirror of the word, and the mysteries of the sacraments. Indeed, this comparatively to the Jewish church is to 'see the face of God in Christ,' 2 Cor. iv. 6—a clear sight, but compared to that we shall have, it is to see in a glass, or mirror. If we look back, it is a clear sight; if we look forward, it is a sight as it were in a mystery. Even that little that we do know, we do not know it as we shall know it in heaven.

Quest. But is the doctrine of the gospel itself only a mystery?

Ans. No. All the graces are mysteries, every grace. Let a man once know it, and he shall find that there is a mystery in faith; that the earthly soul of man should be carried above itself, to believe supernatural truths, and to depend upon that he sees not, to sway the life by reasons spiritual; that the heart of man should believe; that a man in trouble should carry himself quietly and patiently, from supernatural supports and grounds, it is a mystery. That a man should be as a rock in the midst of a storm, to stand unmoveable, it is a mystery. That the carriage of the soul should be turned universally another way; that the judgment and affections should be turned backward, as it were; that he that was proud before should now be humble; that he that was ambitious before should now despise the vain world; that he that was given to his lusts and vanities before should now, on the contrary, be serious and heavenly-minded: here is a mystery indeed when all is turned backward. Therefore we see how Niecdemus, as wise as he was, it was a riddle to him when our blessed Saviour spake to him of the new birth, that a man should be wholly changed and new-moulded; that a man should be the same and not the same; the same man for soul and body, yet not the same in regard of a supernatural life and being put into him, carrying him another way, leading him in another manner, by other rules and respects, as much different from other men as a man differs from a beast. A strange mystery, that raiseth a man above other men, as much as another man is above other creatures. For a man to be content with his condition, in all changes and varieties, when he is cast and tossed up and down in the world, to have a

mind unmoveable, it is a mystery. Therefore St Paul saith, Philip, iv. 11, 12, 'I have entered into religion,' as it were, 'I have consecrated myself.' The word is wondrous significant. 'I have learned this mystery, to be content.' It is a mystery for a man to be tossed up and down, and yet to have a contented mind. 'I can want, and I can abound; I can do all through Christ that strengtheneth me.' Why? I have consecrated myself to Christ and religion, and from them I have learned this point, to be content. Therefore in the text here,—as we shall see afterwards,—not only divine truths are a mystery —'great is the mystery of godliness'—but he insists on particular graces, 'preached to the Gentiles, believed on in the world these are mysteries.

In Christ, all is mysteries: two natures, God and man, in one person; mortal and immortal; greatness and baseness; infiniteness and finiteness, in one person.

The church itself is a mystical thing. For under baseness, under the scorn of the world, what is hid? A glorious people. The state of the church in this world, it is like a tree that is weather-beaten. The leaves and fruit are gone, but there is life in the root. So, what is the church? A company of men that are in the world without glory, without comeliness and beauty; yet notwithstanding, they have life in the root, a hidden life: 'Our life is hid with Christ, in God,' Col. iii. 8. The church hath a life, but it is a hidden mystical life, a life under death. They seem to die to the world, but they are alive. This is excellently and theoretically followed by St Paul: 'As dying, and yet we live; as poor, yet making many rich,' 2 Cor. vi. 9. A strange kind of people; poor and rich, living and dying, glorious and base. Yet this is the state of the church here in this world. They are an excellent people, but they are veiled under infirmities of their own, and the disgraces and persecutions of the world. So we see both the doctrine itself, and the graces, and the head of the church, and the church itself, are nothing but mysteries.

Use 1. Is it so that religion is a mystery? Then, first of all, do not wonder that it is not known in the world; and that it is not only not known, but persecuted and hated. Alas! it is a hidden thing. Men know not the excellency of it. As great men's sons in a foreign country, they find not entertainment answerable to their worth, but as they are apprehended to be by strangers: so these divine truths they find little acceptance in the world, because they are mysteries; not only mysteries in the tenet, but in the practice. Therefore the practice finds such opposition in the world: 'Father, forgive them,' saith our blessed Saviour, 'they know not what they do,' Luke xxiii. 34. The world

knows not what they do, when they hate and persecute religion and religious persons. The church is a mystical thing, and religion is a mystery. It is hid from them. Shall we be moved with the disgraceful speeches of carnal men? They speak they know not what. The thing they speak against is a mystery. Therefore what should we regard the speeches of the world, or follow the example of the world, in embracing religion? Religion is a mystery. Let the world be never so great, it is not the knowledge of great men, or of rich men, it is the knowledge of godly men; it is a 'mystery of godliness.' Shall we follow the example of the world in religion when it is a mystery, and a mystery 'of godliness,' that only godly men know and embrace? Look not, therefore, to the greatness of place, or parts, &c. It is a mystery.

Use 2. Again, If it be a mystery, then it should teach us to carry ourselves suitable to it. Nature taught even the heathens to carry themselves reverently in their mysteries; Procul este profani, Away, begone all profane. Let us carry ourselves therefore reverently toward the truth of God, towards all truths, though they he never so contrary to our reason. They are mysteries altogether above nature. There are some seeds of the law in nature, but there are no seeds in nature of the gospel. Therefore we should come to it with a great deal of reverence. St Paul teacheth us an excellent lesson, Rom. xi. 33. When he entered into a depth that he could not fathom, doth he cavil at it? No. 'Oh the depth! Oh the depth!' So in all the truths of God, when we cannot comprehend them, let us with silence reverence them, and say; with him, 'Oh the depth!' Divine things are mysteries; the sacraments are mysteries. Let us carry ourselves towards them with reverence. What is the reason that there is one word in the Greek and in other languages to signify both common and profane? Because those that come with common affections and common carriage to holy things, they profane them; because as the things are great, so they require a suitable carriage, not a common carriage. We profane the sacrament if we take the bread and wine as a common feast,; as St Paul saith, 'You discern not the Lord's body,' 1 Cor. xi. 29. We profane mysteries when we discern not. Beasts and beast-like men discern not the relation of things; that these outward elements have reference to great matters, to the body and blood of Christ. They do not discern them from common bread and wine, though they be used to raise up our souls to the bread of life.

So likewise when we come to the word of God, and 'look not to our feet,' Eccles. v. 1, but come to the church as if we went to a play or some common place, without prayer, without preparation; when we come with

common affections, this is to come profanely. Here we come to mysteries, to high things, to great matters. Therefore when we come to converse with God we must not come with common affections; we must carry ourselves holily, in holy business, or else we offer to God 'strange tire,' Num. xxvi. 61. 'God was in this place,' saith Jacob, 'and I was not aware of it,' Gen. xxviii. 17. So when we come to hear the word, when we go to pray, when we receive the sacrament, God is here, and mysteries are here, and we are not aware of it. It is a shame for us not to labour to bring suitable dispositions. It is a matter of that consequent, life or death depends upon it. You know what St Paul saith, 1 Cor. xi. 30, 'For this very cause some are sick, and some weak, and some sleep,' some die. Why? For coming with common affection, for 'not discerning the Lord's body,' for not examining ourselves, for not having answerable dispositions to the greatness of the mysteries we go about. Let us not think it enough to come to the sacrament, and then let the reins loose to all kind of vanity. The very heathens would be ashamed of that. It is the bane and blemish of religion, and such a thing for which we may fear that God will give whole Christendom a purge, 1 mean, for our excess.

There is a lawful use of feasting and comely recreations; but to come with unjustifiable vanities, that are not fit at any time, when we should honour God for the greatest gift that ever was, for the incarnation of his Son; to be more profanely disposed then, and to give ourselves to more loose courses than at other times, how can it but provoke the justice of God, especially it being common? Amongst other things we may justly look for the vengeance of God for this, not only upon this or that place, for it is the fault of Christendom. Shall we carry ourselves thus profanely at these times, when we should walk in a holy disposition? Is this the way to be thankful to God? Let us labour to entertain and embrace these mysteries of the gospel as we should, with a suitable carriage to them; for the gospel will no longer tarry than it hath suitable love and affections to the greatness of the thing. The gospel may leave us, we know not how soon, and go to people that are as barbarous as we were before the gospel came to us. The Romans thought they had victory tied to them, but we have not these mysteries of the gospel tied to us. If we labour not for an answerable carriage, as God hath removed the gospel from the Eastern churches of Asia, that are under the tyranny of the Turks now, so he may, and we know not how soon, take away these blessed and glorious mysteries. Let us reverence these mysteries and bless God for them, and labour to express our thankfulness in our lives and conversations, that God may delight to continue with us, and continue his blessed truth among us. Do but conceive in your own selves what equity is it,

that truths should be obtruded to men that care not for them; that live under the mysteries of the gospel with as much liberty to the flesh as if they had never heard of it; that their lives are not better than pagans, perhaps worse. When these things grow general, will God continue these mysteries to us, when there is such a disproportion of affection and carriage? Judge of these things. God should deal justly with us if he should leave us to the darkness of Gentilism, and popery, and confusion, and carry the gospel further west still, to a people that never heard of it, where it should have better entertainment than it hath had of us. I beseech you, let us labour to carry ourselves answerable to this blessed and great mystery, if we would have it continued longer among us.

Use 8. Again, Are these things mysteries, great mysteries? Let us bless God, that hath revealed them to us, for the glorious gospel. Oh, how doth St Paul, in every epistle, stir up people to be thankful for revealing these mysteries? What cause have the Gentiles, that were 'in the shadow of death' before, to be thankful to God? What kind of nation were we in Julius Caesar's time? As barbarous as the West Indians. The cannibals were as good as we. We that were so before, not only to be civilized by the gospel, but to have the means of salvation discovered, what cause have we to be enlarged to thankfulness? And shall we shew our thankfulness in provoking his majesty? There is nothing in the world that is a ground of that thankfulness, as the glorious gospel, that brings such glorious things as it doth. Men are thankful to men for teaching and discovering the mysteries of their trades, and shall God discover the great mysteries of the gospel of Christ, and shall not we be thankful? Are there not thousands that 'sit in darkness?' Is. xlii. 7. The Romish Church, is it not under the 'mystery of iniquity?' 2 Thes. ii. 7. And that we should have the glorious mysteries of the gospel revealed to us; that the veil should be taken off', and we should see 'the face of God in Christ,' 2 Cor. iv. 6; what a matter of thankfulness is it to all gracious hearts that ever felt comfort by it!

Use 4. Again, It is a mystery. Therefore it should teach us likewise not to set upon the knowledge of it with any wits or parts of our own, to think to search into it merely by strength of wit and study of books, and all human helps that can be. It is a mystery, and it must be unveiled by God himself, by his Spirit. If we set upon this mystery only with wits and parts of our own, then what our wits cannot pierce into, we will judge it not to be true, as if our wits were the measure of divine truth; so much as we conceive is true, and so much as we cannot conceive is not true. What a pride is this in flesh, in

worms of the earth, that will make their own apprehensions and conceits of things the measure of divine truth, as heretics heretofore have done? It was the fault of the schoolmen in later times. They would come with their logic only and strong wits, and such learning as those dark times afforded, to speak of grace, of the gospel, of justification. They spake of it, and distinguished in a mere metaphysical and carnal manner. Therefore they brought only human learning. They were furnished with Plato and other natural learning, and with these they thought to break through all the mysteries in religion. We must not struggle with the difficulties of religion with natural parts.

It is a mystery. Now therefore it must have a double veil took off: a veil from the thing, and the veil from our eyes. It is a mystery in regard of the things themselves, and in regard of us. It is not sufficient that the things be lightsome that are now revealed by the gospel, but there must be that taken from our hearts that hinders our sight. The sun is a most glorious creature, the most visible object of the world. What is that to a blind man that hath scales on his eyes? So divine truth is glorious. It is light in itself, but there are scales on the eyes of the soul. There is a film that must be taken off, there is a veil over the heart, as St Paul saith of the Jews; therefore they could not see the scope of Moses directing all to Christ. Naturally there is a veil over men's hearts, and that is the reason, that though they have never so many parts, and the things be light in themselves, yet they cannot see. Therefore I say the veil must be taken both from the things and from our hearts; that light being shed into lightsome hearts, both may close together. Use 5. Again, being a mystery, it cannot be raised out of the principles of nature, it cannot be raised from, reasons.

Quest. But hath reason no use, then, in the gospel?

Ans. Yes. Sanctified reason hath, to draw sanctified conclusions from sanctified principles. Thus far reason is of use in these mysteries, to shew that they are not opposite to reason. They are above reason, but they are not contrary to it, even as the light of the sun it is above the light of a candle, but it is not contrary to it. The same thing may be both the object of faith and of reason. The immortality of the soul, it is a matter of faith, and it is well proved by the heathen by the light of reason. And it is a delightful thing to the soul in things that reason can conceive of to have a double light, for the more light the more comfort; to have both the light of nature, and the light of grace and of God's Spirit.

That which reason should do here is to stoop to faith in things that are altogether above reason, as to conceive Christ in the womb of a virgin, the joining of two natures in one, the trinity of persons in one divine nature, and such like. Here it is the greatest reason to yield reason to faith. Faith is the reason of reasons in these things, and the greatest reason is to yield to God that hath revealed them.

Is not here the greatest reason in the world, to believe him that is truth itself? He hath said it, therefore reason itself saith, it is the greatest reason to yield to God, who is truth itself. Therefore faith stands with the greatest reason that can be. For things have a greater being in God's word than in themselves, and faith is above reason. Therefore it is the reason of reasons to believe when we have things revealed in the word. That is one use of reason in mysteries, to stop the mouths of gainsayers by reason, to shew that it is no unreasonable thing to believe.

Use 6. Again, Seeing it is a mystery, let no man despair. It is not the pregnancy of the scholar here that carries it away. It is the excellency of the teacher. If God's Spirit be the teacher, it is no matter how dull the scholar is. It is a mystery. Pride in great parts is a greater hindrance than simplicity in meaner parts. Therefore Christ, in Mat. xi. 25, he glorifies God that he had revealed 'these things to the simple,' and concealed them from the proud. Let no man despair, for the statutes of God 'give understanding to the simple,' Ps. xix. 7, as the psalmist saith. God is such an excellent mighty teacher, that where he finds no wit he can cause wit. He hath a privilege above other teachers. He doth not only teach the thing, but he gives wit and understanding. It is a mystery. Therefore as none should be so proud as to think to break thorough it with wit and parts, so let none despair, considering that God can raise shallow and weak wits to apprehend this great mystery.

Use 7. It is a mystery, therefore take heed of slighting of divine truths. The empty shallow heads of the world make great matters of trifles, and stand amazed at baubles and vanities, and think it a grace to slight divine things. This great mystery of godliness they despise. That which the angels themselves stand in wonderment at and are students in, that the wits of the world they slight and despise, or dally withal, as if it were a matter not worth reckoning. But I leave such to reformation, or to God's just judgment, that hath given them up to such extremity of madness and folly. Let us labour to set a high price on the mysteries of godliness.

Quest. How shall we come to know this mystery as we should, and to carry ourselves answerable?

Ans. We must desire God to open our eyes, that as the light hath shined, as the apostle saith, Titus ii. 11, 'the grace of God hath shined;' as there is a lightsomeness in the mysteries, so there may be in our eye. There is a double light required to all things in nature,—the lightsomeness in the medium, and in the sight; so here, though the mysterious be now revealed by preaching and books and other helps, yet to see this mystery and make a right use of it, there is required a spiritual light to join with this outward light. And hence comes a necessity of depending upon God's Spirit in conversing in this mystery. There must be an using of all helps and means, or else we tempt God. We must road and hear, and, above all, we must pray, as you see David in Ps. cxix. 18, 'Open mine eyes, Lord, that I may see wonders in thy law.' There are wonders in thy law, but my eyes must be opened to see them. He had sight before, but he desires still a further and clearer sight; and as the poor man in the gospel that cried after Christ, when be was asked, 'What wouldst thou have? Lord, that mine eyes might be opened,' Mat. xx. 88, so should every one of us,—considering it is such a ravishing mystery,—cry after God and Christ, 'Lord, that my eyes might be opened, that I may see wonders in thy law;' that I may see the wonders in thy gospel, 'the unsearchable riches of Christ,' Eph. iii. 8. Therefore it is that St Paul, in Eph. i. 17 and Eph. iii. 8, he prays for 'the Spirit of revelation,' that God would vouchsafe that Spirit to take away the veil of ignorance and unbelief from our souls that we may see; and as it is Eph. iii. 18, 'that we may comprehend the height, and breadth, and length, and depth,' and all the dimensions of God's love in Christ. This must be done by the Spirit of God, for as St Paul divinely reasons in 1 Cor. ii. 11, 'Who knows the things of God, but the Spirit of God?' Therefore we must plough with God's heifer. If we would know the things of the Spirit, we must have the same Spirit.

Now the Spirit doth not only teach the truths of the gospel, but the application of those truths, that they are ours. This truth of the gospel is mine, the sacrament seals it to me. The preaching of the word takes away the veil from the things, and the Spirit takes away the veil from our souls. It is the office of the Spirit to take the veil off the heart, and to lighten our understandings; and likewise to be a Spirit of application to us in particular. It is to no purpose to know that these things are mysteries, unless they be for us and for our good, that we know Christ is ours, and that God is reconciled to us. Therefore, saith the apostle, 'he hath given us the Spirit, to know the

things that are given us of God' in particular, Rom. v. 5. So the Spirit doth not only bring a blessed light to the Scriptures and shew us the meaning in general, but it is a Spirit of application, to bring home those gracious promises to every one in particular, to tell us the things that are given us of God; not only the things that are given to the church, but to us in particular. For the Spirit of God will tell us what is in the breast of God, his secret good-will to the church; he loves the church and he loves thee, saith the Spirit: therefore he is called an 'earnest' and a 'seal' in our hearts, because he discovers not only the truth at large, but he discovers the truth of God's affection in all the privileges of the gospel,—that they belong to us. What a blessed discovery is this, that not only reveals divine truths to us, but reveals them so to us, that we have our share and interest in them!

1. Therefore, whensoever we take the Book of God into our hands, when we come to hear the word, hear of God the Spirit: 'My house,' saith God, 'shall be called the house of prayer,' Isa. lvi. 7; not only the house of hearing of divine truths, but the house of prayer. In the use of means, we must look up to God and Christ. It is impudency and presumption to come to these things without lifting up our souls to God. Therefore there is so little profit under these glorious mysteries, because there is so little prayer and lifting up the heart to God. We should go to Christ, that 'opens, and no man shuts; and shuts, and no man opens,' Rev. iii. 7. He hath the key of David. Go to him, therefore, that he would both open the mysteries and open our hearts, that they may close with them.

In Rev. v. 4, St John wept when the book with 'seven seals' could not be opened. He wept that the prophecy was so obscure, that it could not be understood; but then Christ takes the book and opens it. So when we cannot understand divine mysteries, let us groan and sigh to Christ. He can open the book with seven seals, and he lays open all the mysteries as far forth as it concerns us to know. God's children grieve when things are not discovered to them.

There is a contrary disposition in God's people to carnal papists. They vex, that mysteries should be discovered. God's people grieve that they are not discovered enough. They make a perverse use of this. Divine truths are mysteries; therefore they may not be published to people. Nay, divine truths are mysteries; therefore they must be unfolded. Hence comes the necessity of the ministry; for if the gospel be a mystery, that is, a hidden kind of knowledge, then there must be some to reveal it. God hath therefore

stablished an office in the church, with which he joins his own sacred Spirit, that both ordinance and Spirit joining together, the veil may be taken off: 'How can they understand without a teacher?' Rom. x. 14. And 'to us is committed the dispensation to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ,' saith St Paul, Eph. iii. 6-8. Therefore there is this ordinance to unfold these depths as much as may servo for us. Profane people, they think they know enough, they need not be taught; as if this were a shallow mystery, or none at all. It argues a profane and naughty heart, not to attend upon all sanctified means; all is little enough. And sometimes God will not grant his Spirit in one means, because he will make us go to another, and from that to another, and run thorough all. He denies his Spirit of purpose in hearing, because he will have us to read; and denies it in that, because he will have us confer and practise the communion of saints; and all little enough to apprehend this glorious, excellent mystery. A man may know a profane heart, therefore, by despising the improvement of any means of knowledge. It is a mystery. Therefore God's people desire to have it taught.

2. Again, If we would understand these mysteries, let us labour for humble spirits; for the Spirit works that disposition in the first place: 'The humble, God will teach,' Ps. xxv. 9; the humble, that will depend upon his teaching. Now this kind of humility here required, it is a denial of our own wits, though they be never so capacious for the things of the world. We must be content 'to become fools, that we may be wise,' 1 Cor. iv. 10. We must deny our own understandings, and be content to have no more understanding in divine things than we can carry out of God's book, than we can be taught by God's word and ordinances. This humility we must bring if we will understand this mystery.

3. And bring withal a serious desire to know, with a purpose to be moulded to what we know; to be delivered to the obedience of what we know; for then God will discover it to us. Wisdom is easy to him that will. Together with prayer and humility, let us but bring a purpose and desire to be taught, and we shall find divine wisdom easy to him that will. None ever miscarry in the church but those that have false hearts. They have not humble and sincere hearts, willing to be taught. For if they have that, then God, that hath given this sincerity and will, this resolution, that they will use the means and they will be taught, he will suit it with teachers. God usually suits men with teachers fit for their dispositions. Let a man have a naughty heart, and he shall find flatterers to build him up in all violent and naughty courses. God in judgment will give him teachers that shall suit his

disposition. But if he be a child of God, and have a sincere heart to know the truth, he shall meet with some that shall be as sincere again to tell him the truth. Therefore we should less pity men when we see them run into errors. God sees that they have naughty dispositions; indeed, if they be silly fools, God will have mercy on them, if they be sincere, though they be in error; but if we see men that may know the truth, and yet run into errors, know that such a man hath a poisonous heart, a malicious bent of heart against the truth, or else God would not give him up to such and such things as he is carried with. There is much in that man's disposition that is carried away with false teachers; I mean, where light is discovered. But where God gives a willing mind, there he opens his meaning. Wisdom is easy to him that will understand.

4. And take heed of passion and prejudice, of carnal affections that stir up passion; for they will make the soul that it cannot see mysteries that are plain in themselves. As we are strong in any passion, so we judge; and the heart, when it is given up to passion, it transforms the truth to its own self, as it were. Even as where there is a suffusion of the eye, as in the jaundice, or the like, it apprehends colours like itself; so when the taste is vitiated, it tastes things, not as they are in themselves, but as itself is. So the corrupt heart transforms this sacred mystery to its own self, and oft-times forceth Scripture to defend its own sin, and the corrupt state it is in. It will believe what it list. What it loves, it will force itself to believe,— although it be contrary to divine mysteries,—when the heart is deeply engaged in any passion or affection. Lot us labour therefore to come with purged hearts (it is the exhortation of the apostles James and Peter) to receive those mysteries: they will lodge only in clean hearts. Let us labour to see God and Christ with a clear eye, free from passion, and covetousness, and vainglory. We see a notable example of this in the scribes. When they were not led with passion, and covetousness, and envy against Christ, how right they could judge of the gospel, and the unfolding of the prophecies to the wise men. They could tell aright that he should be born in Bethlehem. But when Christ came among them, and opposed their lazy, proud kind of life, that kept people in awe with their ceremonies, &c., then they sinned against the Holy Ghost, and against their own light, and maliced Christ, and brought him to his end. So it is with men. When their minds be clear, before they be overcast with passion, and strong affections to the world, they judge clearly of divine things; but when those passions prevail with them, they are opposite to that truth that before they saw, in God's just judgment, such is the antipathy and emulation of the heart against this sacred mystery. The heart of itself is an unfit vessel for these holy

mysteries; let us desire God to purge and to cleanse them. It is said of the Pharisees in the gospel, that when Christ spake great matters they scoffed at him. But what saith the text? Luke xvi. 14, 'They were covetous.' Let a covetous proud man come to hear the word: he cares not to hear these mysteries. His heart is so engaged to the world, he scorns and laughs at all. And men are unsettled. Sometimes they will grant truths, sometimes they will not, as their passions lead them. As we see in them towards St Paul, Acts xxii. 11, before he discovered himself to be a Pharisee, 'This man is not worthy to live.' But when he discovered himself on their side, 'I am a Pharisee, and the son of a Pharisee,' Acts xxiii. 6. Oh how finely do they mince the matter! 'Perhaps an angel hath revealed it to him,' &c., ver. 9. He was an honest man then. So men either judge or not judge, as their passions and affections carry them. Therefore it is of great consequence to come with clean hearts and minds to the mysteries of God.

There is besides this mystery, a mystery of iniquity, that St Paul speaks of, 2 Thes. ii. 7. There is the mystery of antichrist, as well as the mystery of Christ.

Quest. And why is that called a mystery?

Ans. Because there is mischief, and error, and wickedness conveyed under seeming truth, and goodness, and virtue; even as in this, grace and goodness is conveyed to the world under a show of baseness and meanness. Therefore in Rev. xvii. 5, it is said, the beast hath 'mystery' in her forehead. Indeed, there is the 'mystery of iniquity' in popery. It was literally performed in Julius the Second; for in his papal crown there was written 'Mysterium,' &c., till at last it was blotted out, and instead thereof was written, 'Julius secunclus papa'. They began to smell it might be found out. This is recorded by those that saw it. It is a mystery indeed, but a 'mystery of iniquity.' But more particularly;—

Quest. How a mystery of iniquity?

Ans. Because, under the name of Christ and of Christian religion, he is antichrist, opposite to Christ. He is both opposite—the word signifieth antichrist—and emulus, one that would be like Christ, a vice-Christ. He is such an opposite as yet he would be his vicar. Under colour of religion he overthrows all religion; and while he would be head of the catholic church, he is head of the catholic apostasy.

These God will have in the church together—the mystery of godliness and ungodliness, of Christ and antichrist. Why? That the one may be a foil to the other. And how shall men magnify, and relish, and highly esteem this mystery I speak of, except they look by way of opposition to the mystery of antichrist, and see how contrary those courses are? Alas! the reason why they so oppose as they do the gospel, and the purity of it, is, because they are contrary mysteries. That must be maintained by ignorance. The gospel, that is a mystery, that must be revealed; and God hath ordained that it should be revealed more and more. Therefore those that would second popery, that are friends of that, they are enemies to the gospel, and to the publishers of it; they cannot carry their conveyance handsomely. All popish spirits are enemies to the mystery of godliness, because where this is, it blows upon the 'mystery of iniquity;' as indeed the overthrowing of error is the discovering of it; for none would willingly be cozened. Popery must be discovered with the breath of Christ; that is, with a mystery which is too sharp a breath for his mystery to feel. Therefore blame them not, that they are so bitter opposites to the publishing of divine truths; the one mystery consumes the other. As Moses' rod devoured all the other rods, so truth eats up all opposite errors whatsoever. See but in experience. Wheresoever truth is planted—the gospel and ordinances, and religion of God—how Satan 'falls down like lightning,' and antichrist falls, Luke x. 18. But this by the way, to give a lustre to the other. There are many other mysteries besides the mystery of iniquity in popery. Every trade hath its mystery; and there are mysteries and secrets of state. But this is the mystery of all mysteries, that we should give ourselves most of all to understand. Therefore it is said to be a 'Great mystery.'

1. That is the adjunct. It is a 'great mystery.' And here I might be endless; for it is not only great as a mystery—that is, there is much of it concealed-—but it is a great and excellent mystery, if we regard whence it came, from the bosom of God, from the wisdom of God. If we regard all that had any hand in it—God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the angels attending upon the church; the apostles, the penmen; preachers and ministers, the publishers of it—it is a 'great mystery.'

2. If we regard the end of it, to bring together God and man—man that was fallen, to bring him back again to God, to bring him from the depth of misery to the height of all happiness; a 'great mystery' in this respect.

3. Again, It is 'great,' for the manifold wisdom that God discovered in the publishing of it, by certain degrees: first, in types, then after he came to truths; first, in promises, and then performances. First, the Jews were the church of God; and then comes in the Gentiles: a sweet, manifold, and deep wisdom. It was a great mystery in the manner of convoying of it from time to time, from the beginning of the world.

4. Again, It is a great mystery, for that it works. For it is such a mystery as is not only a discovery of secrets, but it transforms those that know it and believe it. We are transformed by it to the likeness of Christ, of whom it is a mystery; to be as he is, full of grace. It hath a transforming, changing power. It gives spiritual sight to the blind, and spiritual ears to the deaf, and spiritual life to the dead. Whatsoever Christ did in the days of his flesh to the outward man, that he doth by his Spirit to the inward man, even by the publication of this mystery; wonders are wrought by it daily.

5. If we consider any part of it: Christ, or his church, or anything, it is a mystery, and a 'great mystery.' It must needs be great, that the very angels desire to pry into, 1 Pet. i. 12.

6. If we regard those that could not pry into it; as it is 1 Cor. li. 6, 8, that the wise men of the world understood nothing of it: 'Where is the philosopher?' &c. There are no parts in the world that could ever enter into this. It is above the sharpest wit, the deepest judgment, the reachingest head. They are all nothing here. It is a 'great mystery.' It is a depth above all depths of natural parts whatsoever. It is a wondrous depth. It hath all dimensions, 'the depth and height of the love of God in Christ,' and the 'unsearchable riches of Christ,' saith the apostle Paul.

7. Again, it is a great mystery, because it makes its great. It makes times great, and the persons great that live in those times. What made John Baptist greater than all the prophets and others in those times? Because he saw Christ come in the flesh. What made those after John Baptist greater than he? They saw Christ ascend gloriously; that John Baptist did not. So persons and times are more or less glorious, as they have greater or less manifestation of this mystery. Great is that mystery itself that makes all things great; that makes times and persons great. What made the times of Christ so great? 'Happy are the eyes that see that that your eyes see, and the ears that hear that that your cars hear,' Mat. xiii. 16. Why? Because the Messiah was come. What made the second temple greater than the first? The first, which was Solomon's temple, was more magnificent than the other. Oh it was because

Christ came in the time of the second temple and taught there. So it is the manifestation of Christ's truth that makes times and places glorious. Will he not make the soul glorious then where he is? Certainly he doth. What makes these times glorious? But that we have unthankful, dark hearts, or else we would acknowledge they are blessed times that all of us have lived in under the gospel. What makes them so glorious? The glorious gospel that shines in these times out of Egyptian darkness of popery. Little thankful are we for it, and that threateneth a removal of the gospel; for, being great things, and disesteemed, and undervalued— men living under the gospel as bad as under paganism—will God continue these great things among us, to be thus vilified and disesteemed?

Let us take heed therefore that we set a higher price on religion. It is a mystery, and a great mystery; therefore it must have great esteem. It brings great comfort and great privileges. It is the 'word of the kingdom.' It is a 'glorious gospel;' not only because it promiseth glory, but it makes the soul glorious, more excellent than other persons. Let us raise a greater esteem in our hearts of this excellent truth. It is a 'great mystery.'

8. Again, It is a great mystery, if compared to all other mysteries. Creation was a great mystery, for all things to be made out of nothing, order out of confusion; for God to make man a glorious creature of the dust of the earth, it was a great matter. But what is this in comparison for God to be made man? It was a great and wondrous thing for Israel to be delivered out of Egypt and Babylon; but what are those to the deliverance out of hell and damnation by the gospel? What are the mysteries of nature, the miracles of nature, the loadstone, &c., to these supernatural mysteries? There are mysteries in the providence of God, in governing the world, mysteries of Satan, mysteries of iniquity, that deceive the world. 'The wise men of the world all wonder at the beast,' Rev. xiii. 8, a great mystery. But what are all mysteries, either of nature or hell, to this 'great mystery'? I might be endless in the point.

Use 1. First of all, learn hence from blessed St Paul how to be affected when we speak and think of the glorious truth of God; that we should work upon our hearts, to have large thoughts and large expressions of it. St Paul thought it not sufficient to call it a mystery, but a great mystery. He doth not only call it 'riches,' but unsearchable riches.' So when he speaks of the fruits of the gospel, what strange words the Scripture hath: 'Peace of conscience that passeth understanding,' Philip, iv. 7; and, 'joy unspeakable and glorious,'

1 Peter i. 8; 'we are brought out of darkness into marvellous light,' 1 Peter ii. 9; as if all things were full of wonder in the gospel, both the thing and the fruits of it. Surely all that have the same spirit, and have their eyes open to see in any measure these excellent mysteries, they are in some measure so disposed as the blessed apostle was; that is, they have full hearts, and answerable to that, they have full expressions. Out of the riches and treasure of the heart the mouth will speak. Therefore let us be ashamed of the deadness, and dulness, and narrowness of our hearts, when we are to conceive or speak of these things, and labour to have full expressions of them.

(1.) And that we may the better do this, let us labour to have as deep conceits in our understandings as we can of that mystery of sinfulness that is in us, and that mystery of misery. It is not to be conceived the cursed state we are in by nature. It is not to be conceived what a depth of corruption is in this heart of ours, and how it issues out in sinful thoughts, and speeches, and actions every day. Indeed, there is a height, and breadth, and depth of corruption in man's heart; and there is a height, and breadth, and depth of the misery of man. For as it is said of this blessed estate, 'neither eye hath seen, nor car hath heard, nor hath entered into the heart of man to conceive the things that God hath prepared for those that love him,' Isa. lxiv. 4. So indeed, neither eye hath seen, nor car hath heard, nor hath entered into the heart of man to conceive the misery that men are in by nature; only there are some Hashes of conscience, to give a little taste in this world, of that misery that men in the state of nature fall into, when they go hence. Therefore the more clear knowledge we have of the mystery of corruption—how prone our hearts are to deceive us—and of the great misery we are in by nature, the more we shall wonder at the boundless and bottomless goodness of God in the mystery of our salvation. The one will sharpen the appetite of the other. And, indeed, we ought to have views of these two every day, to look to the state we are brought out of if we believe. If we be not yet in the state of grace, consider but what we are, how little there is between us and eternal destruction, that we are ready to drop into hell irrecoverably; and withal, consider again the infinite love of God in Jesus. These be things fit to take up our thoughts.

(2.) Again, If we would have large and sensible thoughts and apprehensions of these things, such as the blessed apostle, let us set some tone apart to meditate of these things, till the heart he waned; let us labour to fasten our thoughts, as much as we can, on them every day; to consider the

excellency of this mystery of religion in itself, and the fruit of it in this world and in the world to come. It is a good employment; for from thence we shall wonder at nothing in the world besides. What is the reason that men are taken up with admiration of petty mysteries, of poor things? Because their thoughts were never raised up to higher considerations. A wise man will wonder at nothing, because he knows greater things than those objects presented to him, he hath seen greater measures than those; so it is with a wise Christian. Do you think he will stand wondering at great and rich men, at great places and honours, and such things? Indeed, he knows how to give that respect that is due. Alas! he hath had greater matters in the eye of his soul, and hath what is great in this world to him, to whom the world itself is not great. What is great in this world to him to whom Christ is great; to whom heaven and the mysteries of religion are great? All things else are little to him to whom these things are great. Christ took up his disciples, when they said, 'O, Master, what kind of stones are here?' Here are 'goodly stones and buildings' indeed. 'Oh,' saith Christ, 'are these the things you wonder at? I tell you, that not one stone shall be left upon another,' Mat. xxiv. 2. So it is the nature of shallow men to wonder at the things of this world, to be taken with empty vain things. Are these the things we wonder at? If we would wonder, let us come to religion. There we have him 'whose name is Wonderful,' Isa. ix. 6. Christ's name is Wonderful, because all is wonderful in Christ. He is wonderful in his person, in his offices, in the managing of them; to bring us to life by death, to glory by shame. He is wonderful in his government of his church, to govern by afflictions, by conforming us to himself, to bring us to glory; to perfect his work in abasement; to bring it low that he may raise it after. There are wonders every way in Christ, not only in himself, but in all his courses. There is 'peace that passeth understanding,' joy unspeakable and glorious. Religion will teach us what to admire at. We see those that are under antichrist, under the mystery of iniquity, it is said, Rev. xvii. 8, 'They wonder at the beast.' Oh what a goodly order they have among them, one under another! What a wise fabric it is! What a linking together of things! All is wonderful. Indeed, it is fit for them to wonder at, that have not seen these wondrous mysteries of the gospel; but those that have spiritual eye-salve to enlighten the eye of their souls, to see these blessed mysteries how great they are, they will be far from wondering at any earthly thing, much less at the mystery of antichrist. It is a 'great mystery,' therefore,

Use 2. Let us bring great endeavours to learn it, and great respect towards it, and great love to God for it. Let every thing in us be answer-able to this 'great mystery,' which is a 'great mystery.'

'Without controversy.'

It is so under the broad seal of public confession, as the word ὁμολογουμένως in the general signifies; by the confession of all, it is 'great.' It is a confessed truth, that the 'mystery of godliness is great.' As if the apostle had said, I need not give you greater confirmation; it is, without question or controversy, a great mystery.

Obj. What is more opposed than the mystery of godliness?

Ans. We must therefore take St Paul's meaning in a right sense. It is therefore 'a great mystery,' because it is controverted by so many great wits. Were it altogether obvious and open, they would never controvert it. Upon these two reasons it is without controversy.

(1.) First, In itself, it is not to be doubted of. It is a great grounded truth, as lightsome and clear as if the gospel were written with a sunbeam, as one saith. There is nothing clearer and more out of controversy than sacred evangelical truths.

(2.) And as they are clear and lightsome in themselves, so they are apprehended of all God's people. However it be controverted by others, yet they are not considerable. All that are the children of the church, that have their eyes open, they confess it to be so, and wonder at it as a 'great mystery.' They without all doubt and controversy embrace it. Things are not so clear in the gospel that all that are sinful and rebellious may see whether they will or no. For then it were no great matter to have faith; it were no great matter to be a Christian; and then men could not be rebellious, because things would be so clear. Things are not so clear in the gospel that they take away all rebellion; and that it is not a grace to see that they are clear; to those that are disposed and have sanctified souls, they are 'without controversy;' and things are said to be in Scripture as they are to those that are holily disposed. The immortality of the soul, it is clear by reason from nature, yet notwithstanding, ill-disposed souls will not be convinced of the soul's immortality, but live and die like atheists in that particular. The reason is clear; but it is not clear to a lumpish, ill-disposed, perverse soul. Therefore God doth carry the manifestation of evangelical truths especially, that they may be clear to those whose eyes are open, and not to others: not because they are not clear to them if their eyes were open, but because they oppose them, and raise up rebellion and stubbornness of heart against them. It is an undeniable argument to prove the Scripture to be the word of God, to a well-disposed

soul, but come to another, and he wall never leave cavilling. Yet a man may say, 'without controversy,' it is the word of God, because it is so to a sanctified soul. Other persons are not considerable in divine things. Therefore the apostle speaks of them, as they are to God's people, 'without controversy.' Hence then, we may know who is a true Christian; he that brings a firm assent to evangelical truths, that they are 'great without controversy.'

Quest. But is there no staggering, is there no formido contrarii? Is there no fear that it may be otherwise?

Ans. Yes. But in faith, as far as it is faith, there is no doubting, no contrariety; for staggering and wavering is contrary to the nature of faith and believing. But because there are two contrary principles always in a believer, therefore there is doubting in a believer, and wavering. Therefore we are exhorted to grow more and more; and the end of the ministry is not only to lay the foundation of a believer at the first, but to build them up, that they be not carried away with every vain doctrine. It is a truth, confessed to be true; for divine truths are conveyed in an history, in the history of the gospel; and what ground have we to call them in question, more than the story of Thucydides, or the story of Livy, or such like? We take them, because they are the histories of such times. So the mystery of the gospel is 'without controversy,' because it is a mystery in a history. In this respect a man is more unreasonable that denies it, than he that denies Livy's book to be Livy's, or Tacitus to be Tacitus. No man calls these into question. Why should we question this that is the 'mystery of godliness,' set down in the history of Christ, of his birth, his life, and death? &c. But not to press that further.

Use 1. I will only make that use of it that a great scholar in his time once did upon the point, a noble earl of Mirandula. If there be no calling these things into question, if they have been confirmed by so many miracles, as they have been in a strict sense, why then, How is it that men live as if they made no question of the falsehood of them? What kind of men are those that live as if it were 'without controversy,' that Christian truths had no truth at all in them? Men live so carelessly and profanely, and slight and scorn these great mysteries, as if they made no question but they are false. The lives of men shew that they believe not this. That it is out of the question true: to give an instance or two. If a man were to go through a storm for some great matter, if he did believe he should have some great preferment, would he not

adventure? Certainly he would. Those, therefore, that will not venture anything for this excellent treasure, this unsearchable treasure, for his interest in the gospel, do they believe it? He that will not part with a penny for the gaining of a thousand pounds, doth he believe that he shall have so much? Certainly he doth not. There is such a disproportion between that that he parts with, and that that is promised, that if he did believe it, his heart would yield and assent to it, he would redeem it with the loss of such a petty thing; much more in this case, having such an excellent treasure propounded. Those, therefore, that will deny themselves no lust, that will part with nothing for Christ's sake, do they believe these things that the apostle saith are 'without controversy'? Certainly they do not; for there is a less disproportion in the things I named before, than between any earthly thing and the great good things we have discovered here in the mysteries of salvation. Therefore, we may see by this, there is little faith in the world.

Use 2. Again, in that he saith, 'Without controversy,' or confessedly, 'great is the mystery of godliness here we may know then, what truths are to be entertained as catholic universal truths, those that without question are received. Then, if the question be, which is the catholic truth— popery, or our religion—I say, not popery, but our religion. I prove it from hence. That which 'without controversy,' all churches have held from the apostles' time (yea, and the adversaries and opposites of the church), that is catholic. But it hath been in all times, and in all churches, even among the adversaries held, the positive points of our religion, that the Scripture is the word of God; that it is to be read; that Christ is the mediator; that Christ hath reconciled God and man, &c.,—all the positive parts of our religion have been confessed, 'without controversy,' ever since the apostles' times, of all writers; and are still, even among the papists themselves, for they hold all the positive points that we do: they hold the reading of the Scripture, but not in the mother tongue; they hold that the Scripture is the word of God, but not alone, but traditions also; that Christ is mediator, but not alone. So they add their part, but they hold the positive parts that we hold. Therefore I ground that from the text: that which 'without controversy' hath been held in all times and ages of the church, and 'without controversy' held by ourselves and the adversaries, it is more catholic and general than those things wherein they dissent from us, that were neither held from the apostles' times (for they were the inventions of popes, one after another; their fooleries, wherein they differ from us, they are late inventions, and we hold them not), they are less catholic than that that they and we and all Christians hold ever since the apostles' times. But to come to a use of practice.

Use 3. Therefore when we have the truths of religion discovered to us by the ministry, or by reading, &c., when they are conveyed to our knowledge by any sanctified means, let us propound these queries to our own souls, Are these things so or no? Yes. Do I believe them to be so or no? Yes. If I do believe them, then consider what the affection and inward disposition is; whether it be suitable to such things, and so work upon our hearts that our knowledge may be affective knowledge, a knowledge with a taste, that sinks even to the very affections, that pierceth through the whole soul; that the affections may yield, as well as the understanding; and let us never cease till there be a correspondence between the affection and the truth. Are they true? Believe them. Are they good? Embrace them. Let us never rest till our hearts embrace them, as our understanding conceives them. And let us think there is a defect in our apprehensions, that we call them into question, if the affections embrace them not; for alway, answerable to the weight and the depth of the apprehension of the truth, is the affection stirred up, and the wall stirred up to embrace it. A man knows no more in religion than he loves and embraceth with the affections of his soul.

The affections are planted for this end upon the report of that which is good to them, to embrace it, to join with it. Therefore let us never think our state good, till we find our hearts warmed with the goodness of divine supernatural truths. 'Oh! how do I love thy law!' saith David, Ps. cxix. 97. He wonder's at his own affections. Let us labour to have great affections, answerable to the things; and never leave till we can love them and joy and delight in them, as the greatest things; and with blessed St Paul, account 'all as dung and dross, in comparison of them,' Philip, iii. 8. That knowledge is only saving knowledge that works the heart to a love, to a joy and delight, that works the whole man to practice and obedience; that is only spiritual knowledge. All other knowledge serves for nothing but to minister God matter of justifying our damnation; that our damnation will be just; that knowing these things, we do not work our hearts to love them, but we rest in the naked barren knowledge of them. It is a pitiful thing, to know things no further and no deeper, than to minister matter of our just damnation. Now all that have not a transforming knowledge, that have not a spiritual knowledge, they are in this state. Therefore we should labour to see spiritual things, in a spiritual light; for where spiritual light is, there is alway spiritual heat; where spiritual evidence is in the understanding, there is spiritual embracing in the affections. Evidence brings quickness. Supernatural light and supernatural life, they go together. Let us labour, therefore, that our apprehension of these great mysteries may be supernatural and spiritual; and

then as the judgment apprehends them 'without controversy' to be true, the affections will be present, to close with them. So much for the preface, 'without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness.' Now we come to the particulars of this great mystery, 'God manifested in the flesh.'

This, and the other branches that follow', they are all spoken of Christ. Indeed, the 'mystery of godliness' is nothing but Christ, and that which Christ did. Christ was 'manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached to the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory.' So that from the general we may observe this, that Christ is the scope of the Scripture.

Christ is the pearl of that ring; Christ is the main, the centre wherein all those lines end. Take away Christ, what remains? Therefore in the whole Scriptures, let us see that we have an eye to Christ; all is nothing but Christ. The mystery of religion is Christ 'manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit,' See., all is but Christ.

And that is the reason the Jews understand not the Scriptures better, because they seek not Christ there. Take away Christ, take away all out of the Scriptures, they are but empty things. Therefore, when we read them, think of somewhat that they may lead us to Christ, as all the Scriptures lead, one way or other, to Christ, as I might shew in particular, but I only name it in general.

He begins here with this, 'God manifested in the flesh;' not God taken essentially, but taken personally. God, in the second person, was manifested. All actions are of persons. The second person was incarnate. The three persons are all God; yet they were not all incarnate, because it was a personal action of the second person.

Quest. And why in that person?

Ans. 1. Because he was the image of God. And none but the image of God could restore us to that image. He was the Son of God, and none but the natural Son could make us sons. He is the 'wisdom' of the Father, to make us wise, and he is the 'first beloved' to make us beloved. Such reasons are given by the school-men, and not disagreeable to Scripture. For, indeed, it is appropriate to the second Person, the great work of the incarnation, 'God in the flesh.' Therefore they usually compare the incarnation of Christ to a garment made by three virgins, sisters; and one of them wears it. So all

the three persons had a hand in the garment of Christ's flesh. The Father had a work in it, and the Holy Ghost sanctified it, yet he only wore it. Therefore the second person is 'God manifest in the flesh.'

By 'flesh,' here, is meant human nature; the property of human nature, both body and soul. And by 'flesh' also, is usually understood the infirmities and weakness of man, the miserable condition of man. So 'God manifest in the flesh,' that is, in our nature and the properties of it, he put that on; and not only so, but our infirmities, and weaknesses, our miseries, and which is more, he took our flesh when it was tainted with treason, our base nature after it was fallen, which was a wondrous fruit of love. As if one should wear a man's colours or livery after he is proclaimed traitor; it is a great grace to such a man. For Christ to wear our garment when we were proclaimed traitors, after we were fallen, it was a wondrous dignation. And he took not only our nature, but our flesh. He was 'God manifest in the flesh,' that is, in the infirmities of our nature. He took our whole nature, a human body and human soul. And he took our nature upon him when it was at the worst; not in innocency, but with all the infirmities that are natural infirmities, not personal. Therefore he came to be so that he might be pitiful.

Quest. You will say, How can he be pitiful? There are many infirmities that he took not upon him; he took not upon him all infirmities.

Ans. I answer, by proportion to those that he took, he knew how to be pitiful to those he took not. He is infinitely wise. He knows how to make the proportion. It is often set down, in Heb. ii. 18 and Neh. iv. 15, as one end of his taking our nature upon him, that he might be a pitiful and merciful redeemer.

Obj. But some will say, Indeed, he took my nature and the general infirmities, as weariness, and hunger, and the like; but I am sick and troubled in mind and conscience.

Ans. Though he felt not all particular grievances, yet notwithstanding, having taken our nature upon him, that he might he pitiful and merciful, according to the proportion that he felt himself, he knows how to pity us in our sicknesses, and losses, and crosses, every way. And for the chief, the trouble of mind, alas! he knew it in that great desertion, when he cried out, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!' So we may comfort ourselves that we have a merciful, and pitiful, and gracious Saviour, 'God in the flesh.' He hath taken our flesh upon him for that purpose, that he might

have experimental knowledge of our infirmities and weaknesses, and from that he might be the more sweet, and kind, and gentle to us. He was not sick himself; but by experience of labour, and thirst, and the like, he knew what it was to be sick by that he felt. He knew not what it was to sin and to be troubled for sin, because he felt it not in himself; but being our surety for sin, and feeling the wrath of God for it, he had experience to be compassionate from this. He was weary, to pity those that are weary; he was hungry, to pity them that are hungry; he was poor, to pity those that are so; he was misused and reproached, to pity those that are in the like condition. You can name nothing, but he can out of his own experience be merciful and pitiful unto.

In that God, the second person, appeared in our nature, in our weak and tainted disgraced nature after the fall; from hence comes,

1. First of all, the enriching of our nature with all graces in Christ, as it is in Col. ii. 3, 'All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in him,' in our nature. In Christ there is abundance of riches. Our nature in him is highly enriched. Hence comes again,

2. The ennobling of our nature. In that God appeared in our nature it is much ennobled. When our nature is engrafted into a higher stock, a mean graft, into so glorious a stock as Christ, it is a high dignity. That now our flesh is married to the second person, it is a wondrous advancement of our nature, even above the angel call, 'He took not the nature of angels,' Heb. ii. 16. It was a great exaltation to our nature, that God should take it into the unity of his person, for the human nature of Christ had no subsistence but in the second person. And this doth not any way debase the human nature of Christ, that it had no subsistence but in the Godhead. Peter, and James, and John, &c., had a subsistence of their own, but Christ had no subsistence but in the second person. And yet, I say, it did no way demean the human nature of Christ, because it was advanced to a higher stock, where it hath a glorious subsistence and being.

3. In the third place, hence comes the enabling of our nature to the work of salvation that was wrought in our nature. It came from Hence, 'God was in the flesh.' From whence was the human nature enabled to suffer?

Whence was it upheld in suffering, that it did not sink under the wrath of God? 'God was in the flesh.' God upheld our nature. So that both the riches, and dignity, and the ableness of our nature to be saving and meritorious, all came from this, that God was in our nature.

4. And hence comes this likewise, that whatsoever Christ did in our nature, God did it, for God appeared in our nature. He took not upon him the person of any' man, but the nature. And therefore our flesh and the second person being but one person, all that was done was done by the person that was God, though not as God. Therefore when he died, God died; when he was crucified, God was crucified. If he had been two persons, he had died in one person, and the other had not died. Now, being but one person, though two natures, whatsoever was done in the [one] nature, the person did it according to the other nature. He could not die as God. Therefore, because in love he would die, and be a sacrifice, he would take upon him such a nature wherein he might be a sacrifice. This is a great dignity, that our nature is taken into the unity of the person of the Son of God. Therefore hence it comes, I say, that whatsoever was done in our nature God did it.

5. Hence comes also the union between Christ and us. Whence is it that we are 'sons of God?' Because he was the 'Son of man,' 'God in our flesh.' There are three unions: the union of natures, God to become man; the union of grace, that we are one with Christ; and the union of glory. The first is for the second, and the second for the third; God became man, that man might be one with God; God was 'manifested in the flesh,' that we might be united to him; and being brought again to God the Father, we might come again to a glorious union. By this, that God was 'manifest in the flesh,' it is that he was married first to our nature, that we by union might be married to him. We had never had union with God unless God had united our flesh to him, and in that flesh had satisfied God. All that Christ did, saith Peter, it was to 'bring us back again to God,' 1 Peter iii. 18.

O. Hence likewise comes the sympathy between Christ and us; for Christ is said to suffer with us. 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' Acts ix. 4. He is said to be imprisoned in us; and we are said to ascend gloriously with him, because he took upon him our nature. So if he be honoured, we are honoured; if we be despised, he is despised. There is a mutual affection and sympathy between Christ and us.

7. Hence likewise comes the efficacy of what Christ did, that the dying of one man should be sufficient for the whole world. It was, that 'God was in the flesh.'

The apostle may well call this, 'God manifest in the flesh,' a 'mystery,' and place it in the first rank For God to be included in the womb of a virgin;

for happiness itself to become a curse; for him that hath the riches of all men to become poor for our sake; for him that ever enjoyed his Father's presence, to want the beams of it for a time, that he might satisfy his Father's justice, and undergo his wrath for our sins—here is a matter of wonderment indeed!

Use 1. And shall we think that so great a mystery as this was for small purpose? that the great God should take upon him a piece of earth? that he should become a poor and weak man? the immortal God to take upon him our flesh and to die? that he whom heaven and earth cannot comprehend should be enclosed in the womb of a virgin? for him to be so abased as there was never any abasement like unto Christ's, because of the greatness of his person? If angels had done so; alas! they were inferior creatures; they were servants to God; but for the Son of God to take our nature when it was so low, for so excellent a person to be abased so low! There was none ever suffered that, that 'God in our flesh' suffered. For as communion with his Father was sweeter to him than to all men besides, so for him to want communion with his Father upon the cross, when he cried, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' it was the greatest abasement to him, being the most sensible of it. Therefore there was no suffering like that of Christ's. And shall we think so great a matter was for small purpose, for little sins or for few sins only? Oh no. It was to give a foundation to our faith in all extremity of temptations; to stay our conscience in the guilt of great and crying sins. Oh despair not, despair not! This great mystery the apostle speaks of, for the great God to become man, it was for great sins; that where 'sin hath abounded, grace might superabound,' Rom. v. 20. God intended in this to set down the accusing conscience, to quiet and still it. God is offended, it is true; but 'God manifest in the flesh' hath made reconciliation and satisfaction. He was a sacrifice for sin, and God will answer God. God the Son will answer the displeasure of God the Father, because he is appointed to this office by him. He is 'set forth,' as it is Rom. iii. 25, 'to be the propitiation.' Therefore in all risings of conscience in the time of trouble, in the hour of death, let us remember this great mystery, 'God manifest in the flesh.' God's purpose in this was to triumph, as it were, over all the clamours of conscience whatsoever, over all things that Satan and the power of hell can object. Let Satan object what he will, here is a shield put into the hand of faith to beat back all his fiery darts.

God in the covenant of grace, which is founded in Christ, in God in our nature, doth intend to be gracious to sinners. It is a greater mystery than that of the creation. For God there did good to a good man; he made Adam

good, and continued him good while he stood; but after the fall, God intended to raise up the doubting, unbelieving soul against the greatest ills of sin and despair, and against all objections for sin whatsoever; from the greatness of sin either natural or actual. It is the glory of God in the gospel to glorify his mercy and goodness in prevailing and triumphing over the greatest ills that can be. Now he is good to sinners, and to great sinners; so that if there be faith wrought by the Spirit of God, raising up our souls to lay hold of this 'God manifest in the flesh,' let us not be discouraged with any sin. Our sins are but the sins of men; but 'God manifest in the flesh' was made a sacrifice for our sins, and hath given a price answerable. What temptation will not vanish as a cloud before the wind when we see God's love in sending his Son, and Christ's love in taking our nature on him, to reconcile us by the sacrifice of his blood? Therefore let us treasure up this comfort. It is a spring of comfort, a well of consolation, as the Scripture speaks; therefore let us suck comfort out of this breast of consolation.

We may turn over things now, in the time of peace, with ease; but in time of temptation, when the soul is touched with guilt, and Satan plies us with temptations, the soul will have no rest but in an infinite ground of comfort. The soul is prone naturally to misgive, and to forecast the worst, and to conceive hardly of God in the time of temptation, as an enemy, and Satan is then busy about nothing so much as that we should have hard conceits of God, and to make us forget the main end of the great work of our redemption; which is, to undermine our unbelief by all means, by setting before the soul such grounds as the most unbelieving heart in the world, if it did consider of, would fasten and lay itself upon. Therefore let us labour to cherish, at such times especially, large thoughts of the infinite goodness and mercy of God, and of the love of Christ condescending so low as to be manifest in the flesh for our sakes.

It is a point of wondrous comfort, that now in Christ Jesus, God becoming man, we can in him break through the justice of God. For, as I said, when conscience is awaked, there are other manner of conceits of God than when it is sleepy and drowsy. A sleepy Christian hath a slight conceit of God, as if he as little thought of his sins as he doth himself. Oh but when conscience is awaked, and when we are drawn from the pleasures of sin, and they from us, and conscience hath nothing to do but to look upon God and upon the time to come, which is eternity, then if there be not somewhat for conscience to oppose that is equal to the justice of God, if there be not somewhat about us to clothe us and arm us, to pass through the justice, what

will become of us? Therefore it is a fruitful consideration, that God was 'manifest in our flesh,' and that, to give satisfaction to God, that so conscience might have full satisfaction.

This teacheth us what we should do when we find any trouble rise in our conscience for sins and unworthiness. Cast ourselves upon 'God in our flesh,' God that became 'flesh' for us and died for us: let us stay ourselves there. I am unworthy! a lump of sin! There is nothing in me that is good. Oh but I have all in Christ. He is righteousness for me. He hath abundance for me. His fulness is for me. Therefore you have it, Col. ii. 9, 'The fulness of the Godhead dwells in him bodily.' To what purpose is this fulness in him? He shows in the words following, 'In him we are complete,' ver. 10. Suppose in ourselves we be sinners and weak, that we are as ill as sin or the devil can make us in the time of temptation, yet 'in him we are complete.' And for this end 'the fulness of the Godhead dwells in him bodily.' Therefore, in all doubts in regard of sin and unworthiness, let us labour for faith (for faith is a grace that carries us out of ourselves, and plants and fixeth us in Christ), let us consider of ourselves in him, and consider of whatsoever is in him, it is for us. It is no matter what we are ourselves; in him we are in a glorious condition.

And oppose him to the wrath of God and the temptations of Satan; for all will fall before this 'God manifest in the flesh.' He is God, therefore he can subdue all; he is man, and therefore he will love us. 'I know whom I have believed,' 2 Tim. i. 12—him that is merciful, because he is man, and he hath taken my nature; and him that can subdue all enemies, because he is God, God in the flesh: a fit bottom and foundation for faith to rely upon. Let us have recourse to this therefore in all temptations whatsoever. We cannot glorify' God and Christ more than to go out of ourselves and fix our comfort here.

By this we have communion with the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This incarnation of Christ, it brings us into fellowship with the blessed Trinity; and it teacheth us what conceits we should have of God, to have loving thoughts of him. Whence is that that we can call God Father? From this, 'God manifest in the flesh.' The second person, to take away enmity, was 'manifest in the flesh.' Hence it is that I can call God Father, that I can boldly go to God, that I can conceive of God as gracious and lovely. And whence is it that our persons are become lovely to God?

From this, that God hath taken our nature upon him. Our nature is become lovely to him, and his is sweet and fatherly to us.

This should help us against Satan's transforming of God and Christ to us in the time of trouble. He presents him as a terrible judge. Indeed, so he is to sinners that will go on in sin. His wrath shall 'smoke against such,' Deut. xxix. 20. There is no comfort to them in Scripture. But to repentant sinners all is comfort: 'Come unto me, ye that are weary and heavy laden,' Mat. xi. 28; and, 'Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost,' Mat. xviii. 11; and, he came 'to save sinners,' as St Paul saith, 1 Tim. i. 10. Let us conceive of God now as lovely, as a father; and of Christ as a sweet saviour, made 'flesh' for this purpose. He is God and man, because he came to be a mediator between God and man; a friend to both, being to deal with both. Therefore we should thus conceive of Christ: as a great and mighty God, the ruler of the world, as Isaiah describes him, Isa. ix. 6, and conceive of him likewise as a meek, humble man—the one, to establish our faith, that we be not shaken, having such a great God to rely upon; and the other, to establish our faith in his good will, 'God in our flesh.' God, a name of power; 'God in our flesh' implieth mercy and love, pity and compassion.

Therefore, let not Satan abuse our imaginations, if we have a mind to turn to God; for, as I said, there is no comfort to them that go on in their sins. God will wound the 'hairy scalp of them that go on in iniquity,' Ps. lxviii. 21; and, 'they treasure up wrath against the day of wrath,' Rom. ii. 5. There is nothing but discomfort to such: 'The wrath of God abides upon them,' John iii. 36. They are in danger of damnation every minute of their lives. There is but a step between them and hell. But for such as intend to turn to God, God meets them half-way. We see the prodigal did but entertain a purpose to come to his father, and his father meets him. 'God in our flesh' hath made God peaceable to us. If we go to Christ, and lay hold on him for the forgiveness of our sins, God in him is become a loving, gracious, sweet Father to us. Let us frame our conceits of God as the Scripture doth. When sorrow for sin possesseth our souls, take heed of going away from God, that took our nature for this very purpose, that we may boldly go to him.

Oh what boldness have we now to go to 'God in our flesh.' To think of God absolutely, without God in the flesh, he is 'a consuming fire,' Heb. xii. 29, every way terrible; but to think of God in our nature, we may securely go to him: 'He is bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh,' Gen. ii. 23. We may

securely go to God our brother, to him that is of one nature with us, and now having our nature in heaven. Think of God born of a virgin, of God lying in the cradle, sucking the breast! Think of God going up and down teaching and doing all good! Think of God sweating for thee, hanging on the cross, shedding his blood, lying in the grave, raising himself again, and now in heaven 'sitting at the right hand of God,' our intercessor! Eph. i. 20. Conceive of God in this 'flesh' of ours, lovely to us; and now our nature must needs be lovely to him. The nature of God must needs be lovely to us, since he hath joined our poor beggarly flesh to the unity of the second person. Let us thus think of 'God manifest in the flesh.' To think of God alone, it swallows up our thoughts but to think of God in Christ, of God 'manifest in the flesh,' it is a comfortable consideration. To see the sun alone in itself, in the glory and lustre of it, it is impossible, without hurting of the eye; but to see the sun in water, as we do in an eclipse, &e., we may do it. So we cannot conceive of God alone absolutely; but to conceive of 'God in our flesh' is to look upon the sun as it were in the water, or upon the ground. God in himself is so glorious that we could never see him, as he tells Moses, Exodus xxxiii. 20, 'None can ever see God and live that is, God nakedly or absolutely. Oh but 'God manifest in our flesh' we may see; and it shall be our happiness in heaven to see him there, to see 'God in our flesh face to face,' Exodus xxxiii. 11.

We cannot too often meditate of these things. It is the life and soul of a Christian. It is the marrow of the gospel. It is the wonder of wonders. We need not wonder at anything after this. It is no wonder that our bodies shall rise again; that mortal man should become afterwards immortal in heaven, since the immortal God hath taken man's nature and died in it. All the articles of our faith and all miracles yield to this grand thing, 'God manifest in the flesh.' Believe this, and believe all other. Therefore, let us often have these sweet cherishing conceits of God in our flesh, that it may strengthen, and feed, and nourish our faith, especially in the time of temptation.

Use 2. Again, From this, that God was 'manifest in our flesh,' let Ms take heed that we defile not this flesh of ours, this nature of ours. What! Is this 'flesh' of mine taken into unity with the second person? Is this 'flesh' of mine now in heaven, 'sitting at the right hand of God?' And shall I defile this flesh of mine that I profess to be a member of Christ? 'Shall I make it the member of an harlot?' 1 Cor. vi. 15. Shall I abuse it, as intemperate persons do? Let us honour our nature, which Christ hath so honoured; and let us take

a holy kind of state upon us, to think ourselves too good, since God hath so advanced our nature, to abase it to the service of sin.

Use 3. Likewise, it should teach us to stoop to any service of Christ or our brethren. What! Did the love of God draw him into the womb of the virgin? Did it draw him to take my nature and flesh on him? And shall I think much to be serviceable to my poor brethren, for whom God was made flesh, and not only so, but was crucified? Such thoughts will take down such proud conceits as enter into our hearts when we are about any work of charity for the members of Christ. Shall I have base conceits of any man, whose flesh Christ hath taken? Especially, when I see any goodness in him, let me abase myself to any work of charity.

Take heed of pride. God himself emptied himself, and wilt thou be full of pride? He became of 'no reputation,' Philip, ii. 7, and wilt thou stand upon terms of credit? He 'took upon him the form of a servant,' and wilt thou be altogether a lord and king in thy affections, and not serve thy brethren? Did Christ do this that thou shouldst be a proud person? He came to expiate thy pride. Away with thy proud conceits! If thou be too proud to follow and imitate humble men, yet think not thyself too good to imitate an humble God. There is no spirit more opposite to the spirit of a Christian than a spirit swelling and lift up, that thinks itself too good to be abased in the service of others, that carries itself loftily. A proud spirit is most opposite to the spirit of God, that became man to expiate this pride of ours, and to work out salvation in this flesh of ours. Of all sins let us take heed of this diabolical satanical sin; let us be abased for Christ that was abased for us; and as he left his heaven—to do us good he left heaven itself—so let us. If we have a conceited heaven and happiness in ourselves, leave it, and become base and low, to do any good we can. Shall he stoop and bend to us from heaven to earth, and conceal his majesty, not to be known to be as be was; and shall not we stoop one to another to do good, and come down from our conceited excellency?

Use 4. Here we have a good ground likewise not to envy the blessed angels their greatness; nay, here we have that wherein we are above the angels themselves; for 'he took not upon him the nature of angels,' Heb. ii. 16, but he was 'God manifest in our flesh.' Christ married our nature to himself out of his love, that he might marry us to himself by his Spirit; and now, by our union with Christ, we be nearer him than the very angels are. The angels are not the spouse of Christ, but now, by reason of his taking our

nature, we are kin to Christ: 'He is bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh,' Eph. v. 80, and we are 'bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh.' We are the body, Christ is the head. We are nearer to Christ than the very angels. No wonder, then, if those blessed spirits daily pry into this great mystery, 1 Peter i. 12.

5. Lastly, Let us labour that Christ may be manifested in our particular flesh, in our persons. As he was God manifest in the flesh in regard of that blessed mass he took upon him, so we would every one labour to have God 'manifest in our flesh.'

Quest. How is that?

Ans. We must have Christ as it were born in us, 'formed in us,' as the apostle speaks, Col. i. 27. Certainly the same Spirit that sanctified Christ doth sanctify every member of Christ; and Christ is in some sort begotten, and conceived, and 'manifested' in every one that is a Christian. We must labour that Christ may be 'manifest' in our understandings, in our affections, that he may be manifest to us, and conceived, as it were, in us; as St Paul's phrase is, 'That the life of Christ may be made manifest in our mortal flesh,' 2 Cor. iv. 11. The life and spirit of Christ must be 'manifest' in every true Christian, and their 'flesh' must be sanctified by the same Spirit that Christ's flesh was sanctified withal. As Christ's flesh was first sanctified, and then abased, and then glorious, so the flesh of every Christian must be content to be abased, as the flesh of Christ was, to serve Christ, to be conformable to Christ in our abased flesh. And let us not make too much of this flesh of ours, that shall turn to rottenness ere long. It must be gracious sanctified flesh, as Christ's was, and then glorious flesh. Christ must be manifest in our flesh, as he was in his own, that when a man sees a Christian, he may see Christ manifest in him.

Obj. But how shall I come to have Christ manifest in my flesh? My heart is not fit to conceive Christ in. There is nothing in it but deadness, and darkness, and dulness, and rebellion?

Ans. Even as the virgin Mary, she conceived Christ when she yielded her assent. When the angel spake to her, what saith she presently? 'Be it as thou hast said,' Luke i. 38; let it even be so. She yielded her assent to the promise, that she should conceive a son. So when the promises are uttered to us of the forgiveness of sins, of salvation by Christ, as soon as ever we have a spirit of faith to yield our assent, let it be so, Lord, as thou hast promised; thou hast

promised forgiveness of sins: let it be so; thou hast promised favour in Christ: let it be so. As soon as the heart is brought to yield to the gracious promise, then Christ is conceived in the heart. Even as Christ was conceived in the womb of the virgin when she yielded her assent to believe the promise, so Christ is in every man's heart, to sanctify it, to rule it, to comfort it, as soon as this consent is wrought. We should labour, therefore, to bring our hearts to this. So much for this. Because it is of great consequence, and the leading mystery to all that follows, I have been somewhat the longer in unfolding those words, 'God manifest in the flesh.'

'Justified in the Spirit.'

These words are added, to answer an objection that may rise from the former. He was 'God manifest in the flesh.' He veiled himself. He could not have suffered else. When lie took upon him to be the mediator, he must do it in abased flesh. If Christ, being God, had not abased himself, he should never have been put to death. Satan and his instruments would never have meddled with him. Therefore God being veiled in the flesh, being clouded with our flesh and infirmities, thereupon the world had a misconceit of him. He was not generally thought to be what he was indeed. He appeared to be nothing but a poor man, a debased, dejected man; a persecuted, slandered, disgraced man in the world. He was thought to be a trespasser.

It is no matter what he appeared, when he was veiled with our flesh; he was 'justified in the Spirit,' to be the true Messiah; to be God as well as man.

'Justified.'

It implies two things in the phrase of Scripture: a freedom and clearing from false conceits and imputations, and declared to be truly what he was; to be otherwise than he was thought to be of the wicked world. When a man is cleared from that that is laid to his charge, he is 'justified.' When a man is declared to be that he is, then he is said to be justified in the sense of the Scriptures. 'Wisdom is justified of her children,' Mat. xi. 19, that is, cleared from the imputations that are laid upon religion, to be mopish and foolish. 'Wisdom is justified;' that is, cleared and declared to be an excellent thing of all her children. So Christ was 'justified.' He was cleared, not to be as they took him; and declared himself to be as he 'manifested' himself, a more excellent person, the Son of God, the true Messiah and Saviour of the world.

'In the Spirit.'

That is, in his Godhead: that did shew itself in his life and death, in his resurrection and ascension. The beams of his Godhead did sparkle out. Though he were 'God in the flesh,' yet he remained God still, and was 'justified' to be so 'in the Spirit,' that is, in his divine power, which is called the Spirit; because the spirit of anything is the quintessence and strength of it. God hath the name of Spirit, from his purity and power and vigour. So God is a Spirit; that is, God is pure, opposite to gross things, earth, and flesh; and God is powerful and strong. 'The horses of the Egyptians are flesh, and not spirit,' Isa. xxxi. 3, that is, they are weak. A spirit is strong; so much spirit, so much strength. So, by the purity and strength of the divine nature, Christ discovered himself to be true God as well as true man.

The word Spirit is taken in three senses especially in the gospel.

1. It is taken for the whole nature of God. 'God is a Spirit,' saith Christ to the woman of Samaria, John iv. 23. The very nature of God is a Spirit; that is, active and subtile, opposite to meanness and weakness.

2. Then again, Spirit is taken more particularly for the divine nature of Christ, as it is Rom. i. 4: 'Of the seed of David, according to the flesh,' but 'declared mightily to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of sanctification,' or holiness, 'by the resurrection from the dead.' The opposition shows that Spirit is taken there for the divine nature of Christ. He had spoken in the verse before concerning his human nature.

He was made 'of the seed of David, according to the flesh;' and it follows, 'declared to be the Son of God, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.' And so likewise in 1 Pet. iii. 18: 'He was put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the Spirit.' He was put to death in his human nature, but quickened and raised as he was God.

3. The Spirit is taken likewise for the third person in the Trinity, the Holy Ghost, the Holy Spirit. And indeed, whatsoever God the Father or God the Son doth graciously to man, it is done by the Spirit. For, as the Holy Spirit is in the order of the persons, so he is in the order of working. The Father works; from himself; the Son works from the Father; the Holy Spirit from them both. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, as a common principle. Therefore, sometimes the Father is said to raise Christ's body by his Spirit. Christ is said to do things by the Spirit. Here, in this place, it is especially to be understood of Christ's divine nature, not excluding the Holy Ghost. For as the Holy Ghost, in the incarnation, sanctified his 'flesh,'

the second person took flesh, but the third person sanctified it. So in the resurrection of Christ, [it was] the second person that raised itself up, but yet it was by the Holy Ghost too. So when there is mention here of Christ 'justified by the Spirit,' that is, by his Godhead and by the Holy Ghost, which he always used, not as an instrument—for the Holy Ghost is a common principle with himself, one with himself, of equal dignity, only differing in the order of persons; whatsoever Christ did, he did with the Spirit. That must not be excluded. Christ was as well 'justified in the Spirit,' as God, as 'manifest' in our nature to be man.

And this was in the time of his abasement. In the greatest extremity of abasement, there was somewhat that came from Christ, to 'justify' him that he was the Son of God, the true Messiah. There is no part of his abasement but some beams of his Godhead did break forth in it.

He was made flesh, but he took upon him the 'flesh' of a virgin. Could that be otherwise than by the Spirit, to be born of a virgin, she remaining a virgin? When he was born, he was laid in a manger. Indeed, there was God in the low estate of the flesh. Ay, but the 'wise men worshipped him,' and the 'star' directed them, Mat. ii. 11. There he was 'justified in the Spirit.' He was tossed when he was asleep in the ship, but he commanded the winds and the waves, Mat. xiv. 21, seq. He wanted money to pay tribute, as he was abased; but to fetch it out of a fish, there he was justified, Mat. xvii. 27. The one was; an argument of his poverty and meanness, but the other was an argument that he was another manner of person than the world took him for, that he had all the creatures at his command. He was apprehended as a malefactor, but he struck them all down with his word, 'Whom seek ye?' John xviii. 4.

Come to the greatest abasement of all; when he was on the cross, he hung between two thieves. Ay, but he converted the one of them. When the thief had so much discouragement to see his Saviour hang on the cross, yet he showed such power in that abasement, that the very thief could see him to be a king, and was converted by his Spirit. He did hang upon the cross; but, at the same time, there was an eclipse. The whole world was darkened, the earth trembled, the rocks brake, the centurion 'justified' him, 'Doubtless, this was the Son of God,' Mat. xxiii. 47. He was sold for thirty pence, but he that was sold for thirty pieces did redeem the whole world by his blood.

Nay, at the lowest degree of abasement of all, when he struggled with the wrath of God, and was beset with devils, then he triumphed. When he was visibly overcome, then invisibly he overcame. He was an invisible

conqueror when he was visibly subdued. For, did he not on the cross satisfy the wrath of God, and by enduring the wrath of God free us from it and from Satan, God's jailor, and reconcile us by his blood? The chief works of all were wrought in his chief abasement. At length he died and was buried; ay, but he that died rose again gloriously. Therefore he was 'mightily declared to. be the Son of God by raising himself from the dead.' That was the greatest abasement when he lay in the grave; and especially then he was 'justified' by his resurrection from the dead and his ascension, in his state of glorification especially. So, if we go from Christ's birth to his lowest degree of abasement, there was alway some manifestation of his justification by the Spirit.

He was 'justified' in a double regard.

1. In regard of God, he was justified and cleared from our sins that he took upon him. He 'bore our sins upon the tree,' and bore them away, that they should never appear again to our discomfort. He was made 'a curse for us.' How came Christ to be cleared of our sins that lay upon him? When by the Spirit, by his divine nature, he raised himself from the dead. So he was 'justified' from that that God laid upon him, for he was our surety. Now the Spirit raising him from the dead, showed that the debt was fully discharged, because our surety was out of prison. All things are first in Christ and then in us. He was acquitted and justified from our sins, and then we.

2. And then he was justified by the Spirit from all imputations of men, from the misconceits that the world had of him. They thought him to be a mere man, or a sinful man. No. He was more than a mere man; nay, more than a holy man; he was God-man. Whence were his miracles? Wore they not from his divine power? He overcame the devil in his temptations. Who can overcome the devil, but he that is the Son of God? He cast out devils, and dispossessed them with his word. All the enemies of Christ that ever were, at length he conquered them, and so 'declared himself mightily to be,' as he was, 'the Son of God.' He healed the outward man and the inward man by his divine power; he caused the spiritual as well as the bodily eyes to see, the dead to live, and the lame to go, &c. Whatsoever he did in the body he did in the soul likewise. In those excellent miracles he was 'justified,' and declared to be the Son of God,' especially in his resurrection and ascension, and daily converting of souls by his ministry; all being done by his Spirit, which is his vicar in the world, ruling his church and subduing his enemies. So that he was every way 'justified in the Spirit' to be God, to be the true

Messiah prophesied of and promised to the church. Therefore he was 'justified' in his truth, that all the promises were true of him; and in his faithfulness, that he was faithful in performing the promises he made. He was 'justified' in his goodness and mercy, and all those attributes; he was 'justified in the Spirit.'

Obj. But you will say, it seems he was not 'justified in the Spirit.' There are many heretics that think not Christ to be God; that take not Christ to be so glorious as he is.

Ans. I answer: When we speak of the justifying of Christ, it is meant to those that have eyes to see him, to those that shut not their eyes. He was 'justified' to be so great as he was to those 'whose eyes the god of the world had not blinded,' 2 Cor. iv. 4; to all that were his; as it is excellently set down, John i. 14, 'The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we behold his glory, as the glory of the only begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.' We 'beheld his glory.' We did; others did not take notice: but they were those 'whose eyes the god of the world hath blinded,' the malicious Scribes and Pharisees, that sinned against the Holy Ghost, and would never acknowledge Christ; and ignorant people, that had not faith nor the Spirit of God. He was justified by the Spirit of God, to all that had spiritual eyes to see and take notice of his course; as St John saith in one of his epistles, 'What we have seen and heard, and our hands have handled, the Word of life, that we declare to you,' 1 John i. 1. So that he was 'God manifest in the flesh,' and he showed himself to be the 'Word of life' to those that were his apostles and disciples, and those that were converted by him. As we see St Peter, when he had felt his divine power upon his heart by his preaching, 'Lord,' saith he, 'thou hast the words of eternal life; whither shall we go?' John vi. 68. He felt the Spirit in his preaching. And so another time, St Peter, in Matt. xvi. 16, he confessed him to be 'the Son of the living God.' You see to whom he was 'justified' and declared to be the true Messiah, to be God as well as man by his Spirit.

The reason why he justified himself to be so, 1. It was the more to strengthen our faith. All his miracles were but so many sparkles of his divine nature, so many expressions of his divine power. And after he was raised from the dead, at his ascension and sending of the Holy Ghost, he showed his divine power more gloriously; and all to strengthen the faith of the elect; and, 2. To stop the months of all impudent rebellious persons. For, considering that he wrought such miracles, that he raised men from the dead,

and raised himself; considering that he called the Gentiles, and converted the world, by the ministry of weak men, he showed that he was more than a man. Well! to make some use of this, that Christ was 'Justified in the Spirit.' Then first of all,

Use 1. Christ will at length justify himself. This is a ground of faith. However he be now as a sign set up that many speak against and contradict, yet the time will come when he will gloriously justify himself to all the world. Now some shut their eyes willingly, and the opposites of Christ seem to flourish; yet Christ will be 'justified by his Spirit' to all his elect in every age, especially in the resurrection. For 'when he shall come and appear to be glorious in his saints,' 2 Thes. i. 10, it will appear who he is indeed. Now he suffers many to tread upon his church, and he suffers many heretics to deny him, sometimes in one nature, sometimes in another, and so to offend against him. But the time will come that he will trample all his enemies under his feet; he will be 'justified by his Spirit.' That is our comfort. There are many schismatics and heretics and persecutors, but Christ will be 'justified' at length. 'The kingdoms of the earth will be the Lord Jesus Christ's,' Rev. xi. 15. Are they not now so? They are. But truly they appear not to be so. But at length they will appear to be so. At the conversion of the Jews and the confusion of antichrist, then it will appear more and more that he is King of the world indeed. Now, as it were, his offices are darkened: his kingly office is darkened and his prophetical office is darkened; but at length it will appear that he is King of the church, and all kingdoms will be Christ's. There are glorious times coming, especially the glorious day of the resurrection. Christ at length will be cleared, he will be justified. The sun at length will scatter all the clouds. In the morning they gather about the sun, as if they would cover it. Oh, but the sun breaks through all, and gloriously appears at length. So Christ will scatter all clouds, and gloriously appear to be that which the word sets him forth to be.

Again, As Christ will justify himself, so he will justify his church and children, first or last, by his Spirit. His children are now accounted the offscouring of the world. They are trampled and trod upon, they are the objects of scorn and hatred, and who accounted so base? Will Christ endure this? No. He that 'justified' himself; that is, that declared himself, and will more and more declare himself to be as he is; will he not 'justify' his church, his mystical body, to be as they are indeed? Certainly it shall appear to the world that he will justify them, to be kings and priests, to be heirs, to be glorious, to be so near and dear to him as the Scripture sets them forth to be.

Whatsoever the Scripture hath spoken of the saints and children of God, the time will come that all this shall be 'justified' and made good by that Spirit of Christ, whereby he made good whatsoever he hath said of himself.

Therefore in our eclipses and disgraces lot us all comfort ourselves in this. Let the world esteem us for the present as the refuse of the world, as persons not worthy to be acquainted with, not worthy to be regarded; we shall be 'justified' and cleared and glorified, especially at that day 'when Christ shall come to be glorious in his saints.' There is a hidden life of the church and every Christian; they have a life in Christ, but that 'life is hid in Christ,' in heaven, Col. iii. 3. As the flowers in winter they have a life, but it is hidden in the root. 'When Christ shall appear,' as blessed St Paul and St John say, then it 'shall appear who we are.' Then our 'glorious life,' that now is in our Head, 'shall appear;' then we shall be 'justified to be so glorious,' as the Scripture sets us forth to be. The church shall be glorious within and without, too, at that day. Therefore let us comfort ourselves. This hidden life, though it appear not now, yet we shall be justified. And hence we may answer some objections likewise.

Obj. Some may say, How doth it appear that Christ is King of the church? We see how the church is trampled on at this day. Where is the life and glory of the church? What! his spouse, and thus used! What! his turtle, and thus polluted and plucked by the birds of prey!

A us. I answer, Look with other spectacles, with the eye of faith, and then you shall see a spring in the winter of the church. However she be now abased and eclipsed, yet she shall be 'justified;' and it will appear that Christ regards his church and people and children more than all the world besides, only there must be a conformity.

' It was fit there should be a time of Christ's abasement; how should he have suffered else? The world would never have crucified God. They could not have done it. Therefore he was abased; he veiled his Godhead under his manhood, under a base condition, so he passed through 'suffering to glory.' So it must be in the body of Christ. It must pass through the veil of infirmities, of weakness, affliction, and disgrace. How else should it he conformable to Christ? If Christ had 'justified' himself at all times in his humiliation, he could not have suffered; if we should be justified now and appear to all the world who we are, who would persecute us? how could we be conformable to Christ? Therefore let us quietly and meekly a-while endure these things, that are nothing but to conform us to our Head, knowing this,

that as he was 'justified' by little and little, till he was perfectly 'justified' when he was raised from the dead, so we shall be perfectly 'justified' and freed from all imputations at the last day, when by the same Spirit that raised him we shall be raised up too.

Nay, in this world, when it is for his glory and for our good, he will bring our righteousness to light as the noonday, Ps. xxxvii. 6; he will free us from the imputations that the world lays on us; he will have a care of our credit. For as Christ was 'mightily declared to be the Son of God' in a fit time, so shall we when we are fit. Then the world shall see that we are not the men that profane, bitter, malicious persons, led with the spirit of the devil, charged us to be.

Let us take no scandal at the present afflictions of the church. Christ will justify his mystical body by his glorious power in good time. Antichrist shall not alway ruffle in the world. Christ will be justified to be the King and Ruler of the world. 'All power is committed to him,' Mat. xxviii. 18. But we see it now. Antichrist rages in the world, and the church seems to be under hatches. So it is with particular Christians. Those that belong to God, and indeed are truly such as they profess themselves to be—though with much weakness—we see in what respect and esteem they are had. 'Let us comfort ourselves, beloved.' Christ justified himself by his Spirit, and will he not justify his poor church, and free it from the tyranny of antichrist? Will he not advance those that are trodden on now and made as the dirt in the street, that 'they shall shine as the sun?' Daniel xii. 3. Therefore when you hear of the dejected state of the churches abroad, be not dismayed. Consider there is a glorious King that rules the world, and he will make it appear ere long. He will justify himself and his church, for he suffers in his church. He is wise. He sees cause to do this. He is working his own work. He corrects and rules and purgeth his church in the furnace of affliction. But be sure the time will come that he will bring the cause of religion to light, and he will shew what side he owns; he will justify his truth, and tread Satan and all his members under feet. This frame of things will not hold long. As verily as Christ is in heaven, as verily as he is 'justified' in his own person by his Spirit, by his divine power, so he will justify his mystical body. And as he hath conquered in his own person, so he will by his Spirit conquer for his church.

Use 2. And as he will overcome for his church, so he will overcome in his church; 'stronger is he that is' in the church, 'in you, than he that is in the world,' 1 John iv. 4; and God's children will be triumphant. Though they may

be discouraged in respect of the present carriage of things, yet the Spirit that is in them, above the world, will gather strength by little and little, and it will appear at length, notwithstanding present discouragements. Undoubtedly the best things will have a true lustre and glory at length, however they seem to be carried for the present. You see as Christ hath 'justified' himself to be the true Messiah, and as he hath justified himself, so he will justify all his. There is the same reason for both.

For our further instruction and comfort, lot us consider, that in regard of God likewise, we shall be 'justified' from our sins in our consciences here and at the day of judgment, before angels and devils and men. As Christ was 'justified' from our sins himself, and he will justify every one of us by his Spirit, his Spirit shall witness to our souls that we are justified; and likewise his Spirit shall declare it at the day of judgment; it shall be openly declared that we are so indeed. There is a double degree of justification: one in our conscience now, another at the day of judgment. Then it shall appear that we have believed in Christ, and are cleansed from our sins. When we shall stand on the right hand of Christ, as all that cleave to Christ by faith [will do], then it shall appear that by him we are 'justified' from all our sins whatsoever.

Use 3. Again, Christ was 'justified in the Spirit.' Then hence we may learn our duty; we ought all of us to justify Christ. To whom is Christ justified by the Spirit? Only to his own church and children; not to the reprobate world. We may know, that we are members of Christ, if we be of the number of those that justify Christ.

Quest. How do we justify Christ?

Ans. (1.) We justify Christ when, from an inward work of the Spirit, we feel and acknowledge him to be such an one as he is: Christ is God. Now, when we rely upon him as our rock, in all temptations, we justify Christ to be so; when we 'kiss the Son' with the kisses of faith, of subjection, of obedience, of reverence and love; this is to justify Christ to be the Son of God, as it is Ps. ii. 12, 'Kiss the Son, lest he be angry.' Those that in temptation are to seek for their comfort, they do not justify Christ; they do not live as if he were a Saviour, not as if he were a God. In temptations to despair, they justify not Christ.

(2.) Those that have Christ illuminating their understandings, to conceive the mysteries of religion, they justify Christ to be the prophet of his church; because they feel him enlightening their understandings.

(3.) Those that find their consciences pacified, by the obedience and sacrifice of Christ, they justify him to be their priest; for they can oppose the blood of Christ sprinkled on their hearts, to all the temptations of Satan, and to the risings of their own doubting conscience. Their hearts being sprinkled with the blood of Christ, they can go to God, and the blood of Christ speaks for them 'peace;' it pleads 'mercy, mercy.' Thus we justify Christ as a priest, when we rest in his sacrifice, and do not, with papists, run to other sacrifices. This is not to justify Christ. To justify Christ, God-man, is to make him a perfect mediator of intercession and redemption, to make him all in all. They do not justify Christ, that think God was made man to patch up a salvation; that he must do a part and we must merit the rest. Oh no! Take heed of that; account all our obedience, and all that is from us, as 'menstruous cloths,' Isa. xxx. 22, not able to stand with the justice of God.

(4.) In a word, we justify and declare and make good that he is our Icing, and put a kingly crown upon his head, when we suffer him to rule us and to subdue our spirits and our rebellions; when we cherish no contrary motions to his Spirit; when we rest in his word and not traditions, but stoop to the sceptre of Christ's word. This is to justify him as a king. Thus we should labour to justify and declare to the world the excellency and power of Christ in our hearts, that we may make religion lovely, and make it be entertained in the world; because we shew it to be an excellent powerful thing. Let us examine our hearts, whether we thus justify Christ or no; that by our carriage towards him, we make it good that he is such an one as the Scripture sets him forth to be.

In particular, we justify him, that 'he rose from the dead,' when we believe that we are freed from our sins, our surety being out of prison. We justify him as 'ascended into heaven,' when we have heavenly affections, and when we consider him as a public person gone to heaven in our name. We justify him as 'sitting at the right hand of God,' when we 'mind the things that are above,' Col. iii. 1, and not that are here below; or else we deny these things, we believe them not, we justify them not, when our conversations are not answerable to the things we believe. If we be the children of wisdom, undoubtedly we shall justify wisdom. If we be the members of Christ, we shall justify our head. If we be his spouse, we shall justify our husband. Let us examine ourselves that we do in this kind, and never think our state good till we can justify Christ.

In the next place, for our direction; as Christ justified himself by his Spirit, by his divine power, so let us know that it is our duty to justify ourselves, to justify our profession, justify all divine truth. Let us make it good that we are the sons of God, that we are Christians indeed; not only to have the name, but the anointing of Christ; that we may clear our religion from false imputations; or else, instead of justifying our profession, we justify the slanders that are against it. The world is ready to say none are worse than Christians; and their religion is all but words and shows and forms. Shall we justify these slanders? No. Let us, by the Spirit of God, justify our religion; let us shew that religion is a powerful thing; and so indeed it is. For divine truth, when it is embraced and known, it alters and changeth the manners and dispositions; it makes of lions lambs; it makes our natures mild and tractable and sweet: it raiseth a man from earth to heaven. Let us justify this our religion and profession against all gainsayers whatsoever. 'Wisdom is justified of all her children.' Let us justify our religion and profession, by maintaining it and standing for it, and express in our lives and conversations the power of it.

Quest. How shall this be?

Ans. The text saith, 'by the Spirit.' For as Christ 'justified' himself, that is, declared himself to be as he was 'by his Spirit,' so every Christian hath the 'Spirit of Christ, or else he is none of his,' Rom. viii. 9; and by this Spirit of Christ he is able to justify his profession; not only to justify Christ to be the true head, &c., but all things he doth must be done by the Spirit, or not at all. For as Christ, when he became man and was in the world, he did all by the direction of the Spirit. 'He was led into the wilderness by the Spirit,' he 'taught by the Spirit.' The Spirit that sanctified him in the womb guided him in all his life. So a Christian is guided by the Spirit. God doth all to him by the Spirit. He is comforted, and directed, and strengthened by the Spirit; and he again doth all to God by the Spirit. He prays in the Spirit, and sighs and groans to God in the Spirit. He walks in the Spirit. He doth all by the Spirit. Therefore by the Spirit let us justify and declare ourselves what we are; that there is somewhat in us above nature; that we have love above carnal men, and patience and, meekness above the ability and capacity of other men. We justify our profession when we do somewhat more than nature, or when we do common ordinary things in a spiritual holy manner. Religion is not a matter of form, but of spirit. Let us not shew our religion only by word, but by the fruits of the Spirit; by love, and mercy, and meekness, and zeal, when occasion serves. The whole life of a Christian, as far as he is a Christian, it

gives evidence that he is a Christian. The whole life of a carnal formal man evidences that he is not a Christian, because he hath nothing in him above other men; as our Saviour Christ saith, 'What peculiar thing do ye,' to distinguish yourselves from other men? Mat. v. 47. So let us ask ourselves. We profess ourselves to be the children of God, the heirs of heaven, 'What peculiar thing do we?' How do we justify ourselves? A true Christian can answer, I can justify it by the Spirit; I find I do things from other principles, and motives, and inducements, than the world doth, who only respect terms of civility and aims of the world, or to content the clamour of conscience. But, I find, I do things out of assurance that I am the child of God, and in obedience to him. Let us see what peculiar thing we do.

Alas! I cannot but lament the poor profession of many. How do they 'justify' their profession? How do they make good that they have the Spirit of God raising them above other men, when they live no better than pagans, nay, not so well, under the profession of the gospel and religion? Would pagans live as many men do? Did they not keep their words better? Were they so loose in their lives and conversations, and so licentious? Would they swear by their gods idly? Most of our ordinary people are worse than pagans. Where is the 'justifying' of religion? If Turks and heathens should see them they would say, You talk of religion, but where is the power of it? If you had the power of it you would, express it more in your fidelity, and honesty, and mercy, and love, and sobriety. The kingdom of God, that is, the manifestation of the government of Christ, 'it is not in word but in power.' Therefore let us labour to 'justify' that we are subjects of that kingdom, by the power of it.

Mere civil persons, the apostle saith of them, 2 Tim. iii. 5, they are such as 'have a form of godliness, but deny the power of it.' All that rabble-ment that he names there, they have 'a form.' A form is easy, but the power of it is not so easy. Therefore, let us justify our religion by our conversation. Let us justify the ordinances of God, the preaching and hearing of the word of God, by reverence in hearing it as the word of God, and labour to express it in our lives and conversations, or else we think it nothing but the speech of man. Let us 'justify' the sacrament to be the seal of God, by coming reverently to it, and by finding our faith strengthened by it. So labour to 'justify' every ordinance of God, from some sweet comforts that we feel by them; and then we shew that we are true members of Christ, that we are like Christ, who 'justified himself in the Spirit.'

Beloved, it is a great power that must make a true Christian, no less than the 'power of the Spirit, that raised Christ from the dead;' as it is Eph. i. 20, St Paul prays that they might 'feel the power that raised Christ from the dead.' It is no less power for Christ to shine in our dark hearts, than to 'make light to shine out of darkness.'

Now, what power is in the lives of most men? The 'power that raised Christ from the dead'? Certainly no. What power is there in hearing the word, when many are so full of profaneness that they altogether neglect it? What power is there now and then to speak a good word, or now and then to do a slight action? Is this the 'power that raised Christ from the dead,' when by the strength of nature men can do it? There must be somewhat above nature, to justify a sound, spiritual Christian. We must have something to shew that we have our spirits raised up by the Spirit of Christ, to justify our profession in all estates. In prosperity, to shew that we have a spirit above prosperity, that we are not proud of it. Then in adversity, then we justify that we are Christians, by a spirit that is above adversity; that we do not sink under it, as a mere natural man would do, when we have learned St Paul's lesson, 'in all estates to be content,' Philip, iv. 11. In temptation we justify our Christian profession by arming ourselves with a spirit of faith, to beat back the 'fiery darts of Satan,' Eph. vi. 16. When all things seem contrary, let us cast ourselves, by a spirit of faith, upon Christ. That argues a powerful work of the Spirit, when we can, in contraries, believe contraries.

Thus let us shew that we are Christians; that we have somewhat in us above nature; that when the course of nature seems to be contrary, yet we can look with the eye of faith through all discouragements and clouds, and can see God reconciled in Christ. That will justify us to be sound Christians. Therefore let us labour, not only for slight outward performances, that are easy for any to do, but by an inward frame of soul, and by a carriage and conversation becoming our profession, that we may 'walk worthy of our profession,' fruitfully and watchfully, carefully and soberly, as be-cometh Christians every way. So much for that: I proceed to the next words, 'Seen of angels.'

The word is not altogether so fitly translated, for it is more pregnant than it is here rendered, 'He was seen.' It is true. But he was seen with admiration and wonderment of angels. He was seen, as such an object presented to them should be seen, and seen with wonderment. It implies the

consequence of sight. Sight stirs up affection. It stirs up the whole soul. Therefore it is put for all the rest.

1. They saw him with wonderment. For was it not a wonder that God should stoop so low, as to be shut up in the straits of a virgin's womb? that Christ should humble himself so low, to be 'God in our flesh? Was not here exceeding wondrous love and mercy to mankind, to wretched man, having passed by the glorious angels that were fallen? And exceeding wisdom in God, in satisfying his justice, that he might shew mercy? It was matter of admiration to the angels, to see the great God stoop so low, to be clothed in such a poor nature as man's, that is meaner than their own. This doubtless is the meaning of the Holy Ghost: they saw it with admiration.

(2.) And because he was their head, as the second person, and they were creatures to attend upon Christ, their sight and wonderment must tend to some practice suitable to their condition. Therefore they so see and wondered at him, as that they attended upon Christ in all the passages of his humiliation and exaltation—in his life, in his death, in his resurrection and ascension.

(8.) They saw him so as they were witnesses of him to men. They gave testimony and witness of him. So that it is a full word, in the intention of the Holy Ghost. Indeed, not only the angels, but all gave witness of him, from the highest heavens to hell itself; all witnessed Christ to be the true Messiah.

In his baptism there was the Trinity; the Father in a "voice from heaven,' the Holy Ghost in the shape 'of a dove.' He had the witness of angels, of men of all ranks, Jews and Gentiles, men and women; yea, the devils themselves ofttimes confessed him in the gospel. He was witnessed of all ranks. They saw him, and gave evidence and testimony of him that he was the true Messiah.

He was seen of angels. To declare this a little more particularly.

The angels knew of Christ's coming in the flesh before it was, for what the church knew the angels knew in some measure. When God made the promise of the promised seed, the angels knew of it. And in Daniel the angel speaks of the seventy weeks; therefore before his incarnation they knew of him. But now they saw him with wonderment in our flesh, now they had an experimental knowledge of him; for the angels, besides their natural and supernatural knowledge, they have an experimental knowledge, that is daily

increased in them, in the church. They see somewhat to admiration continually in the church, in the head, and in the members. They knew of the incarnation of Christ before. You know the angel brought the news of it beforehand to the virgin Mary. The angels attended upon Christ from his very infancy. The angels ministered to him in his temptation, Mat. iv. 11. Before his death they comforted him in the garden, Luke xxii. 43. He was made 'lower than the angels,' in some sort, as it is in Ps. viii. 5; for they came to 'comfort him.' He was so low that he had the comforting of angels. Then they saw when he was buried; they 'rolled away the stone,' Mat. xxviii. 2.

By the way in general, it is the angels' office to remove impediments that hinder us from Christ. A Christian shall have angels to remove the stones, the hindrances that are between heaven and him, rather than they shall be any impediment to his salvation.

Then when he rose there were angels, one at the head and another at the feet; and they told Mary that he was risen. And then at his ascension the angels told the disciples that Christ should come again. You have the story of it at large in the Gospel, how from the annunciation of his conception to his ascension they saw him, and attended on him, and witnessed of him.

As soon as ever he was born, when they appeared to the shepherds, what a glorious hymn they sang! 'Glory to God on high, peace on earth, good will to men,' Luke ii. 14. How joyful were they of the incarnation of Christ, and the great work of redemption wrought thereby!

And, as I said, they did not only see these things, but they wondered at the love and mercy and wisdom of God in the Head and members of the church; as we see in divers places, in 1 Pet. i. 12, 'We preach the gospel, which things the angels desire to look into.' The very angels desire to pry and look with admiration into the wondrous things of the gospel. So in Eph. iii. 10, 'To the intent that unto principalities and powers in heavenly places might be made known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.' There is somewhat done by Christ, by his incarnation and resurrection and government of his church, that the very angels look into, and wonder at the 'manifold wisdom of God' in governing his church; his wisdom in electing them, and after in restoring mankind. And in his manner of dispensation to the Jew's, first by ceremonies, and then after by the body itself, Christ 'in the flesh.' There is such a world of wonders in the government of the church, such 'manifold wisdom,' that the very angels themselves look upon this with admiration and wonder, and with great delight.

Use 1. Shall angels see and wonder at these things? at the love and mercy and wisdom of God in governing his church, in joining together things irreconcilable to man's comprehension, infinite justice with infinite mercy in Christ, that God's wrath and justice should be satisfied in Christ, and thereby infinite mercy showed to us? Here are things for angels to wonder at. Shall they wonder at it, and joy and delight in it, and shall we slight those things that are the wonderment of angels? There are a company of profane spirits— I would there were not too many among us— that will scarce vouchsafe to look into these things, that have scarcely the book of God in their houses. They can wonder at a story, or a poem, or some frothy device; at base things, not worthy to be reckoned of. But as for the great mysteries of salvation, that great work of the Trinity, about the salvation of mankind, they tush at them, they slight them; they never talk seriously of these things, except it be as it were with a graceless grace of slighting and scorn. They account it a disparagement to be serious in these things. They make no mysteries of that which the glorious creatures the angels themselves look upon and pry into, even with admiration. But it is not to be conceived of, the profaneness and poison that is in man's nature against divine truths, as I shall shew afterwards, how it slights the means of its own salvation, and stands wondering at baubles and trifles; and so men waste away their precious time in admiration of that which is nothing but 'vanity of vanities,' whereas we should take up our time in studying these transcendent things that go beyond the capacity of the very angels. Yet these things we dally and trifle withal.

Use 2. Again, from hence, that Christ was seen and attended on and admired by angels, there is a great deal of comfort issueth to us. It is the ground of all the attendance and comfort that we have from the angels. For this is a rule in divinity, that there is the same reason of the head and of the members; both head and members are one. Therefore what comfort and attendance Christ had, who is the head, the church, which is the body, hath the same, only with some difference. They attended upon him as the head, they attend upon us as the members. They attended upon him immediately for himself, they attend upon us for his sake; for whatsoever we have of God, we have it at the second hand. We receive 'grace for grace' of Christ. We receive attendance of angels, for the attendance they yielded to Christ first; they attend upon us, by his direction and commission and charge from him. So we have a derivative comfort from the attendance of angels upon Christ. But surely, whatsoever they did to him they do to us, because there is the same respect to head and members. Therefore the devil did not mistake, he was right in that, when he alleged out of the Psalm: 'He shall give his

angels charge over thee, that thou dash not thy foot against a stone,' Ps. xci. 11. He was right in that, applying it to Christ. For however it be true to Christians, yet it is true to Christ too; it is true to the members, as well as the head; and to the head, as to the members. For 'he that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, are all one;' as the apostle saith, 'one Christ,' Heb. ii. 11.

Now the care of angels concerning Christ and his church, it was shadowed out in Exod. xxv. 17, seq., and xxvi. 31. There the mercy-seat, which covered the ark wherein the law was, upon the mercy-seat there were two cherubim counter-viewing one another, and both pried to the mercy-seat. They shadowed out the angels that look on the mercy-seat, Christ; for he is the mercy-seat that covers the law and the curse, in whom God was merciful to us. There they look upon that with a kind of wonderment and attendance,! which St Peter alludes unto in that place, 'into which mysteries the very angels pry,' 1 Pet. i. 12. And so in the veil of the tabernacle, the veil had round about it pictures of cherubim, Exod. xxvi. 31. What did that shadow out unto us? The multitude of cherubim and seraphim and angels that attend upon Christ and his church. So he was 'seen' and attended on by 'angels;' and it belongs to all that are his, as you have it, Heb. i. 7, 'They are ministering spirits, for the good of the heirs of salvation.' They that serve the king serve the queen too. Christ is the King of his church, and the church is the greatest queen in the world. They attend upon her; nay, Christ hath made us, with himself, kings. Now, what a king is that that hath a guard of angels! As they guarded and attended upon Christ, so they guard and attend all that are his; as you have it excellently in Dan. vii. 10, 'There are thousand thousands of angels about the throne continually.' All this is for our comfort, because we are one mystical body with him.

You have in Jacob's ladder a notable representation of this. Jacob's ladder, it reached from earth to heaven; and that pointed to Christ himself, who is 'Immanuel,' God and man, who brought God and man together. He was a mediator between both, and a friend to both. He was that ladder that touched heaven and earth, and joined both together. Now it is said, the angels ascended and descended upon that ladder; so the angels descending upon us, is, because they ascend and descend upon Jacob's ladder first; that is, upon Christ. 'All things are yours,' saith the apostle. What be those? God is ours, the Spirit is ours, heaven is ours, the earth is ours; afflictions, life, death, Paul, Apollos, the angels themselves, all is ours. Why? 'Ye are Christ's.' That is the ground.

So it is a spring of comfort to consider that Christ was 'seen' and admired and attended by angels. They are ours, because we are Christ's. Let us consider what a comfort it is, to have the attendance of these blessed spirits for Christ's sake.

And Hence we have the ground of the perpetuity of it, that they will for ever be attendants to us; because their love and respect to us is founded upon their love and respect to Christ. When favour to another is grounded upon a sound foundation; when the favour that a king or a great person bears to one is founded on the love of his own son; he loves the other because he loves his son whom the other loves; so it is perpetual and sound, because he will ever love his son. The angels will for ever love and honour and attend us. Why? For what ground have they respect to us at all? It is in Christ, whose members and spouse we are. So long as the church hath any relation to Christ, so long the angels shall respect the church; but the church hath relation to Christ for ever. Therefore, the respect that the blessed angels have to Christ and to the church, it is for ever and for ever.

Well, let us think of this, so as to make use of it; that now in Christ we have the attendance of angels. We do not see them, as in former time, before Christ's incarnation. It is true; because now, since Christ is come 'in the flesh,' the government of Christ is spiritual; and we are not supported with those glorious manifestations, but they are about us in an invisible manner. We have Elisha's guard about us continually, but we see them not. There were more apparitions in the infancy of the church, because the dispensation of Christ to the church was according to the weak state of the church. But now Christ is come 'in the flesh,' and 'received up in glory,' and there is more abundance of spirit. We should be more spiritual and heavenly-minded, and not look for outward apparitions of angels; but be content that we have a guard of them about us, as every Christian doth. 'Despise not,' saith Christ, 'these little ones.' They are about Christians, and about little ones, little in years, and little in esteem; 'for their angels,' &c., Matt, xviii. 10. It is a strange thing. They are God's angels, but they are theirs for their service. 'Their angels behold the face of your heavenly Father.' So that Christ's angels are our angels; they are angels even of children, of little ones. Nay, let a man be never 60 poor, even as Lazarus, he shall have the attendance of angels, in life and death. There is no Christian of low degree, of the lowest degree, that shall think himself neglected of God; for the very angels attend him, as we see in Lazarus. There is a general commission for the least, the little ones.

Likewise, it may comfort us in all our extremities whatsoever, in all our desertions. The time may come, beloved, that we may be deserted of the world, and deserted of our friends; we may be in such straits as we may have nobody in the world near us. Oh! but if a man be a true Christian, he hath God and angels about him always. A Christian is a king; he is never without his guard, that invisible guard of angels. What! if a man have nobody by him when he dies, but God and his good angels, to carry his soul to heaven, is he neglected? Every Christian, if he hath none else with him, he hath God, the whole Trinity, and the guard of angels, to help and comfort him, and to convey his soul to the place of happiness. Therefore, let us never despair, let us never be disconsolate; whatsoever our condition be, we shall have God and good angels with us in all our straits and extremities. Go through all the passages of our life, we see how ready we are to fall into dangers. In our infancy, in our tender years, we are committed to their custody: after, in our dangers, they pitch their tents about us; as it is, Ps. xxxiv. 7, 'The angels of the Lord pitch their tents about those that fear the Lord.' In our conversion they rejoice. 'There is joy in heaven at the conversion of a sinner,' Luke xv. 10. At the hour of death, as we see in Lazarus, they are ready to convey our souls to the place of happiness. Lazarus's soul 'was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom,' Luke xvi. 22. At the resurrection they shall gather our dead bodies together. It is the office of the angels. In heaven they shall 'praise and glorify God,' together with us for ever; for 'Christ shall come with a multitude of heavenly angels,' at the day of judgment: 'when he shall come to be glorified in his saints,' 2 Thess. i. 10. Then we shall for ever 'glorify God,' saints and angels together, in heaven. Therefore, in Heb. xii. 22, it is said, 'We are come to the innumerable multitude of angels.' What is the meaning of that? That is, now in the New Testament, by our communion with Christ, we have association with the 'blessed angels, innumerable company of angels,' saith the Holy Ghost there. We have association with them even from our infancy, till we be in glory. Indeed, they are as nurses: 'They shall carry thee, that thou dash not thy foot against a stone,' as it is in Ps. xci. 11. They keep us from many inconveniences.

Obj. But you will say, God's children fall into inconveniences; how then are they attended by angels?

Ans. I answer: First of all, God's angels preserve those that are his, from many inconveniences that they know not of. And certainly we have devils about us continually, and there is a conflict betwixt good angels and devils about us continually. And when we do fall into any inconvenience, it is

because we are not in our way. If we go out of our way, they have not the 'charge over us;' they are to keep us 'in our ways.' And if they keep us not from 'dashing our foot against a stone,' if they keep us not from ill, yet they keep us in ill, and deliver us out of ill at length; for they deliver us not only from evil, that we fall not into it, but they keep us in ill, and deliver us out of ill, nay, and by ill. If we suffer in the custody of angels any inconvenience, it is that we may be tried by it, that we may be exercised and bettered by it. There is nothing that falls out to God's children in the world, but they gain by it, whatsoever it is. This, therefore, doth not prejudice the attendance of angels.

Therefore let us comfort ourselves in all conditions for ourselves and for the state. Put case it be brought to a very small number, that the enemies were thousands more than we, many thousands and millions; yet, if we be in the covenant of grace, and in good terms with God, we have 'more for us than against us,' we shall have angels fight for us. You know Elisha's servant, when he saw a multitude of enemies, his eyes were opened to see a company of angels; and saith the prophet, 'There are more for us than against us,' 2 Kings vi. 17, seq. So let us be to the eye of the world never so few and never so weak; let us but have Elisha's eye, the eye of faith, and we shall have his guard about us alway and about the commonwealth. This should comfort us.

But then we must learn this duty, not to grieve these good spirits. As it is wondrous humility, that they will stoop to be servants to us, that are of a weaker, baser nature than they, so it is wondrous patience, that they will continue still to guard us, notwithstanding we do that that grieves those good spirits: one motive to keep us in the way of obedience, that we do not grieve those blessed spirits that are our guard and attendance. Let us consider when we are alone—it would keep us from many sins—no eye of man seeth; ay, but God seeth, and conscience within seeth, and angels without are witnesses: they grieve at it, and the devils about us rejoice at it. These meditations, when we are solicited to sin, would withdraw our minds and take up our hearts, if we had a spirit of faith to believe these things.

Let us learn to make this use likewise, to magnify God, that hath thus honoured us; not only to take our nature upon him, to be 'manifest in the flesh,'but also to give us his own attendance, his own guard, a guard of angels. Indeed, we are in Christ above angels, advanced higher than angels. What cause have we to praise God! How are we advanced above them? We are the spouse of Christ, and so are not angels. They are under Christ as a

head of government and a head of influence. They have strength and confirmation from Christ. He is not a head of redemption, but of confirmation to them. St Paul calls them 'elect angels' that stand. They stand by Christ, they have good by him. But they are not the spouse of Christ. We are the spouse and members of Christ. He hath honoured our nature more than the angelical: he did not take upon him the nature of angels, but of men; and as he hath advanced us above angels, so his dispensation is, that those glorious creatures should be our attendants for our good; and they distaste not this attendance.

And this is that we should know, what care God hath over us, and what love he bears us; that he hath honoured us so much that creatures of a more excellent rank than we are, even the angels, should be serviceable to us in Christ. And all is, that we should be full of thankfulness.

Obj. But you will say, What need the guard or attendance of angels to Christ or to us, to head or members, considering that God is able to guard us with his almighty power?

Ans. It is true. The creatures that God hath ordained in their several ranks, they are not for any defect in God, to supply his want of power, but further to enlarge and demonstrate his goodness. He is the 'Lord of hosts,' therefore he will have hosts of creatures, one under another, and all serviceable to his end. His end is, to bring a company to salvation, to a supernatural end, to happiness in the world to come; and he being Lord of all, he makes all to serve for that end. He could do it of himself; but, having ordained such ranks of creatures, he makes all to serve for that end, for the manifestation of his power and of his goodness, not for any defect of strength in himself. He could do all by himself. He could have been content with his own happiness, and never have made a world; but he made the world to shew his goodness and love and respect to mankind. So he will have angels attend us, though he watch over us by his own providence. This takes not away any care of his, but he shows his care in the attendance of angels and other creatures. He useth them to convey his care and love to us.

Obj. But you will say, How can the angels help our souls any kind of way? They may help our outward man, or the state where we live; but what good do they to the inward man?

Ans. I answer, The inward man is especially subject to the Spirit of Christ. It is God that bows the neck of the inward man. But yet

notwithstanding, if the devils can suggest sin, angels are as strong as devils, and stronger and wiser too. They are wiser than the devil is malicious, and stronger than the devil is powerful. Whatsoever they can do in evil, the good angels can in good. Therefore no question, but they suggest many thoughts that are good They are not only a guard about us, but they are tutors to teach and instruct us; they minister good thoughts, and stir up good motions and suggestions. They work not upon the heart of man immediately, to alter and change it—that is proper to God—but by stirring up motions, and by way of suggestion; as the devils do in ill, so they in good. Therefore it is said, they 'comforted' our blessed Saviour; which I suppose was more than by their presence. So they comfort God's children, by presenting to their thoughts (we know not how, the manner is mystical; it is not for us to search into that) good motions, by stirring up to good. Only the altering and changing of our dispositions, that is proper to the Holy Spirit of God.

Let us often think of this, what a glorious head we have, for whose sake the angels attend upon us in all estates whatsoever, even till we come to heaven.

And this should stir us up to labour to be made one with Christ. All the good we have any way is by the interest we have in Christ first. He holds it in captive. If we have not a being in our head Christ, we can challenge nothing in the world, no attendance of angels; for the angels are at variance with us out of Christ. We see presently after the fall, the cherubim was set with his sword drawn to keep the entrance of paradise, from whence Adam was shut, to shew that presently upon the fall there was a variance, and a mighty distance between the angels and us. But now the angels no longer shut paradise; no, they accompany us in the wilderness of this world, to the heavenly Canaan, to paradise. They go up and down Jacob's ladder. They attend upon Christ; and for his sake they are ministering spirits for the comfort of the elect. So that all things are reconciled now in Christ, both in heaven and earth, angels and men. It should stir us up to get interest in Christ, so that we may have interest in all these excellent things that first belong to Christ, and then to us. Whatsoever is excellent in heaven or earth belongs to the king of all, which is Christ, and to the queen of all, the church; and the time will come that there will be no excellency but Christ and his church. All whatsoever is in the world is nothing. It will end in hell and desperation; all other excellencies whatsoever.

This should teach us likewise to carry ourselves answerable to our condition, to tale a holy state upon us. We should think ourselves too good to abase ourselves to sin, to be slaves to men, to flesh and blood—be they what they will be—to the corruptions and humours of any man, since we have angels to attend upon us. We are kings, and have a kingly guard. It should move us to take a holy state upon us. It should force a carriage suitable to kings, that have so glorious attendance. Undoubtedly, if we had a spiritual eye of faith to believe and to know this, answerable to the things themselves and their excellency, it would work a more glorious disposition in Christians than there is, to carry ourselves as if we were in heaven before our time. Oh that we had clear eyes, answerable to the excellency of the privileges that belong to us.

Again, It should teach us not to despise the meanest Christians, seeing angels despise not to attend on them. Shall we disdain to relieve them, that the angels do not disdain to comfort? To comfort and relieve one another, it is the work of an angel. Shall any man think himself too good to help any poor Christian? Oh the pride of man's nature! when the more glorious nature of the angels disdain not to be our servants, and not only to great and noble men, but to little ones, even to Lazarus. What a devilish quality is envy and pride, that stirs us up to disdain to be useful one to another, especially to those that are inferiors! We know it was the speech of wicked Cain, 'Am I my brother's keeper?' Gen. iv. 9. Shall I stoop to him? Flesh and blood begins to take state upon it. Alas! if angels had taken state upon them, where had this attendance been? The devils that kept not their first standing, being proud spirits, they disdained the calling they had; the good angels humble themselves. God himself, as it is Ps. cxiii. 6, disdains not to look on things below. When the great God became man, shall we wonder that angels should attend upon the nature that God hath so honoured? What a devilish sin, then, is envy, and pride, and disdain! Let these considerations move us to be out of love with this disposition. The angels joy at the conversion of others. Shall that be our heart-smart and grief that is the joy of angels? Shall we despise the work of regeneration and the image of God in another? Shall it be the joy of angels, and shall it be our sorrow, the welfare and thriving of others spiritually or outwardly? Shall we, out of disdain and envy, think ourselves too good to do anything when it is the delight of angels?

The angels are described with wings to fly, in Isa. vi. 2, seq, to shew their delight in their attendance; and wings to cover their faces and their feet, to shew their adoration and reverence of God. The nearer they come to God,

the more reverence. So there is no Christian, but like the angels, the nearer he comes to God, the more he abaseth himself and adores God; as Job, when he came nearer to God than he was before, 'I abhor myself,' saith he, 'in dust and ashes,' when God came to talk with him, Job xlii. 6. The angels, the nearer they come to God, the more reverence they shew; the more they cover their faces in his presence. And with the other wings they fly and do their duty, to shew their expedition in their service to Christ and his church. They do readily what they do. Let us imitate the angels in this.

, The angels have a double office: a superior office and an inferior. The superior office they have is to attend upon God, to serve God and Christ, to minister to our head. The inferior office is, to attend his church, and to conflict with the evil angels that are about us continually.

It is good for us to know our prerogatives, our privilege, and our strength; not to make us proud, but to stir us up to thankfulness, and to a holy carriage answerable. It is a point not much thought on by the best of us all. We forget it, and betray our own comfort. Satan abuseth us to make us forget the dignity and strength that we have. Hereby we dishonour God and wrong ourselves, and wrong the holy angels, for want of faith and consideration of these things. A Christian is a more excellent creature than he thinks of. It is necessary ofttimes to think what a groat degree God hath raised us to in Jesus Christ, that we have this glorious attendance about us wherever we are. Oh it would move us, as I said, to comfort and to a reverent carriage! and, indeed, when we carry ourselves otherwise, it is for want of minding and believing these things. I have spoken something the more of it, because we are subject to neglect this blessed truth. Therefore, for the time to come, let us take occasion to meditate often or of this spring of comfort than formerly we have done.

'Preached to the Gentiles.'

Christ, our blessed Saviour, being the king of his church, it was not sufficient that he was 'manifested in the flesh,' and 'justified in the Spirit;' that is, declared by his divine power to be God; but he must have his nobles to acknowledge this too. Kings in their inaugurations not only make good their own title what they can themselves, but they would have others to acknowledge it. Therefore it is said Christ was seen of angels, those noble and glorious creatures.

But not only the greatest of the kingdom, but likewise the meaner subjects, must know their king. There must be a proclamation to them to know who is to rule over them. Therefore, Christ being a general catholic king, there must be a publication and proclamation of Christ all the world over. He must be 'preached to the Gentiles.' But yet that is not enough. Upon proclamation, there must be homage of all those he is proclaimed a king to. Therefore it follows, 'Believed on in the world;' that is, the world must stoop, and submit, and give homage to Christ as the Saviour of the world, us the Mediator of mankind. Thus we see how these things follow one upon another. To come to the words, 'Preached to the Gentiles, believed on in the world.'

Those follow one another by a necessary order, for 'preaching' goes before faith. Faith is the issue and fruit of preaching. Christ is first 'preached to the Gentiles,' and then 'believed on in the world.' The points considerable are these:

First, That there mast be a dispensation of salvation wrought by Christ unto others. It is not sufficient that salvation was wrought by Christ 'manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit,' but this salvation and redemption wrought, it must be published and dispensed to others. Therefore he saith 'preached to the Gentiles.'

And then this publication and 'preaching,' it must be of Christ. Christ must be published to the Gentiles. All is in Christ that is necessary to be published.

Then the persons to whom. 'To the Gentiles,' that is, to all. The church is enlarged since the coming of Christ; the pales and bounds of the church are enlarged.

And then the fruit of this. Christ being thus dispensed to the Gentiles, the world 'believes.' All preaching is for 'the obedience of faith,' as St Paul saith,' Rom. i. 5, and Rom. xvi. 19, 'That the obedience of the faith may be yielded to Christ;' 'preaching to the Gentiles' is, that he may be believed on in the world.'

First of all, There must be a dispensation of Christ.

See the equity of this, even from things among men. It is not sufficient that physic be provided; but there must be an application of it. It is not

sufficient that there is a treasure; but there must be a digging of it out. It is not sufficient that there be a candle or light; but there must be a holding out of the light for the good and use of others. It was not sufficient that there was a 'brazen serpent,' but the brazen serpent must be 'lifted up,' that the people might see it. It is not sufficient that there is a standard, but the standard must be set up. It is not sufficient that there be a foundation, but there must be a building upon the foundation. It is not sufficient that there be a garment, but there must be a putting of it on. It is not sufficient that there be a box of ointment, but the box must be opened, that the whole house may be filled with the smell. It is not sufficient that there be tapestry, and glorious hangings, but there must be an unfolding of them. Therefore there must be a dispensation of the mysteries of Christ; for, though Christ be physic, he must be applied; though Christ be a garment, he must be put on; though he be a foundation, we must build on him, or else we have no good by him; though he in his truth be a treasure, yet he must be digged up in the ministry; though he be a light, he must be held forth; though he be food, there must be an application. Of necessity therefore there must be a dispensation of the gospel, as well as redemption wrought by Christ; 'preached to the Gentiles.'

To unfold the point a little, seeing the necessity of it, to shew What it is to preach .

What it is to preach Christ. And,

What it is to preach Christ to the Gentiles.

1. To preach is to open the mystery of Christ, to open whatsoever is in Christ; to break open the box that the savour may be perceived of all. To open Christ's natures and person what it is; to open the offices of Christ: first, he was a prophet to teach, wherefore he came into the world; then he was a priest, offering the sacrifice of himself; and then after he had offered his sacrifice as a priest, then he was a king. He was more publicly and gloriously known to be a king, to rule. After he had gained a people by his priesthood and offering, then he was to be a king to govern them. But his prophetical office is before the rest. He was all at the same time, but I speak in regard of manifestation. Now 'to preach Christ' is to lay open these things.

And likewise the states wherein he executed his office. First, the state of humiliation. Christ was first abased, and then glorified. The flesh he took upon him was first sanctified and then abased, and then he made it glorious

flesh. He could not work our salvation but in a state of abasement; he could not apply it to us but in a state of exaltation and glory. To open the merits of Christ, what he hath wrought to his Father for us; to open his efficacy, as the spiritual Head of his church; what wonders he works in his children, by altering and raising of them, by fitting and preparing them for heaven: likewise to open all the promises in Christ, they are but Christ dished and parcelled out. 'All the promises in Christ are yea and amen,' 2 Cor. i. 20. They are made for Christ's sake, and performed for Christ's sake; they are all but Christ severed into so many particular gracious blessings. 'To preach Christ' is to lay open all this, which is the inheritance of God's people.

But it is not sufficient to preach Christ, to lay open all this in the view of others; but in the opening of them, there must be application of them to the use of God's people, that they may see their interest in them; and there must be an alluring of them, for to preach is to woo. The preachers are paranymphi, the friends of the bridegroom, that are to procure the marriage between Christ and his church; therefore, they are not only to lay open the riches of the husband, Christ, but likewise to entreat for a marriage, and to use all the gifts and parts that God hath given them, to bring Christ and his church together.

And because people are in a contrary state to Christ, 'to preach Christ,' is oven to begin with the law, to discover to people their estate by nature. A man can never preach the gospel that makes not way for the gospel, by showing and convincing people what they are out of Christ. Who will marry with Christ, but those that know their own beggary and misery out of Christ? That he must be had of necessity, or else they die in debts eternally; he must be had, or else they are eternally miserable. Now, when people are convinced of this, then they make out of themselves to Christ. This therefore must be done, because it is in order, that which makes way to the preaching of Christ; for 'the full stomach despiseth an honeycomb,' Prov. xxvii. 7. Who cares for balm that is not sick? Who cares for Christ, that sees not the necessity of Christ? Therefore we see John Baptist came before Christ, to make way for Christ, to level the mountains, to cast down whatsoever exalts itself in man. He that is to preach must discern what mountains there be between men's hearts and Christ; and he must labour to discover themselves to themselves, and lay flat all the pride of men in the dust; for 'the word of God is forcible to pull down strongholds and imaginations and to bring all into subjection to Christ,' 2 Cor. x. 4. And indeed, though a man should not preach the law, yet by way of implication, all these things are wrapped in the gospel. What need

a Saviour, unless we were lost? What need Christ to be wisdom to us, if we were not fools in ourselves? What need Christ be sanctification to us, if we were not defiled in ourselves? What need he be redemption, if we were not lost and sold in ourselves to Satan, and under his bondage? Therefore all is to make way for Christ, not only to open the mysteries of Christ, but in the opening and application to let us see the necessity of Christ. In a word, being to bring Christ and the church together, our aim must be, to persuade people to come out of their estate they are in, to come and take Christ. Whatsoever makes for this, that course we must use, though it be with never so much abasing of ourselves. Therefore the gospel is promulgated in a sweet manner. 'I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God,' &c. The law comes with 'Cursed, cursed but now in the gospel Christ is preached with sweet alluring. 'I beseech you, brethren,' and 'We as ambassadors beseech you, as if Christ by us did beseech you,' &c., 2 Cor. v. 20. This is the manner of the dispensation in the gospel, even to beg of people that they would be good to their own souls. Christ, as it were, became a beggar himself, and the great God of heaven and earth begs our love, that we would so care for our own souls that we would be reconciled unto him. It was fitter, indeed, that we should beg of him. It was fit we should seek to be reconciled to him, but God so stoops in the dispensation and ministry of the gospel, that he becomes a beggar and suitor to us to be good to our souls. As if he had offended us, he desires us to be reconciled. The wrong is done on our part, yet he so far transcends the doubtings of man's nature, that he would have nothing to cause man's heart to misgive, no doubts or scruples to arise. He himself becomes a beseecher of reconciliation, as if he wore the party that had offended. This is the manner of the publication of the gospel. I do but touch things, to shew what it is to preach Christ.

Use. Seeing then of necessity there must he a dispensation together with the gospel, let us labour to magnify this dispensation of preaching, that, together with redemption and the good things we have by Christ, we have also the standard set up and the brazen serpent lifted up by preaching 'the unsearchable riches of Christ' unfolded to us. It is a blessed condition. Let us magnify this ordinance, without disparaging other means, of reading, &c. This preaching is that whereby God dispenseth salvation and grace ordinarily.

And God in wisdom sees it the fittest way to dispense his grace to men by men. Why?

(1.) To try our obedience to the truth itself. He would have men regard the things spoken, not for the person that speaks them, but for the excellency of the things. If some glorious creatures, as the angels, should preach to us, we should regard the excellency of the preachers more than the truth itself; we should believe the truth for the messengers' sake.

(2.) And then God would knit man to man by bonds of love. Now there is a relation between pastor and people by this ordinance of God.

(3.) And then it is more suitable to our condition. We could not hear God speak, or any more excellent creatures. God magnifies his power the more in blessing these weak means.

(I.) And it is more proportionable to our weakness to have men that speak out of experience from themselves that preach the gospel, that they have felt the comfort of themselves. It works the more upon us. Therefore, those that first preached the gospel, they were such as had felt the sweetness of it themselves first. St Paul, a great sinner out of the church, and St Peter in the church, he fell, after he was in the state of grace; that these great apostles might shew to all people that there is no ground of despair, if we humble ourselves. If they be sins out of the church, if they be sins against the first table, as Paul he was 'a blasphemer;' or against the second, he was 'a persecutor;' yet he found mercy notwithstanding, and for this end he found mercy, he saith, that he 'might teach the mercy of God to others, that he might be an example of the mercy of God to others, 1 Tim. i. 16. And so, if we relapse and fall, let none despair. Peter, a great teacher in the church, an apostle, see how foully he fell! Now, when men subject to the 'same infirmities' shall discover the mercy of God out of the book of God, it works the more upon us.

It is good for us to have a right esteem of the ordinances of God, because the profane heart of man doth think it a needless matter.

Quest. Some are ready to say, Cannot I as well read privately at home?

Ans. Yes. But the use of private exercises, with contempt of the public, they have a curse upon them instead of a blessing. It is with such men as with those that gathered manna when they should not; it stank. Hath God set up an ordinance for nothing, for us to despise? Is not he wiser to know what is good for us better than we do for ourselves? God accompanies his ordinance with the presence of his blessed Spirit. The truth read at home

hath an efficacy, but the truth unfolded hath more efficacy. As we say of milk warmed, it is fitter for nourishment, and the rain from heaven hath a fatness with it, and a special influence more than other standing waters; so there is not that life and operation and blessing that accompanies other means that doth preaching, being the ordinary means where it may be had.

Obj. Ay, but this ordinance of God, 'preaching,' it is only for the laying the foundation of a church; it is not for a church when it is built. Then other helps, as prayer and the like, without this, may suffice.

Ans. Those that have such conceits, they make themselves wiser than the Spirit of God; in St Paul, we see in Eph. iv. 8, seq. Christ, 'when he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, he gave gifts to men, some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, for the edifying and building up of the church.' So that this ordinance it is necessary for building up still, and for the knitting of the members of Christ together still. Therefore, that is a vain excuse.

Obj. Oh, but what need much, less would serve the turn.

Ans. Thus people grow to contemn and despise this heavenly manna. But those that are acquainted with their own infirmities, they think it a happiness to have plenty; for naturally we are dull, we are forgetful, we are unmindful. Though we know, we do not remember; and though we remember, yet we do not mind things. We are naturally weak, and therefore we need all spiritual supports and helps that may be, to keep the vessel of our souls in perpetual good case. The more we hear and know, the fitter we are for doing and suffering; our souls are fitter for communion with God for all passages, both of life and death. Therefore we cannot have too much care this way.

Oil let us therefore choose Mary's part, 'the better part,' that will never depart from us; and take heed of profane conceits in this kind. It is to the prejudice of our souls. We must know, that whensoever God sets up an ordinance, he accompanies it with a special blessing. And we are not so much to consider men in it, but consider the ordinance, which is his; and being his, there is a special blessing goes with the dispensation of the word, by the ministry.

Obj. Others object, they know it well enough; and therefore they need not to be taught.

Ans. The word of God preached, it is not altogether to teach us, but, the Spirit going with it, to work grace, necessary to 'strengthen us in the inward man,' 2 Cor. iv. 16. And those that say they know it enough, deceive themselves. They know' it not. Religion is a mystery, and can it be learned at the first? There is no mystery but it requires many years to learn. If it be but a handicraft, men are six or seven years learning it. And is religion, and the mysteries and depths of it, learned so soon, think we? There is a mystery in every grace, in repentance, in faith, in patience, that no man knows, but those that have the graces [and] what belongs to those graces. Religion consists not in some parts and abilities to speak and conceive of these things; and yet that is hardly learned, being contrary to our nature, having no seeds of these things. Even the outside of religion, that is the preparative to the inward; there is somewhat to do to bring our hearts to these things. But, then, religion itself is a deep mystery; it requires a great deal of learning.

Let us therefore set a price upon God's ordinance. There must be this dispensation. Christ must be 'preached.' Preaching is the chariot that carries Christ up and down the world. Christ doth not profit but as he is preached. For supernatural benefits, if they be not discovered, they are lost; as we say of jewels, if they be not discovered, what is the glory of them? Therefore there must be a discovery by preaching, which is the ordinance of God for that end. Whereupon God stirred up the apostles before, that were the main converters of the world. They had some prerogatives above all other preachers. They had an immediate calling, extraordinary gifts, and a general commission. In them was established a ministry to the end of the world. 'Christ, when he ascended on high and led captivity captive'—he would give no mean gift then, when he was to ascend triumphantly to heaven—the greatest gift he could give was, 'some to be prophets, some apostles, some teachers, for the building up of the body of Christ, till we all meet a perfect man in Christ.' 'I will send them pastors according to my own heart,' saith God, Jer. iii. 15. It is a gift of all gifts, the ordinance of preaching. God esteems it so, Christ esteems it so, and so should we esteem it.

And to add this further, to clear it from whatsoever may rise up in any man's mind, do but consider in experience, where God sets up his ordinance, how many souls are converted. Some are savingly cast down and then raised up again. Their lives are reformed. They walk in the light, they know whither they go. They can give an account of what they hold. The state of those that live under the ordinance of God is incomparably more lightsome, and comfortable, and glorious, than those that are in the dark, that want it. If we

had no other argument, experience is a good argument. Where doth popery and profaneness reign most? In those places where this ordinance of God is not set up; for popery cannot endure the breath of the gospel. Thus we see the necessity and benefit of preaching.

But then, in the next place, this preaching it must be of Christ; Christ must be 'preached.'

Quest. But must nothing be preached but Christ?

Ans. I answer, Nothing but Christ, or that that tends to Christ. If we preach threatening, it is to cast men down, that we may build them up. If a physician purge, it is that he may give cordials. Whatsoever is done in preaching to humble men, it is to raise them up again in Christ; all makes way for Christ. When men are dejected by the law, we must not leave them there, but raise them up again. Whatever we preach, it is reductive to Christ, that men may walk worthy of Christ. When men have been taught Christ, they must be taught to 'walk worthy of Christ, and of their calling,' Col. i. 10, that they may carry themselves fruitfully, and holily, and constantly, every way suitable for so glorious a profession as the profession of Christian religion is. The foundation of all these duties must be from Christ. The graces for these duties must be fetched from Christ; and the reasons and motives of a Christian's conversation must be from Christ, and from the state that Christ hath advanced us unto. The prevailing reasons of an holy life are fetched from Christ. 'The grace of God hath appeared'—saith St Paul, 'it hath shined gloriously'—'teaching us to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, and righteously, and holily, in this present evil world,' Titus ii. 12. So that Christ is the main object of preaching. This made St Paul, when he was among the Corinthians, to profess no knowledge of anything but of 'Christ, and him crucified;' to esteem and value nothing else. He had arts and tongues and parts. He was a man excellently qualified, but he made show of nothing in his preaching, and in his value and esteem, but of Christ, and the good things we have by Christ.

Now Christ must be preached wholly and only. We must not take anything from Christ, nor join anything to Christ. The Galatians did but believe the necessity of ceremonies with Christ; and the apostle tells them, 'Ye are fallen from Christ,' Gal. v. 4. It is a destructive addition, to add anything to Christ. Away with other satisfaction. The satisfaction of Christ is enough. Away with merits. The merits of Christ are all-sufficient. Away with merit of works in matter of salvation. Christ's righteousness is that that we

must labour to be found in, and 'not in our own,' Philip, iii. 9. All is but 'dung and dross,' Philip, iii. 8, in comparison of the excellent righteousness we have in Jesus Christ. You must hear, and we must preach all Christ and only Christ. St Paul saith, he was 'jealous with a holy jealousy' over those he 'taught.' Why? 'Lest Satan should beguile them, and draw them from Christ,' to any other thing, 2 Cor. xi. 2. Why is the Church of Rome so erroneous, but because she leaves Christ and cleaves to other things? Therefore we must labour to keep chaste souls to Christ, and those that are true preachers, and ambassadors, and messengers, they must be 'jealous with a holy jealousy' over the people of God, that they look to nothing but Christ.

Christ must be preached; but to whom? 'To the Gentiles.'

Here lies the mystery, that Christ, who was 'manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit,' &c., should be 'preached to the Gentiles.' What were the Gentiles? Before Christ's time they were 'dogs,' in our Saviour Christ's censure. 'Shall I give the children's bread to dogs?' Mat. xv. 27. Before Christ's time they 'sat in darkness, and in the shadow of death,' Ps. cvii. 10. Before Christ's time they were 'the halt and the lame,' that he, the great feast-maker, sent to bid come in, Luke xiv. 21. They were 'aliens from the commonwealth of Israel,' without Christ, 'without God in the world,' Eph. ii. 12; without God because they were without Christ. It is not to be imagined in what misery the poor Gentiles were before the coming of Christ, except some few proselytes that joined themselves to the Jewish Church, for the Gentiles worshipped devils. What were all their gods but devils? They were under the kingdom of Satan when the gospel came to be preached among them. They were 'translated' out of the kingdom of Satan, into the blessed and glorious kingdom of Christ, Col. i. 13. Yet we see here, notwithstanding, they were such kind of people; the mystery of the gospel is preached to these, 'to the Gentiles.'

It was such a mystery as St Peter himself, although he were acquainted with it ofttimes by Christ, and he might read of it in the prophets, yet, notwithstanding, he was to be put in mind of it, Acts x. 18. When he was to go to Cornelius he saw a vision full of beasts, and a voice saying, 'Kill and eat,' and indeed, the 'Gentiles' were little better than beasts. They were esteemed so before they had the gospel, and the preaching of it to them. You see it was a mystery to St Peter himself.

Obj. But why did God suffer the Gentiles to 'walk in their own ways?' as the apostle saith, Acts xiv. 16. Why did he neglect and overlook the Gentiles,

and suffer them to go on 'in their own ways,' so many thousand years before Christ came? Were they not God's creatures as well as the Jews?

I answer, This is a mystery, that God should suffer those witty people, that were of excellent parts, to go on 'in their own ways.' But there was matter enough in themselves. We need not call God to our bar to answer for himself. They were malicious against the light they knew. They imprisoned the light of nature that they had, as it is Rom. i. 21. They were unfaithful in that they had. Therefore, besides that it is a mystery, God may well be excused. Do but look to the judgment that some of the heathens had of divine things, what reprobate and malicious judgments they had, how basely they esteemed of the Jews. The Jewish nation, saith Tully, shew how God regards them, in that she hath been overcome so oft, by Nebuchadnezzar and Pompey, &c. What a reasoning was this. And that proud historian Tacitus, how scornfully doth he speak of Christians. It is not to be imagined the pride that was in the heathens against the Jewish religion, especially the Christian religion, how they scorned and persecuted it, in the beginning of it. So you see, in the best of the heathen men there was matter and ground of God's just condemning of them; therefore we need not quarrel with God against that.

Obj. But here is another mystery, Why the Gentiles, being all alike naught, God should leave the better of the Gentiles, and reveal Christ to the worst. Were not Socrates, and Plato, and such like, more goodly moralists than the Corinthians and Ephesians? What kind of people were the Corinthians? A proud people, 'fornicators, idolaters;' as the apostle saith, 'such were some of you,' Eph. v. 8, and 1 Cor. vi. 11. Here is a mystery.

Ans. It is God's sovereignty. We must let God do what he will. 'He will be merciful to whom he will be merciful,' and 'he will neglect whom he will.' Saith Austin, 'We must be very reverent in these matters;' it is most safe to commit all to God, and usurp no judgment here (I). It is a mystery; yet there is some satisfying reason may be given why the Gentiles were called, when Christ came in the flesh, and not before; besides many prophecies foretold that it should be so, and some reason may be given why it was so.

Because they were to be incorporate to the Jews, to be 'fellow-citizens' with the church of the Jews. They were to be of God's household, as it is excellently and largely set down in Eph. ii. 19. Now Christ coming took down the 'partition-wall.' Christ is the centre in whom they meet, in whom they are one. Therefore they met one with another when Christ came,

because he is the Saviour of both. He is the 'corner-stone' whereupon both are built. So that now they are 'fellow-citizens' since Christ came.

And you see in the genealogy of Christ, he came both of Jews and Gentiles, as we see in Ruth. Divers of our Saviour's ancestors, they were Gentiles as well as Jews, to shew that he that came of both, he came to be the Saviour of both. But it is the safest, as I said before, in these queries, to rest in the wise, unsearchable dispensation of God, and rather be thankful that God hath reserved us to these times and places of knowledge, than to ask why our forefathers did not know Christ. We enjoy a double spring of the gospel, and the benefits of it. First, we were delivered from heathenism. What kind of people were we in Julius Caesar's time? Barbarous people.]; And after, when popery came in, God delivered us from that'; there was a second spring. Yet how few give God praise, that hath had mercy on us Gentiles, that hath delivered us from Gentilism, and from the darkness of popery. But we grow weary of religion, as they did of manna, Numb. xi. 6.

Let us therefore make good use of it, that God hath been merciful to us Gentiles in these later times. And let us that are born in the precincts of the church help our faith in the time of temptation this way. Certainly God means well to my soul. I might have been born before, in times of ignorance and places of ignorance, and never have heard of Christ; but I have been baptized and admitted into the church: and by that there is an obligation. Before I understood myself, I was bound to believe in Christ. God was so careful of my soul when I understood nothing, that there should be a bond for me to believe in Christ. If God bad not meant well to my soul, I should not have lived so much as to hear of the gospel. Thus we should gather upon God, as the woman of Canaan did upon our Saviour Christ, and fight against all distrust and unbelief, and all temptations of Satan, that present God as though he cared not for us. There cannot be too much art and skill to help our faith this way.

Again, the Gentiles have now interest in Christ since the coming of Christ, and not before. It is a mystery. It were not a mystery, if the Gentiles had had an interest in Christ, and been within the pale of the church before.

There are several degrees of the dispensation of salvation. There is, first, the ordaining of salvation. That was before all worlds. And then the promise of salvation. That was when Adam fell. Then there is the procuring of salvation promised. That was by Christ, when he came in the flesh. Then there is the promulgation and enlarging of salvation to all people. This was

after Christ was come in the flesh. Then there is the perfect consummation of salvation in heaven. Now the execution of the promise, and the performance of all good concerning salvation, it was reserved to Christ's coming in the flesh; and the enlargement of the promise to all nations was not till then. I do but touch this, to shew that God hath had a special care of this latter age of the world. Some account the first age of the world to be a golden age, the next silver, and then an iron age. But indeed we may invert the order. We live in the golden age, the last ages, when Christ was 'manifested.' What is the glory of times and places? The 'manifestation of Christ.' The more Christ is laid open with his 'unsearchable riches,' the more God glorifies those times and places; and that is the golden age where the gospel is preached.

Therefore, we cannot be too much thankful for that wondrous favour which we have enjoyed so long time together, under the glorious sunshine of the gospel.

Hence we have a ground likewise of enlarging the gospel to all people, because the Gentiles now have interest in Christ; that merchants, and those that give themselves to navigation, they may with good success carry the gospel to all people. There are none shut out now, since Christ, in this last age of the world; and certainly there is great hope of those Western people. We see the gospel hath imitated the course of the sun. The Sun of righteousness hath shined like the sun in the firmament. The sun begins east, and goes to the west; so the gospel. It began in the eastern parts. It hath left them; they are under the Turkish barbarous tyranny at this time. The gospel is now come to the western parts of the world. For Christ will take an holy state upon him, and will not abide long where he is disesteemed, where the gospel is under-valued, and blended with that which is prejudicial to the sincerity of it; when there is little care had what men believe. The state of the gospel and truth is such, that if it be mingled overmuch with heterogeneal stuff, it overthrows it; and Christ will not endure this indignity. Therefore, let us take heed that we keep Christ and his truth with us exactly; and let us take heed of sinning against the gospel, if we would have it stay with us, especially of sins immediately against the gospel, as for instance,

1. Take heed of joining superstition and popish trash with it, or the like, that will eat out the very heart of the gospel, and sets up man in the place of Christ.

2. Again, Take heed of decaying in our first, love. We see God threatened the church of Ephesus, for not cherishing and maintaining her first love; that he would remove not only the gospel, but the 'candlestick,' the church itself. For security in abundance and plenty, and decay in her first love, God threateneth that he will scatter the candlestick, the church itself, into foreign places.

3. Again, A sin against the gospel is unfruitfulness under it. When men shall have the blessed influence of the gospel, the soul-saving truth, the good word to be long among them, and to be as barren under it as if they were pagans; for the gospel to have no more power over our souls than if we had no gospel at all; that there is no difference between us and heathens in regard of our conversations; to go no further then they, nay, not so far in honesty, and justice, and sobriety: let us take heed of these and the like sins against the gospel. And I say, it should be a ground of labouring the conversion of those that be savages, be they never so barbarous, to labour to gain them to Christ. There are indeed some hindrances. There be Jannes and Jambres among them, instruments of the devil, to keep them in blindness and ignorance, and then custom that they are bred in,—which prevails most with the sorriest people,—for ignorant people that have their wits determined to one way they are so strong in it, as they are not to be untaught; as it is hard to teach a beast, because he is taught to go one way, for want of variety of conceptions, being void of reason. Now, people by nature are little better than beasts. Therefore they are so fixed and determined in that way they are brought up in, and are so settled by the devil and those priests among them, and by the tyranny of those that have come among them, the Spaniards, &c., that hath hindered their conversion much, yet, take them as bad as they can be, God hath a time for them. What were we of this nation sixteen hundred years agone? There is a fulness of the Gentiles to come in; and certainly it is not yet come fully. For it is probable, nay, more than probable, that there are some people that never had the gospel; and the fulness of the Gentiles must come in before the other mystery of the calling of the Jews. I speak it to encourage those that have interest that way, not to take violent courses with them. There is nothing so voluntary as faith. It must be wrought by persuasions, not by violence; and there is a ground of encouragement hence, that since the coming of Christ there is a liberty for all nations to come in. Christ must be 'preached to the Gentiles.'

To conclude this point. Let us consider that we are those Gentiles that have enjoyed this preaching of Christ; and it is the glory of our nation. It is

not our strength, or riches, or any ornament above others, that sets us forth, so much as this, that we have the gospel 'preached' among us, that these blessed streams run so plentifully everywhere among us. Let us labour to value this inestimable benefit. Where the gospel is not 'preached,' there the places are salt-pits, despicable places, whatsoever they are else, as it is in Ezekiel. They are under the kingdom of Satan. It is the glory of a nation to have the truth among them. 'The glory of Israel' was gone when the ark was taken, 1 Sam. iv. 21. The religion and truth we enjoy it is our ark; our glory is gone if we part with that. Therefore, whatsoever God takes from us, let us desire that he would still continue the gospel of truth, that he would still vouchsafe to dwell among us, and not leave us. What were all things in the world besides, if we had not the blessed truth of God? We must leave all ere long. Therefore let us labour to have the eyes of our understanding enlightened, to conceive aright of the difference of things, and to value ourselves by this, that Christ is 'manifested' to us; and thereby we have interest in Christ, more than by any interest and part and portion in the world besides. For then Christ will delight to be with us still, when we make much of him, and esteem, and prize, and value him.

'Believed on in the world.'

After 'preached to the Gentiles,' he joins 'believed on in the world,' to shew that faith 'comes by hearing.' Indeed, 'preaching' is the ordinance of God, sanctified for the begetting of faith, for the opening of the understanding, for the drawing of the will and affections to Christ. Faith is the marriage of the soul to Christ. Now in marriage there must not be a mistake and error in the person, for then it is a kind of nullity. Now that the person to whom we are to be married by faith may be known to us, there is an ordinance of preaching set up, to lay open our own beggary and necessity, what we are without him; and to open the riches of our husband, the nobility, and privileges, and whatsoever is glorious in Christ, that the church may know what a kind of husband she is like to have. In Rom. x. 14, seq., you have the scola coli, the ladder of heaven, as a good old martyr called it; and we must not presume to alter the staves of that ladder. 'How can they call upon him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe without a preacher? and how shall they preach unless they be sent?' Here is preaching, and believing, and then prayer. There are some that are bitter against this ordinance of preaching, and advance another excellent ordinance of prayer, to the disparagement of this: if they would join them both together, it were well. You see what the apostle saith: 'How shall they call

upon him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe without a preacher?' without this ordinance of preaching? showing that we cannot have the spirit of prayer without faith, nor faith without preaching. And the wise man saith, 'He that turns his ear from hearing the law' (under what pretence soever), 'his prayer shall be abominable,' Prov. xxviii. 9. The prayers of such men that would cry down this ordinance, how are they like to be accepted? They are abominable. We see here the apostle sets them down in this degree, hearing, and believing, and prayer; and here in this place preaching goes before believing.

Therefore the gospel unfolded is called 'the word of faith,' because it begets faith. God by it works faith; and it is called the 'ministry of reconciliation,' 2 Cor. v. 18, because God by it publisheth reconciliation. As preaching goes before believing, so it is the blessed instrument, by reason of the Spirit accompanying of it, to work faith. In the ministry of the gospel there is not only an unfolding of the excellent things of Christ, but there is grace given by the Spirit to believe. And herein this publication and proclamation differs from all other publications in the world. Men may publish and proclaim what they would have, but they cannot give hearts to believe it. But in the blessed promulgation and publishing of divine truths, there is the Spirit of God accompanying it, to work what it publisheth. It opens the riches of Christ, and offers Christ; and Christ is given to the heart with it. It publisheth what is to be believed and known, and it alters our courses. Together with it there goes a power— the Spirit clothing the ordinance of preaching—to do all. Therefore it is called 'the ministry of the Spirit,' 2 Cor. iii. 8. Why? Because what is published in the preaching of the word, to those that belong to God, it hath the Spirit to convey it to the souls of God's people. Therefore he saith here, first preached and then believed.

Therefore, those that are enemies to this ordinance of God, they are enemies of the faith of God's people, and by consequent, enemies of the salvation of God's people. But the more the proud and haughty atheistical heart of man riseth against it, the more we should think there is some divine thing in it. It must needs be excellent, because the proud heart of man stomachs it so much. We see here it is the means to work faith. Therefore, as we esteem faith and all the good we have by it, let us be stirred up highly to prize and esteem of this ordinance of God. So much for the coherence or connection, 'preached to the Gentiles,' and then 'Believed on in the world.'

For the words themselves, we see here, first, that Christ, as he must be unfolded in preaching, so he must be 'believed on.'

Because the dispensation ministerial is not enough, unless there be an applying grace in the heart; and that is a spirit of faith, whose property is, to make peculiar that that is offered. There is a virtue of application in this grace of faith. Whore there is a giving there must be a receiving, or else the gift is ineffectual. Christ is the garment of the soul. He is the foundation and food, &c. As I said before, he is our husband. We must give our consent. 'Believing' is a spiritual marriage. In marriage there must be a consent. This consent is faith. That makes up the bond between Christ and the believing soul. Therefore of necessity there must be faith; all else, without believing in Christ, is nothing. Faith is the means of making Christ our own, and no other thing whatsoever.

The papists have ridiculous means, that they understand not themselves, nor anybody else. They make the sacrifice of the Mass a means to apply Christ, and other courses; but the ministerial means to apply to Christ is the preaching of the gospel, and faith that is wrought by the ministry of the gospel; and there is no other way of application, by the Mass, or any such thing. Christ without faith doth us no good; in Heb. iv. 2, 'The word that they heard did not profit them, because it was not mingled with faith.' The word of God, the gospel, it is the 'power of God to salvation;' but it is to all that 'believe,' 1 Peter i. 5. Whatsoever good Christ doth to us, he doth it by faith. It is a rule in divinity, and it is to purpose in the deciding some controversies, that a spiritual benefit, not known and applied, is a nullity; because God intends all, whatsoever we have, to be opened to us and applied, that he might have the glory, and we the comfort. We see the excellency and necessary use of this grace of faith.

How is Christ to be believed on?

1. We must rest upon no other thing, either in ourselves or out of ourselves, but Christ only. In popery they have many other things to rest on, and their faith being corrupt, all their obedience likewise is corrupt that springs from it. They dishonour Christ to join anything in the world with him. The apostle is wondrous zealous in this, to have nothing joined with Christ; as in Gal. v. 2, 'If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing;' only Christ must be believed on in matter of salvation.

2. And whole Christ must he received. 'Believing' is nothing but a taking or receiving of Christ as a Lord and as a Saviour; as a priest, to redeem us by his blood; and Christ as a king, to govern us. We must take whole Christ.

We see what manner of faith is in most men, that snatch out of Christ what they list, to serve their own turn. As he died for their sins, so they are glad of him; but as he is a lord and king to rule and govern them, so they will have none of him, but 'turn the grace of God into wantonness,' Jude 4. But Christ, as we must rest and rely on him only, so we must receive him and believe on him wholly.

Now faith looks upon Christ as the main object of it, as it justifieth. The same faith it looks upon the whole word of God as a divine truth revealed; but for the main work of it, it looks upon Christ. Christ is the jewel that this ring of faith doth enclose; and as the ring hath the value from the jewel, so hath faith from Christ. In the main point of justification and comfort, faith lays hold upon Christ for mercy; for the distressed afflicted soul it looks first of all to comfort, and peace, and reconciliation; therefore it looks first to him that wrought it—that is, Christ. Now, the same faith that doth this, it believes all divine truths, the threatenings, and precepts, &c. Faith chooseth not its object to believe what it lists, but it carries the soul to all divine truths revealed. But when we speak of justifying faith, then Christ, and the promises, and the mercy of God in Christ, is the first thing that the soul looks unto.

Christ is the first object of faith, before any benefit or gift that we have from him; first, we must receive Christ before we have any grace, or favour, or strength, from him. And a sanctified soul looks first to Christ, to the love of Christ, to the person of Christ, and then to his goods and riches. As one that is married, she regards first the person of her husband, and then looks to the enjoyment of his goods, and inheritance, and nobilities, or else it is no better than a harlot's love. So faith looks to the person first. It knits us to Christ, to be in love with, and to embrace Christ, and then it looks to all the good things we have by him. For he never comes alone. There is a world of good things in him: all that tends to grace and glory. Yet it is the person of Christ that the soul of a Christian principally looks to. Other divine truths are the object of faith to direct and sway our lives; yet, notwithstanding, they are not the object of faith; when we look for comfort, for forgiveness of sins, and reconciliation with God, then it looks to Christ especially.

Therefore we that are ministers of the gospel of Christ should especially look to unfold the riches of Christ; and those that are God's people should especially desire to have Christ unfolded, and the riches of God's love in Christ. The soul that ever found the sting of sin, the conscience that ever was awakened to feel the wrath of God, it accounts nothing so sweet as evangelical truths, those things that concern his Husband and Saviour. A carnal man loves to hear moral points wittily spoken of, as delightful to his ear; but the soul that understands itself, what it is by nature, that ever felt in any degree the wrath of God for sin, of all points, it desires most to hear of Christ and him crucified. Therefore we may judge ourselves by our ears, of what tempers our souls are; for 'the ear tastes of speeches as the mouth doth meat,' as Job saith, Job xii. 11.

'Believed on in the world.'

By 'world,' especially here in this place, is meant the world taken out of the world, the world of elect. There is a world in the world, as one saith well in unfolding this point; as we see, man is called a little world in the great world. Christ was preached to the world of wicked men, that by preaching, a world might be taken out of the world, which is the world of believers. Hence we may clear our judgments in that point, that when Christ is said to redeem the world, it must not be understood generally of all mankind. We see here, the world is said to believe in Christ. Did all mankind believe in Christ? was there not a world of unbelievers?

We see here Christ 'believed on in the world'—the world that was opposite, that were enemies, that were under Satan. Who shall despair, then? Therefore, let us conceive well of Christ. Why was he 'manifest in the flesh?' and why is there an ordinance of preaching? Wherefore is all this, but that he would have us believe, he our sins what they will? Put the case that there were a world of sin in one man, that one man were a world of naughtiness; as in some sense, St James saith, 'there is a world of wickedness in the tongue,' James iii. 6. If in the tongue, much more in the heart, which is the sink of wickedness. But put the case, there were a world of wickedness in one man, what is this to the satisfaction of 'God manifest in the flesh,' and to the infinite love of God, now pacified in Christ, looking upon us in the face of his beloved Son? You see here Christ is 'believed on in the world.' Do but consider what is meant by the world in Scripture, how it is set down to be in an opposite state to Christ, and look to the particular state of the Gentiles,

that are said to be the world. What wretched people were the Corinthians before they believed, and the Ephesians, and the rest!

Let no man therefore despair; nor, as I said before, let us not despair of the conversion of those that are savages in other parts. How bad soever they be, they are of the world, and if the gospel be preached to them, Christ will be 'believed on in the world.' Christ's almighty power goeth with his own ordinance to make it effectual. Since the coming of Christ, the world lies before Christ, as beloved of him, some in all nations. The gospel is like the sea: what it loseth in one place it gaineth in another. So the truth of God, if it lose in one part—if it be not respected—it gets in another, till it have gone over the whole world.

And when the fulness of the Gentiles is come in, then comes the conversion of the Jews. Why may we not expect it? They were the people of God. We see Christ 'believed on in the world.' We may therefore expect that they shall also be called, there being many of them, and keeping their nation distinct from others.

Now, I shall shew how this is a mystery. 'Great is the mystery of godliness, Christ believed on in the world.' This is a great mystery to join these together: 'the world' and 'believing.' It is almost as great a mystery as to join God and man together; a virgin and a mother; to bring an unbelieving rebellious heart, such as is in the world, and believing together. It is a great mystery in divers considerations.

1. First, if we consider what the world was, an opposite and enemy to Christ; and under his enemy, being slaves to Satan, being idolaters, in love with their own inventions, which men naturally dote on; here was the wonder of God's love and mercy, that he should vouchsafe it to such wretches. We may see by St Paul's epistles what kind of people they were before they embraced the gospel. Here was God's wondrous dignation, that God should shine upon them that 'sat in darkness, and in the shadow of death,' that were abused by Satan at his will. That the world, that is, all sorts of the world, from the highest to the lowest, should at length stoop to the cross of Christ; that the emperors should lay their crowns at Christ's feet, as Constantine and others—Christ at length subdued the Roman empire itself to the faith; that the philosophers of the world, that were witty and learned, should at length come to embrace the gospel—for divers of the fathers were philosophers before; that men of great place, of great parts, and learning, and education, and breeding, should deny all, and cast all prostrate at the feet of Christ; for

these to be overcome by plain preaching; for meanness to overcome mightiness; for ignorance to overcome knowledge; yet, notwithstanding, these great and wise men of the world were overcome by the gospel.

It was a mystery that the world should believe. If we consider, besides their greatness and wisdom, the inward malicious disposition of the world, being in the strong man's possession, for these men to believe the gospel, surely it must needs be a great mystery.

2. Again, if we consider the parties that carried the gospel, whereby the world was subdued—a company of weak men, unlearned men, none of the deepest for knowledge, only they had the Holy Ghost to teach and instruct, to strengthen and fortify them,—which the world took no notice of,—men of mean condition, of mean esteem, and few in number: and these men they came not with weapons, or outward defence, but merely with the word, and with sufferings. Their weapons were nothing but patience, and preaching, offering the word of Christ to them, and suffering indignities; as St Austin saith, 'The world was not overcome by fighting, but by suffering'. So the lambs overcame the lions, the doves overcame the birds of prey, the-sheep overcame the wolves. 'I send you,' saith Christ, 'as sheep among wolves;' and how? By nothing but by carrying a message, and suffering constantly and undauntedly for going with their message; for they had cruel bloody laws made against them, that were executed to the utmost; yet by these means they overcame by preaching, and sealing the truth that they taught by suffering—a strange kind of conquest. The Turks conquer to their religion, but it is by violent means; it is a religion of blood. But here, as I said, meanness overcame greatness, ignorance overcame learning, simplicity overcame pride, baseness overcame glory; a mystery in this respect.

'S. Again, If we consider the truth that they taught, being contrary to the nature of man, contrary to his affections; to enforce self-denial to men that naturally are full of self-love, that make an idol of their wit and will; for them to come to be taught to be fools, in respect of wit, and to resign up their wills to the will of another—for these men to believe things that are above belief to carnal men, as St Austin observes, it was the wonder of the world. What a kind of doctrine was this, to win such entertainment in the world as it did! Yet it did make men deny themselves, deny their wits, their wills, their goods, their lives. Therefore in this respect it was a great mystery that Christ should be 'believed on in the world.'

4. Again, If we consider another circumstance, it adds to the mystery; that is, the suddenness of the conquest. The world was conquered to the faith and obedience of Christ. In a short time after Christ, one man, St Paul, spread the gospel almost all the world over; he conquered almost all the world; he spread the savour of the gospel like lightning, suddenly and strongly, because there was an almighty power and Spirit accompanying the glorious gospel; and thereupon it came to be thus effectual with the world.

5. Again, It is a wonder in respect of Christ, whom the world 'believed on.' What was Christ? Indeed, he was the Son of God, but he appeared in abased flesh, in the form of a 'servant.' He was crucified. And for the proud world to believe in a crucified Saviour, it was a mystery.

6. Lastly, It is a great mystery, especially in respect of faith itself, faith being so contrary to the nature of man. For the heart of man, where faith is wrought, to go out of itself, and to embrace a beginning, and principle, and rising of life from another; to seek justification and salvation by the righteousness and obedience of another; for the proud heart of man to stoop to this, to acknowledge no righteousness of its own to stand before the tribunal of God, but to have all derived from Jesus Christ; to fetch forgiveness of sins out of the death of another; to wrap itself in the righteousness and obedience of Christ, given of God for it: the heart of man, without a supernatural work of the Spirit to subdue it, will never yield to this, because proud flesh and blood will alway have somewhat in itself to dote upon, and to set it out before God; and when it finds nothing in itself, then it despairs. For the heart of man thus to go out of itself, and rely only upon the righteousness of Christ, not having its own righteousness, this is the greatest mystery. Especially for a guilty soul, that hath its eyes opened to discern of its own estate; for a conscience awakened to trust in God, being a holy God, a just God; for these two to meet together, God, and a doubting, galled, misgiving conscience, forecasting the worst; for such a conscience to find peace by this act of faith casting itself upon Christ, this is more than can be done by any power of nature.

There is somewhat in nature for all legal obedience. Man naturally hath some seeds, to love his parents, to hate murder, and the like; but to go out of himself, and cast himself upon God's love and mercy in Christ, there is no seeds of this in nature, but all against faith in Christ. Ofttimes when a man is cast down, all in the world seems to make against him; and then for a man to have his heart raised up by an almighty power to 'believe,' certainly this must

be a mystery. I say, when all makes against him; his conscience makes against him, and the judgment of God against him, and Satan's temptations against him—all the frame of things present seems to be against him—God himself ofttimes seems to be against him, to be an offended God, justly offended with his sins. For the soul in this case to cast itself upon God in Christ, there must needs be a hidden and excellent deep work on the soul. This is the greatest mystery. The greatest difficulty is in this branch, considering how contrary to the heart of man faith is.

Let us take hoed of shallow conceits of faith, as if it were an easy common universal grace to 'believe.' No, beloved! It is a supernatural powerful work. Saint Paul sets it out divinely and largely in Eph. i. 18. He calls it the 'mighty power of God.' It requires not only a power, but an almighty power, to raise the heart of man to believe. For even as the work of redemption by Christ is a greater work in itself than the work of creation, so also the work of conversion.

1. Though they be all one to an infinite power, yet the thing itself is more difficult, to make the heart of man to believe, than to make a world of nothing; for when God made the world there was nothing to oppose. There he had to do with simply nothing. But when God comes to make the heart believe, he finds opposition and rebellion. He finds man against himself. He finds the heart and conscience against itself. He finds opposition from Satan, that helps man's distrustful heart. Then all meet together, afflictions, the sense of God's anger and man's guilty conscience. Now to make such a man believe, is more than to create a world.

2. And as God showed more power, so he showed more mercy in the work of redemption than in the creation. In the creation there he did good to a good man; Adam was created good, and he should, had he stood, have continued in a good condition. But in the work of redemption God doth good to evil men. God transcends in his love, because the glory of his mercy reigns in the work of redemption; so that the power, and wisdom, and mercy being greater in the work of redemption, it requires a more supernatural power in the soul to apprehend this than any other truth. As the work in redemption is more glorious, so the divine grace and virtue in the soul, that makes use of this, which is faith, it must be more excellent than all other graces whatsoever. And as it must be God that must save and redeem us, so it must be God that must persuade the heart of this. As Christ, who is God, must perform the work of redemption, so it must be God the Holy Ghost

that must persuade the heart, that God loves it so much, and raise the heart to apprehend it, and make use of it; no less power will do it. Let us, I say, have great conceits of this excellent grace of faith. 'All men have not faith,' 2 Thes. iii. 2. It is a rare grace, a rare jewel. When Christ comes, 'shall he find faith in the world?' Luke xviii. 8. Certainly it is a mystery for a man to believe in Christ, for a natural man to be brought to rely upon Christ. 'To you it is given to believe,' saith the apostle, Mat. xiii. 11. He might well say, it is 'given.' It is no ordinary gift neither. Therefore let us pray with the disciples, 'Lord, increase our faith,' Luke xvii. 5; and with the poor man in the gospel, 'Lord, I believe, help my unbelief,' Mat. ix. 24.

The next thing I shall touch shall be this, that faith is put here for all graces. Here, in these six clauses of this 'great mystery of godliness,' there is only this one that is within us. 'God manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached to the Gentiles, received up in glory'— these are all without us. But this one, 'believed on in the world,' that is only within us, and it is set down instead of all, and indeed so it is; for it draws all other graces after it. It enlivens and quickens the soul. It is the spring of spiritual life in us. It is the first grace of all. There are some degrees of the Spirit perhaps before it; but all graces have their quickening from faith. It infuseth supernatural vigour into all the parts and powers of the soul, and into all graces whatsoever. Where Christ is 'believed on in the world,' all follows, love and patience, and courage and fortitude whatsoever; as we see in Heb. xi. 2, 'By faith they had a good report.' They had a good report for patience and for courage, and other good works; but all these came from faith. Therefore, 'by faith they had a good report.' Therefore the acting of all other graces, it comes from faith. By faith, 'Enoch walked with God;' by faith, Noah and Moses did so and so, signifying that faith is the ground of all. Faith it fetcheth spiritual life from Christ for all, whatsoever is good; it knits us to the spring of life, Christ; it is the grace of union. Even as Satan, by unbelief, did infuse all his poison at the first; for by making our first parents stagger in the word of God came sin; so by faith all obedience comes; all have their rising and beginning from faith.

As it draws spiritual life from Christ, so the encouragements are by faith, to all other graces whatsoever, for patience and love, &c. Faith must set before them the object and the reasons from the glory to come, from the love of God in Christ. When faith propounds all this, then it stirs and quickens all graces. Faith yields strong reasons and discourse, to stir us up to whatsoever is necessary. Why do I hope for the glory to come? I believe it

first. Why do I love God? I believe he is my Father, in Christ. All have strength from love, and that from faith: unless I believe that God loves me in Christ, I cannot love him; unless I love him, I can express no virtue for him, no patience, no good work. So it puts life into all; therefore it is here put for all, 'believed on in the world.' It should stir us up to make much of this faith; above all graces to desire it.

And being a mystery, and so excellent a grace, we have need to discern whether we have it or no. Therefore I will touch a few evidences, some of them out of the text.

1. First, If you believe, it conies usually after preaching. We see here, 'preached to the Gentiles,' and then 'believed on in the world.' Whence came thy faith? If not by the ordinance of God, thou mayest expect it to be a bastard faith; it hath not a right beginning; especially if it be joined with contempt of God's ordinance, it is no faith, but a presumptuous conceit. Preaching and believing here go one after another. Therefore examine how thy faith was wrought in thy heart.

2. Again, as I said, faith being a mystery in regard of such a world of opposition between the heart of man and Christ, Satan helping the unbelieving heart, here must needs be a strife and conflict with faith. Therefore those men that never had conflict with their own unbelieving heart, that never had conflict with Satan's temptations, they never had faith; for it is a mystery to have faith. It is with opposition and conflict. No grace hath the like conflict and opposition from Satan; for Satan aims, in all sins, to shake our faith and affiance in God's love. As God aims at the strengthening of faith above all, so the devil hates it above all, and in all temptations whatsoever he aims to shake our faith at the last. Therefore there must needs be opposition to ourselves and our own doubting nature, and to Satan's temptations, and to the course of things, that sometimes are clean opposite to a man. For a sinner to believe the forgiveness of sins; for a miserable man to believe glory in the world to come; for a dying man to believe life eternal; for a man tumbled into the grave to believe that he shall rise from the dead: if there be no conflict with these things, so opposite to faith, there is no faith.

3. Then again, in the third place, it is the spring of all obedience. The apostle calls it the obedience of faith, Rom. i. 5. All preaching is for the obedience of faith. Obedience of faith brings obedience of life and conversation. Examine thyself, therefore, by the course of thy obedience, by

that that comes from faith. See what it works in thy soul, in thy life and conversation. And here I might be very large; for where faith is,

(1.) First of all, after it hath been a means to justify, to lay hold upon the all-sufficient righteousness of Christ, to stand between God and us, to clothe and cover our souls, then it pacifieth the conscience. 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through Jesus Christ our Lord,' Rom. v. 1. Faith hath a quieting power. It quiets the soul, because it propounds to the soul a sufficient satisfaction in God-man. It propounds to the soul Christ sealed by God the Father. Having done all that is necessary to salvation, it sets down the soul: for he was God, and therefore able; and man, and therefore willing to save. Faith sets Christ as wooing us first; in his ministers inviting us, alluring us, commanding us, removing objections from our unworthiness. 'Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden,' Mat. xi. 28; and objections from our want of any goodness: 'Come and buy without money,' Isa. lv. 1, the all-sufficiency of Christ. Hereupon faith comes to quiet the soul, in the sweet course that Christ takes to bring the soul to him, being so able and willing, and showing his willingness by all means that may procure love, that the soul may rest without doubting. Saith the soul, Surely Christ intends well to me, being so able, 'God in the flesh,' and setting up an ordinance, a ministry, whereby he invites me, and allures me, and commands me; and then also I have examples before me, of wicked men that have been converted: hereupon the soul comes to be at rest. Faith hath a quieting power.

(2.) And then again, there is presently an alteration of the course: Jordan goes backward; there is a turning of a man wholly; for faith is a turning of the soul clean another way. It turns the soul from the world to God and Christ, from the present evil world to a better world. We see as soon as Zaccheus believed, his thoughts were altered, his esteem of the things of this life was altered; 'half my goods I give to the poor,' Luke xix. 8. We see in the Acts of the Apostles, as soon as they believed, they burned their books, Acts xix. 19. As soon as a man believes in Christ, down goes the esteem of the world, and all worldly things whatsoever, because he sees a higher excellency in Christ. The poor jailer, when he had misused the apostles, as soon as he believed, we see how he neglects all, and makes a feast for them presently.

(3.) As soon as faith enters into the soul, there is a mean and base esteem of all things, and a high esteem of Christ. 'All is dung, in comparison of Christ,' Philip, iii. 8. There is a change of the soul, and an esteem that goes

before that change. We work as we esteem. As soon as we believe, we esteem Christ, and the things of a better life, above all other things; and thereupon goes the whole soul, and the bent of it, that way, though with some conflict. We see in the epistles of St Paul, before those men believed in Christ, the Ephesians, the Colossians, the Romans, Ac., what wicked people they were before, and how they were changed, as soon as they believed; then they were saints.

(4.) Again, Where this faith is, it is a triumphing, a conquering grace, a prevailing grace. It overcomes the world and whatsoever is opposite, for it sets before the soul greater things than the world can. The world presents terrors. What are these 'to the glory that shall be revealed?' The world sets out pleasures to allure us, and profits, and favours, and this and that; but what are all these to the favour of God in Christ? what are they to heaven? What can the world set before the soul of a believer that is not beneath? Faith can raise the soul above all worldly things. It subdues the natural doubts and loves, the fears of troubles and cares for the world, and all the affections that were before ruling in the soul. Faith coming into the soul subdues all to itself, and makes them all serviceable. Thus it prevails, if not at the first, yet in the continuance of time. It prevails by little and little in the hearts of all believers. It is a victorious grace, as we see in Moses and Abraham, Ac., how it prevailed against all obstacles whatsoever. How many discouragements had blessed Abraham to leave his father's house, and to go he knew not where, and after to sacrifice his son! Yet faith overcame all. So Moses to leave the court, and to cleave to a despised people, what a work of faith was there! Faith is victorious. Therefore when people are drawn away with anything, that the looks of any man scares them, that the very noise of danger affrights them; when the hope of any rising will make them warp to do anything, when the hope of any gain will make them crack their conscience; where is the triumph of faith? As I said before, there is a prevailing power in faith, because faith sets before the soul that which is incomparably better and incomparably worse. What is all that man can do in comparison of hell and damnation? Conscience saith, If yon do this, ye shall die. And on the other side, what is all the world can give, in comparison of heaven, which faith presents to the eye of the believer?

(5.) Again, Where this believing is, it is a working grace; it works by love. By the love to God it desires the communion and fellowship of that it desires, and it works by love to other believers. It works towards Satan hatred, toward wicked men strangeness in conversation. It is a working grace.

It works by love, to all good, to God and God's people, and to ourselves. It makes us have too high esteem of ourselves to be stained with the base services of sin. It works every way; and indeed it must needs be so, when faith sets before the soul the love of God in Christ: Hath God loved me so, to redeem me from such misery by such a course as this, 'God manifest in the flesh,' to advance me to such happiness, being, such as I was before, a sinner? Oh the thought of this will constrain us, as the phrase of the apostle is, 'The love of Christ constraineth me,' 2 Cor. v. 11; and then the soul will be active and earnest in anything that may be for the honour of Christ. Hath Christ thought nothing too dear for me, not his own blood, for the salvation of my soul is the price of his blood? He came down from heaven, he was 'God manifest in the flesh,' on purpose, in love to my soul; and shall I think anything too dear for him? And hereupon faith works and stirs up love, and when it is stirred up by it, it is acted by it; it useth the love of God in all the performance of worship to God, and in doing all good to our brethren and to ourselves, to carry ourselves as we should every way.

We see the woman in the Gospel, Luke vii. 47, when she had much forgiven her, 'she loved much.' All duties come from love. What need I speak of particular branches? Christ brings all to love. He includes all duties in that one, in love, because they come from love, and have love to carry them, and to mingle itself with them; and love comes from faith. 'Faith working by love' evidenceth that we believe, Gal. v. 6. Where there is no love there is no faith. Therefore let us labour to have this affection of love kindled. If we would have love kindled, we must stir it up by faith. You see then that this believing is the leading grace.

Let us labour by all means therefore to water this root. When we would have trees flourish and thrive, we pour water to the roots of them. Now, the radical grace in a Christian's soul is this believing, this trusting in God reconciled in Christ, this relying upon Christ; a convincing persuasion that God and Christ are mine. This is the radical grace of all other. Let us water and cherish this by all means whatsoever.

And to this end, let us labour to increase in knowledge. 'I know whom I have believed,' saith the apostle, 2 Tim. i. 12, for all grace comes into the soul by the light of knowledge. Whatsoever is good is conveyed by light into the heart. Faith especially is the bent of the will to Christ, receiving him; but this comes by a supernatural light, discovering Christ. Therefore let us desire to hear much of Christ, of his privileges and promises. The more of Christ we

know, the more we shall believe, and say with the apostle, 'I know whom I have believed,' 2 Tim. i. 12.

It is a fond and wicked tenet of the papists, to say that ignorance is the mother of devotion; and Bellarmine's tenet is, that 'faith is better defined by ignorance than by anything else'—a fond and unlearned conceit. For howsoever the reason and depth of the things of faith cannot be searched, yet we may know the things that are revealed in the Scriptures. The more I know the things that are revealed concerning Christ, and know that they are God's truths, the more I know, the more I shall believe. Faith of necessity requires knowledge; therefore knowledge is put for all other graces. 'This is eternal life, to know thee, and whom thou hast sent,' John xvii. 3, because it is an ingredient in all graces. It is a main ingredient in faith. The more we know, the more we shall believe. 'They that know thy name will trust in thee,' Ps. ix. 10. Is it not so in men's matters? The more we know a man to be able and loving and faithful of his word, the more we shall trust him. Is it not so in divine things? The more we know of Christ and of his riches and truth, the more experimental knowledge we have of him, that we find him to be so, the more we shall trust him. Therefore, by the knowledge that is gotten by the means, let us labour for an experimental knowledge, that so we may trust and believe in him more and more. Let us look to the passages of our lives in former times, how gracious God hath been towards us, and take in trust the time to come, that he will be so to the end. 'He is the author and finisher of our faith,' Heb. xii. 2. And let us search into the depth of our own wants and weaknesses; and this will force us to grow in faith more and more. This will be a means to increase our faith. The more we see of our own nothingness and inability, without Christ, that we are nothing, nay, that we are miserable without him, the more we shall cleave to him and cast ourselves upon him. Those that have the deepest apprehensions of their own wants and weakness, usually they have the deepest apprehensions of Christ, and grow more and more rooted in him. The searching of our own corruptions every day is a notable means to grow in faith, to consider what we are, if it were not for God's mercy in Christ; and this will make us to make out of ourselves to Christ, it will make us fly to the city of refuge. Joab, when he was pursued, he fled to the horns of the altar, 1 Kings ii. 28. When conscience pursues us, it will make us fly to the horns of the altar, to the city of refuge. A search into our own conscience and ways will force us to live by faith and to exercise faith every day in Christ Jesus.

And this is to feed on Christ daily, to fly to Christ, when we are stung with sin, and hunger, in the want of grace and strength, to fly to him for supply; and so to keep and increase faith by this excellent means. Christ is all in all to those that hope to be saved by him. Christ is the ground of our life and comfort, and our happiness. Therefore we should make out to him upon all occasions, to cleave to him in life and death. We cannot press this point of faith too much. Why are Christians called believers? Because believing is all. If we can prove the truth of our faith and belief, we prove all. If we be faulty in that, all is rotten. 'Whatsoever is without faith is sin,' Rom. xiv. 23. All men's natural morality and civility, it is, as it were, but copper graces; but counterfeits. They are but for the outward appearance, and not in truth. They are not enlivened and quickened by faith in Christ. But I leave this, and come to the last clause, 'Received up in glory.'

This is the last branch of this divine 'mystery of godliness,' but it is none of the least. Christ 'ascended,' if we respect himself; he was 'received,' if we look to his Father;' himself 'ascended,' his Father 'received' him. The Scripture hath both words: ἀνέβη, he 'ascended up,' that is, for himself; ἀνελήφθη, he was 'received up,' that is, he was assumpted.'

There is no difficulty in the words. He 'ascended up' as well as he was 'received up,' positively as well as passively. In his death, he was not only crucified by others, and delivered by his Father, but he gave himself to death; so he was not only 'received up in glory,' but he 'ascended up into glory.' This shows the exaltation of Christ. The apostle begins with 'God manifest in the flesh.' There is the descent; a great mystery, for the great God to descend into the womb of a virgin, to descend to the ' lowest part of the earth,' Ps. lxxxvi. 13; and then he ends with this, 'received up in glory.' The ascent is from whence the descent was. Christ ascended, and was 'received' as high as the place was whence he came down. 'Received up to glory.' 'Glory' implies three things. It is an exemption from that which is opposite, and a conquering over the contrary base condition. It implies some great eminency and excellency as the foundation of it, and then a manifestation of that excellency; and it implies victory over all opposition. Though there be excellency, if there be not a manifestation of that excellency, it is not 'glory.' Christ was inwardly glorious, while he was on earth in the state of abasement. He had true glory, as he was God and man; but there was not a manifestation of it, and therefore it is not properly called 'glory.' There was not a victory, and subduing of all that was contrary to his glory; for he was abased, and suffered in the garden, and died. But where these three are, —an exemption

and freedom from all baseness, and all that may diminish reckoning and estimation, and when there is a foundation of true excellency, and likewise a shining, a declaring and breaking forth of that excellency,—there is glory. But Christ, after he was 'manifest in the flesh,' and had done the work here that he had to do, he was 'received up to glory;' that is, all baseness was laid aside.

His glory appearing, all abasement did vanish; he was victorious over that for, in his resurrection, that was the first degree of his glory. You know, the cloths that he was bound with were left in the grave, the stone was removed. All things that might hinder his glory, that might abase him in body, in soul, or condition, they were removed.

There was an excellency in all that was not before, in regard of manifestation. For his body, it was now impassible, an immortal, spiritual body. It could suffer no longer. It was not fed with meat and drink, as in the time of his abasement. It was a body so agile and so nimble, that he could move even as he would himself. So there was a glory put upon his body above the sun. There was a glory upon the soul. All that might hinder that, was subdued; for there was no sorrow, no fear, nor grief, as there was in his soul before he was glorified. So both in body and soul, he was more glorious.

And then for his whole condition, that was glorious. He was abased no longer, for now he was taken into the highest place of all, above the heavens; and as his place is most eminent, so his government is most eminent. For he is taken up there 'above all principalities and powers,' as it is Eph. i. 20, and 'is gloriously set down at the right hand of God', 1 Peter iii. 22. All being subject to him, he hath the domination and government of all. So that whatsoever might shadow and cloud him, all ills, either in body, in soul, or condition, all was removed, and he was glorious in all.

For excellency, the foundation of glory, that was always with him in his very abasement, but now it was 'manifested.' He was 'mightily declared to be the Son of God, by raising himself from the dead,' Rom. i. 4. He was declared to be glorious in all those things wherein he could be glorious. As no person can be glorious but either it must be in body or soul or condition, he was glorious in all; for he was 'received up' into the place of 'glory,' to heaven, to the assembly of glory, to the presence of his Father and the blessed saints and angels, and no question but there was a glorious welcome. If the angels came so cheerfully to proclaim his incarnation when he was born, and sang, 'Glory be to God on high, on earth peace, and good will towards men,' Luke ii. 14, what kind of triumph do you think was made by

all the blessed company in heaven when he was entertained thither after his abasement? It is beyond our conceits to imagine.

It will not be altogether unuseful to speak of the circumstances of Christ's being 'taken up to glory.'

1. Whence was he taken? He was taken 'up to glory,' from mount Olivet, where he used to pray, and where he sweat water and blood, where he was humbled. From the place of humiliation was his ascension to glory, showing unto us that the place ofttimes where we pray, where we are afflicted, our sick-beds, nay, the places of our abasement, the very prisons, they may be as mount Olivet to us, from whence God will take us to glory. Let no man, therefore, fear any abasement; it may prove as mount Olivet to him in this respect.

2. And when was he taken 'up to glory?' Not before he had finished his work, as he saith, John xvii. 4, 'I have finished the work thou gavest me to do.' Then he was taken up, when he had done all, when he had accomplished our salvation; and after his abasement, not before. So our taking 'up to glory,' it must be when we have done our 'work,' when we have finished our 'course,' when we have run our 'race,' when we have 'fought the good fight.' And also after our abasement. We must first 'suffer' with Christ, before we can be 'glorified' with him. Again, if we speak of the first degree of Christ's glory, his resurrection: he was taken 'up to glory' when he was at the lowest that could be, when he was in the grave. So God's church and children, at the lowest they are nearest to glory. We use to say, Things when they are at the worst are nearest mending. So is the state and condition of the church of God, and every particular Christian. When he is lowest he is nearest rising, as we shall see afterwards.

3. The witnesses of this were the angels. They proclaimed his incarnation with joy; and without doubt they were much more joyful at his ascending up to glory. It was in the presence of the angels. So likewise, when he shall come to manifest his glory at the day of judgment, there will be 'innumerable thousands of angels.' Those glorious creatures were witnesses of his glory, and no question but they yielded their joyful attendance and service, that were so willing to attend him at his birth and coming into the world.

4. He was carried up in the clouds, in which also he shall come again at the last day.

But before he was taken up 'to glory' he was forty days on earth, to give evidence to his apostles and disciples of his resurrection, and to instruct and furnish them in things concerning their callings; afterwards he was taken 'up to glory.' And in all that time of his abode on earth, after his first degree of glory, his resurrection, he was never seen of sinful eye for anything we see in Scripture—I mean of those that were scorners of him, that despised him. The Scribes and Pharisees and carnal people did not see him. They had no commerce of all with him after his resurrection. They that despised him in his abasement had no comfort by his exaltation.

But that which I will chiefly press in this clause shall be to shew, that, as this is a mystery, so how it is a 'mystery of godliness' to stir us up to godliness; for, as I said before, divine truths and principles they are called 'godliness,' because, where they are embraced, they work godliness, the soul is transformed into them. Where these truths are 'engrafted in the soul,' as St Peter saith, they turn the soul into their own nature. Therefore I will shew how this mystery, Christ 'received up to glory,' breeds a frame of godliness in the heart.

That it is a mystery it will easily appear. For was it a 'great mystery' that God should take our nature upon him, to be abased in it? Surely it must needs be a mystery that God will be glorified in our nature. Was our nature advanced in his incarnation? Much more was it glorified in his exaltation, when he carried it to heaven with him. Hero was the mystery of the exaltation of our nature. God was as much abased as he could be, being born and dying for us. Our human nature was as much advanced as it could be, when God raised it up to heaven. God could be no more abased, remaining God; and man's nature can be no more advanced, remaining the true nature of man. This is a 'great mystery,' the advancement of our nature in Christ, that was made 'lower than the angels;' he was 'a worm, and no man.' Now our nature in Christ is advanced above the angels. Now this nature of ours in Christ, it is next to the nature of God in dignity; hero is a mystery.

Among many other respects it is a mystery for the greatness of it. We see after his ascension, when he appeared to Paul in glory, a glimpse of it struck Paul down; he could not endure it. Nay, before he suffered, a very shadow of his glory, it amazed Peter and James and John; they could not bear it; they forgot themselves: 'Let us build,' say they, 'three tabernacles,' &c. If a little discovery of his glory on earth wrought these effects, what great glory is it then that he hath in heaven! Certainly it is beyond all expression.

In this glorious condition that Christ is received into, he fulfils all his offices in a most comfortable manner. He is a glorious prophet, to send his Spirit now to teach and open the heart. He is a glorious priest, to appear before God in the holy of holies, in heaven for us, for ever; and he is a king there for ever. From thence he rules his church and subdues his enemies. So that though he accomplished and fulfilled those blessed offices that were appointed him in the state of humiliation on earth, as it became that state to suffer for us, yet it was necessary that he should enter into glory, to manifest that he was a king, priest, and prophet; for he was not manifested who he was, indeed, to our comfort, till he was 'received up in glory.' We had not the Spirit, the Holy Ghost, sent from above till he ascended; as it is in John vii. 89, 'The Holy Ghost was not given, because Christ was not ascended,' to apply and to help us make use of Christ and all his benefits and riches. So that in regard of the manifestation of Christ's offices, and of application of all the good we have by it, it is by Christ 'received up in glory.' To come to some application.

1. First of all, we must lay this for a ground and foundation of what follows, that Christ ascended as a public person. He must not be considered as a particular person, alone by himself, but as the 'second Adam.' As he took the nature of man in his incarnation, so he ascended into heaven in it, as a public person. As the first Adam was, in whom we all sinned, and all came to misery and baseness, and died, so Christ must be considered as the 'second Adam,' as in other things, so in his ascension to glory.

2. In the second place, we must know that there is a wondrous nearness between Christ and us now; for before we can think of any comfort by the 'glory of Christ,' we must be one with him by faith, for he is the saviour of his body. Therefore we must be in him, we must be his members, we must be his spouse; and being so once, we are one with Christ. There is no relation in the world that is able to express the nearness between Christ and us sufficiently; and therefore, when we speak of Christ ascending into glory, we must needs think of ourselves, and of our glory and advancement. He was taken up to glory in our nature, not only for himself but for all his. As the husband of the church, he is gone before, to take up heaven for his wife. As a husband takes up land in another country for his spouse, though she be not there, Christ hath taken up heaven for us: 'I go before to prepare a place for you,' John xiv. 3. So likewise he is in heaven as a glorious head, ministering virtue, and comfort, and strength to all his. All our power and strength, it comes from Christ now, as our head in heaven.

8. Again, There is a causality, the force of a cause in this; because Christ, therefore we. Here is not only a priority of order, but a cause likewise; and there is great reason. Was there the force of a cause in Adam, that was but mere man, to convey sin and misery, and the displeasure of God to all that are born and descend of him? and is there not the force of a cause in the 'second Adam,' to convey grace and glory to his, he being God and man? Therefore, whatsoever is good, it is first in Christ and then in us. Christ first rose, therefore we shall rise; he ascended into glory, therefore we shall be afterward in glory.

4. And then we must consider Christ not only as an efficient cause, but as a pattern and example how we shall be 'glorified.' He is not only the efficient of all glory within and without, but he is the exemplary cause; for all is first in him and then in us. He was first abased, and so must we; and then he was glorified, and so shall we. We must be conformable to his abasement, and then to his glory. 'He is the first-fruits of them that sleep,' 1 Cor. xv. 20; he being the first-fruits, we succeed. These things being premised as grounds, I come to make some use of this comfortable point.

Use 1. Christ is received up in glory; therefore, first of all, for our information, we must not seek him in a wafer-cake, we must not look for him in the sacrament bodily: how can he be there when he is 'received up in glory'? Therefore when we come to the sacrament, let us consider we have now to deal with Christ who is in heaven. Cannot Christ shew his virtue to comfort and strengthen us, but we must have his body in the communion to touch our bodies? The foot hath influence from the head, yet the head is distant from it in place. The utmost branches have life and sap from the root, yet they are remote in respect of place. A king spreads his influence over his whole kingdom, though it be never so large, yet he is but in one place, in respect of his person. Doth the sun in the heavens come down to the earth to make the spring, and to make all fruitful? Cannot he send beams and influence from thence to cherish the earth? Must Christ come down in his body to us, or else he can do us no good? Must there be a corporeal descent, or else we can receive no influence from him? There may he a derivation of virtue from Christ though his person be in heaven; where he shall remain till the last day, when he shall come to be 'glorious in his saints.' The sun doth more good being in heaven, than he could do if he were on the earth. If the sun were lower, what would become of the earth? But being so remote, and so far above, he hath opportunity to shine over the greatest part of the earth at once; being greater than the earth, he shineth over more than half the

earth at once. Christ being in heaven, as the 'Sun of righteousness,' he shines more gloriously over all; and we have more comfort, and benefit, and influence from Christ, now in heaven, than we could if he were on earth. Must we needs make him bodily present everywhere, as the papists do, and other heterodox strange conceited men in Germany? What need we do thus when there may he influence from Christ, now in heaven, to us on earth,—as we see in other things,—without confusion of his divine properties to his body, or making his body as his Godhead is? Therefore seek him not bodily anywhere but in heaven. Those opinions overthrow three articles of our faith at once: 'He ascended into heaven;' 'He sitteth at the right hand of God and, 'He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.' And where is his body in the mean time? in the sacrament? No. He is 'received up in glory.' Therefore we must have our thoughts in heaven when we are about that business. We must 'lift up our hearts,' as it is in our liturgy, which is taken out of the ancient liturgy, 'We lift them up unto the Lord.' We must have holy thoughts raised up to Christ in heaven.

Use 2. Again, Is Christ 'received up to glory'? Here is singular comfort, considering what I said before, that he is ascended as a public person, in our behalf, in our nature, for our good. Therefore, when we think of Christ in heaven, think of our husband in heaven, think of ourselves in heaven: 'We are set together in heavenly places with Christ,' as the apostle saith, Eph. i. 20. We have a glorious life, but it is hid with Christ, in heaven. When Christ himself shall be revealed, our life shall he revealed. Though we creep upon the earth as worms, yet notwithstanding we have communion and fellowship with Christ, who is joined with us in the same mystical body; who is now 'at the right hand of God' in heaven; and he that hath glorified his natural body in heaven, that he took upon him, he will glorify his mystical body; for he took flesh and blood, his natural body, for the glory of his mystical body, that he might bring his church to glory. Therefore, we ought as verily to believe that he will take his mystical body, and every particular member of it, to heaven, as he hath taken his natural body, and hath set it there in glory.

It is a comfort, in the hour of death, that we yield up our souls to Christ, who is gone before to provide a place for us. This was one end of his taking up to heaven, to provide a place for us. Therefore, when we die, we have not a place to seek. Our house is provided beforehand. Christ was taken up to glory to provide glory for us. Even as paradise was provided for Adam before he was made, so we have a heavenly paradise provided for us. We had a place in heaven before we were born. What a comfort is this at the hour of

death, and at the death of our friends, that they are gone to Christ and to glory! We were shut out of the first paradise by the first Adam. Our comfort is, that now the heavenly paradise in Christ is open: 'This day shalt thou he with me in paradise,' saith Christ to the good thief, Luke xxiii. 48. There was an angel to keep paradise when Adam was shut out; but there is none to keep us out of heaven; nay, the angels are ready to convey our souls to heaven, as they did Lazarus, and as they accompanied Christ in his ascension to heaven, so they do the souls of his children.

Likewise, In our sins and infirmities. When we have to deal with God the Father, whom we have offended with our sins, let us fetch comfort from hence. Christ is ascended into heaven, to appear before his Father as a mediator for us; and, therefore, God turns away his wrath from us. We have a friend, a favourite in the court of heaven, the Son of God himself, at his Father's 'right hand he makes intercession for us. As Jonathan appeared in Saul's court to speak a good word and to plead for David, so our Jonathan, Jesus Christ, but with far better success, appears in the court of heaven for us, continuing our peace with God in our daily breaches, perfuming our prayers. And there is no danger of his death, for 'he is a priest for ever at the right hand of God,' to make intercession for us; his very presenting himself in heaven speaks for us. As if he should say, These persons that ask in my name, they are such persons as I was horn for; such as I obeyed for; such as I died for; such as I was sent into the world to work the great work of redemption for; for he wrought our redemption in his abased estate; but he applies it as he is exalted. Application is as necessary as merit. We have no good by the work of redemption, without application: and for that end he appears in heaven for us and pleads for us. For even as there is speech attributed to Abel's blood—it cried, 'Vengeance, vengeance!'—so Christ appearing now in heaven for us, his blood cries, 'Mercy, mercy! These are those I shed my blood for; Mercy, Lord!' The very appearing of him that shed his blood, it cries for mercy at the throne of mercy, which is therefore a throne of mercy because he is there. He shed his blood to satisfy justice, to make way for mercy.

In the law, the high priest, after he had offered a sacrifice of blood, he was to go into the 'holy of holies;' so Christ, after he had offered himself for a sacrifice, he went into the 'holy of holies,' into heaven, to appear before God. And as the high priest, when he went into the holy of holies, he had the names of the twelve tribes on his breast, to shew that he appeared before God for them all, so Christ being gone into the 'holy of holies,' into heaven,

he hath all our names upon his breast; that is, in his heart the name of every particular believer, to the end of the world; to present them before God. Therefore, when we have to deal with God, think of Christ, now glorious in heaven, appearing for us; God can deny him nothing, nor deny us anything that we ask in his name; we have his promise for it.

It is a ground likewise of contentment in ail conditions, whatsoever our wants he. What if we want comfort, houses, &c., on earth, when we have heaven provided for us, and glory provided for us; when we are already so glorious in our Head? Shall not any condition content a man in this world, that hath such a glorious condition in the eye of faith to enter into? We should not so much as look up to heaven without comfort: Yonder is my Saviour, yonder is a house provided for me. We should think and look upon heaven as our own place, whither Christ is gone before, and keeps a room for us. Here we may want comforts, we may be thrust out of house and home, out of our habitation and country and all; but all the world, and all the devils in hell, they cannot thrust us out of heaven, nor dissolve and break the communion that is between Christ and us. They cannot take away either grace or glory from us. Therefore we should be content with any condition in this world. Christ is ascended into heaven, to keep a blessed condition for us.

Likewise, when we think of the troubles of this world, of the enemies we have here, think of Christ taken 'up to glory,' and think of Christ's order. First, he suffered, and then he entered into glory. So we must be content to suffer first, and then be glorious. We are predestinate to be conformable to Christ. Wherein stands our conformity? It is in abasement first, and then in glory. Christ entered into glory in this order, and shall we think to come to heaven in another order than Christ did? Shall we wish for a severed condition from him? If we be in Christ, all that we suffer in this world, they are sufferings of conformity to make us suitable to our Head, and to fit us for glory. And our greatest abasements, what are they to the abasement of Christ? None was ever so low, and there is none so high. As he was the lowest in abasement, so he is the highest in glory. When he was at the lowest, in the grave, not only dead, but under the kingdom and command of death, then he rose gloriously and ascended. Our lowest abasements are forerunners of our advancement and glory. This assumption of Christ to glory should help us in this respect.

In all disconsolations there is a world of comfort hence. We must not think of Christ, as if his honours had changed his manners, as it is among

men; that now he is become stately, that he doth not regard his poor church. No such matter; he regards his poor church now he is in heaven as much as he ever did. The members here cannot suffer anything but the Head in heaven is sensible of it; as it is Acts ix. 4, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' The foot is trod upon, and the tongue complains. Our blessed Saviour is not like Pharaoh's unkind butler, that forget Joseph when himself was out of prison. Christ being advanced to honour now, forgets us not here. No; he is as good Joseph, that was sent into Egypt to provide for all his family beforehand. So this our Joseph, the great steward of heaven and earth, he is gone to provide for us all, against we come to heaven. He forgets us not: 'He disdains not to look on things below,' Ps. cxiii. 6; he considers every poor Christian. He is as merciful now as he was when he was upon earth; as you have it largely proved Heb. iv. 7, 'He was man for this end, that he might be a merciful high priest;' and he is so in heaven, and pities all our infirmities. It is not here 'Out of sight, out of mind,' for, as I said, he hath us in his breast; ay, and he is with us, by his Spirit, to the end of the world. He is taken up to heaven by his body; but his Spirit, which is his general vicar, is here with us to the end of the world: 'I will send you the Comforter, and he shall abide away with you,' John xiv. 20. And it is better for us to have the Comforter here, without his bodily presence, than to have his bodily presence without the abundance of his Spirit; as it was better with the disciples when he was taken up to heaven, and was present by his Spirit, than it was before. We lose nothing therefore by the ascension of Christ. It was for us. He was given for us, born for us. He lived for us, he died for us, he rose and ascended to heaven for our good: 'It is good for you that I go,' John xiv. 28. It was to provide a place for us, and to send the Comforter. All was for our good, whatsoever he did, in his abasement and exaltation.

Again, This administereth comfort in regard of the afflictions of the church. When the church is under any abasement, at the lowest, it hath a glorious head in heaven; and what! doth he sit there and do nothing? No. He sits 'at the right hand of God,' and rules his church, even in the midst of his enemies. If he do give the chain to them, it is for special ends. His people stand in need of all that they endure, and he measures it even to a drachm, whatsoever his church suffers; for they are his members, and he is sensible of their sufferings. He is 'a high priest that is touched with our infirmities,' Heb. iv. 15. Therefore nothing can befall his church without his government. He lets loose the enemies thus far, and then he restrains them, and subdues and conquers them, making them his 'footstool.' The enemies seem to domineer now, and trample on the church; but ere long they shall become the church's

'footstool.' Christ will govern his church till all his enemies 'be under his feet.' He is ascended into heaven for this purpose; and he is fitting his church by these afflictions, for greater grace in this world, and for eternal glory in the world to come.

Therefore, let us not take scandal at the present sight of things. We stand amazed to see the state of Europe at this time; but for our comfort let us consider that Christ is taken 'up to glory,' and he sits in heaven and rules his church, and will guide all these wars to a good and gracious end. He sits at the stern. The ship may be tossed where Christ sleeps, but it cannot be drowned. The house that is built upon a rock, it may be blown upon, it shall never be overthrown. The bush wherein the fire is, it may burn, but it shall never be consumed. The church, wherein Christ rules and governs, it may be tossed, it shall never be overcome and subdued. Nay, by all these things that the church suffers, Christ rules, and exerciseth his church's graces, and mortifies his church's corruptions. It is necessary there should be some change. Standing waters breed frogs, and other base creatures; so it is with Christians. If there be not some exercise by afflictions, what kind of vices grow? As we see in these times of peace, what kind of lives most men live, that we may take up an admiration that God should be so merciful to continue his truth to a company of proud base carnal persons, that lead lives, under the gospel, no better than if they were in paganism. Therefore we cannot look for any good, without further abasement. And certainly, if troubles come, we should many of us be better than we are now: afflictions would be so far from doing us harm, that they would refine us. We shall lose nothing, but that that doth us hurt; that, that we may well spare; that, that hinders our joy and comfort.

But, I say, let us comfort ourselves in respect of the present state of the church. Christ rules in the midst of his enemies, in the midst of crosses and persecutions, not to free us alway from them; but he rules in turning them to good, in strengthening and exercising our graces; and he rules in the midst of his church at this time by turning his enemies' cruelty to the good of the elect. As he ruled in the Israelites when he suffered Pharaoh to go on in the hardness of his heart, but he had a time for Pharaoh's ruin; so Christ hath a time for the persecutions of the church, as he had for all the ten persecuting emperors, that came to base and fearful ends. 'Was there ever any man fierce against God and prospered?' saith Job, chap. ix. 4. Was there ever any that set themselves against the church of God and prospered? No, no. It is with the church as it was with Christ; to have looked on Christ hanging and

bleeding on the cross, to have seen him grovelling on the ground in the garden, men would be ready to take offence. What! he the Saviour of the world? But stay and see him in the text, assumed to glory, and then there would he no offence taken at Christ. So it is in the church. You see the church suffers persecutions, but lay one thing with another. See the church in heaven with the Head of the church. See the church advanced. See it in glory ere long. See it refined and fitted by sufferings, to come better out of afflictions than it went in, and then none will take scandal at the afflictions of the church, as they ought not at the abasement of Christ. For though he was 'God manifest' in weak 'flesh,' yet we see he 'ascended up in glory.'

There is a comfortable speech, Jer. xxx. 7, 'It is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be delivered out of it.' So we may say, this is the time of the church's trouble, but the church shall be delivered out of it. The enemies have their time to afflict and trample upon the church; but Christ hath his time to trample on them. Let us wait and expect with comfort better times. The kingdoms of the world will be known to be the Lord Jesus Christ's. There will be a further subjection to Christ's kingdom than ever there was since the first times, when the fulness of the Gentiles and the conversion of the Jews shall be. Let us comfort ourselves with the times to come. Christ is in glory, and he will bring his church to further glory even in this world, besides eternal glory at the latter day.

'Rejoice not over me, O mine enemy: for though I be fallen, yet shall I rise,' Micah vii. 8. Let not the enemies of the church insult over much; though the church be fallen, yet she shall rise again 'after three days,' saith the prophet, Mat. xxvii. 63. Christ, though he were abased as low as possible he could be, yet after three days he arose; so the church shall rise out of her troubles after three days; that is, after a certain time that we know not; but the exact time is only in the hands of Christ. But certainly there are glorious times of the church coming.

Consider the wonderful love of Christ, that would suspend his glory so long. The glory of heaven was due to him upon his incarnation, by virtue of the union of his human nature with the divine; for that nature that was united to the Godhead, it must needs have right to glory by that very union. What should hinder, when it was so near to God as to be one person, to be taken into the union of the person? Oh but where had our salvation been then, if Christ had entered into glory upon his incarnation, if he had not shed his blood, if he had not been abased to the death of the cross? Therefore the

schoolmen speak well, he enjoyed the presence of God affectione justitiae, with the affection of justice and all virtues; that is, he was as gracious from the beginning, from his incarnation, for matter of grace and love of all that is good; yet not affectione accommoda. There was a nearness to God in pleasure, and joy, and comfort. This he denied himself till he was assumpted to glory after his resurrection; and this he did in love to us, that he might suffer and be abased, to work out our salvation. That redundance of glory that should have been upon his person presently upon the union, it was stayed till his resurrection, that he might accomplish and fulfil our salvation. What a mercy and love was this! So it is with the church. It is glorious as it hath union with Christ. Is not the church a glorious thing, that is joined to Christ, that is 'Lord of lords, and King of kings,' the ruler of heaven and earth? What is the reason the church is so abased then?

If the church were not abased, it could not be conformed to Christ. Christ, that he might work our salvation, he must be abased, and have suspension and stopping of the glory due to him, till the resurrection. Of necessity, we must be conformed to Christ as far as we may; and, that we may be conformed to him in abasement and suffering, there must be a stop of our glory, till we be dead and turned to dust, until we rise again, until Christ come to be 'glorious in his saints,' 2 Thes. i. 10. If Christ, as I formerly said, had showed all his glory in his abasement, he could never have suffered. The devil himself would have done him no harm. There had been no pretence. The Pharisees would never have persecuted him and hated him, if they had seen him to have been such a person as he was; but he veiled his glory that he might suffer. If the world did but see the thousandth part of the glory that of due belongs to Christians, would they revile them, and disgrace, and malign, and trample on them? Certainly they would not. This is discovered in Scripture; but the world, to discover their atheism, that they believe not the word of God, take no notice of it. And that the children of God may be conformed to their head, and that way may be made to the malice of wicked men, to trample upon them, they go in the shape of miserable men.

Therefore let us not be discouraged for any abasement. We have a glorious life hid with Christ, which shall be revealed one day; in the mean time, in the midst of abasement, let us believe glory. And let me add this to the rest:

As the same body wherein Christ was spit upon, and mangled, and crucified, in the same body he rose again, and in the same body ascended into heaven, so it shall be with us. The same body that suffers anything for Christ, the same body that dies, the same body shall rise, and be assumed to glory.

Hence likewise we have a ground of patience in all our sufferings from another reason, not from the order but from the certainty of glory. Shall we not patiently suffer, considering the glory that we shall certainly have? 'If we suffer with him we shall be glorified with him,' Rom. viii. 17. Who will not be patient awhile, that hath such glory in his eye? Therefore let us look upon the glory of Christ in all our sufferings whatsoever. What made Moses and all the saints in all times to be so patient? They had an eye this way. What made Stephen not only patient but glorious? 'His face shone as the face of an angel,' Acts vi. 15. He looked on Jesus Christ, and saw him 'sitting at the right hand of God.' What made the martyrs not only patient but triumphant in all their sufferings? They had an eye of faith to see Christ sitting in glory, and to see themselves in heaven 'glorious in Christ;' and not only to see themselves 'glorious in Christ,' but in themselves afterwards. We are not only glorious in our Head, but we shall he ourselves where he is, 'taken up in glory.'

And let it stir us up likewise not to be ashamed of religion, and to stand out in good causes for Christ and the church. 'He is not ashamed to be called our brother,' Heb. ii. 11. No; not after his resurrection. 'Go tell my brethren, I ascend to my Father and your Father,' John xx. 17. He was not ashamed of it when he began to be in the state of glory. He is not ashamed of our nature now, to take it up into heaven. He is not ashamed to own us hero, and at the day of judgment to set us at his right hand. And shall we now, for fear of men, for fear of shame, for any base earthly respect, be ashamed of our glorious Head? He we believe that we have a Head that is glorious in heaven, 'sitting at the right hand of God,' that ere long will come to 'judge the quick and the dead;' and shall we be ashamed to hold out the profession of religion for a scorn, for a word, for a frown? Where is the 'Spirit of glory,' the spirit that should be in Christians that hope to be glorious? 'He that is ashamed of me here,' saith Christ, 'I will be ashamed of him at that great day.' How can we think that Christ will own us, when we will not own religion here? When we are ashamed to stand for him, shall we think to stand at his right hand? All base carnal atheistical spirits, that are afraid of disgrace, of displeasure, of loss, of anything but of him they should be afraid of; let them know there is

no comfort for them in Christ's exaltation; for if they had any communion with Christ, he would infuse another manner of spirit into them. Let us therefore stand for Christ. We have a glorious head, a glorious hope, a glorious inheritance.

And let us go on with encouragement in good duties, with a spirit of faith; for wherefore is Christ in heaven but to rule his church by his Spirit; 'to lead captivity captive, and to give gifts to men,' Eph. iv. 8. Let us therefore go on with confidence, that Christ from heaven will give us his Spirit to subdue our corruptions. He is in heaven to rule his church; and what is his kingdom but the subduing of our spirits by his Spirit, to be more humble, and more holy and gracious every way? Let us not think that our corruptions will be too hard for us, but go on in a spirit of faith; that Christ that died for us as a priest, he will rule us as a king; and if we be true to our own souls, we shall have strength to sustain us. He sits in heaven to rule us by his gracious Spirit. Let us not despair. Though we carry this and that corruption about us, we shall by little and little overcome all. He will 'lead captivity captive,' and overcome all in us, as he did in his own person. He that overcame for us will overcome in us, if there be a spirit of faith to depend upon him.

Again, This mystery is a 'mystery of godliness.' It tendeth to and enforceth godliness and holiness of life. Christ 'received up to glory.' You see then our flesh is in heaven. Christ hath taken into heaven the pledge of our flesh, and given us the pledge of his Spirit. It was a dignifying of our nature that God should be manifest in our flesh. That that was an abasing to him, as God, was an honour to our nature. The incarnation of Christ it was the beginning of his abasement in regard of his Godhead, for the Godhead to be clouded under flesh; but it was a dignifying of the human nature that it should be grafted into the second person. And is it not a greater honour to our nature that now in Christ it is gone to heaven, and is there above angels? Our nature in Christ rules over all the world. And wherefore is all this? As it is for wondrous comfort, so for instruction, to carry ourselves answerable to our dignity. What! hath God taken our nature upon him to the unity of the second person, and exalted and honoured and enriched it? Is he likewise gone to heaven in our nature, and is there above all principalities and powers? All the angels in heaven attend upon him. And shall we debase and dishonour our nature that is so exalted? Let it work upon us, to carry ourselves in a holy kind of state. Shall we defile ourselves with sinful courses, and make ourselves baser than the earth we tread on, worse than any creature? for a man without grace is next to the devil in misery, if God be not

merciful to him. If God have thus honoured our nature above all created excellency whatsoever, shall not this stir us up to a correspondent carriage? It is oft pressed by the apostle that we 'walk worthy of our calling,' Eph. iv. 1. And, indeed, let us oft consider to what great matters we are called; for the life of heaven it must be begun upon earth. 'Whosoever hath this hope,' to be glorious with Christ in heaven, 'it purgeth him,' 1 John iii. 3. It frames him to be like the state he hopes for, and he that hath not a care to suit and fit his carriage and disposition to the state he believes, it is an empty hope; he deludes himself. Whosoever shall be glorious with Christ in heaven, is also glorious now. There is a Spirit of glory resting upon them, that is, grace; grace makes them glorious. Those that have not a Spirit of glory, that is, a Spirit of grace, to fashion and conform them, in some measure to be like Christ, by little and little, they have no right nor interest in the state of glory that shall be revealed after.

Is Christ taken up to glory, and for us as well as for himself? 'What manner of men ought we to be in holy conversation,' 2 Peter iii. 11. We should 'keep ourselves unspotted of the wicked world,' James i. 27. Shall we think to have communion and fellowship with Christ in glory, when we make 'the members of Christ the members of an harlot?' 1 Cor. vi. 15; when we make our tongues instruments of blaspheming God and Christ; as a company of vile wretches, that will come to the ordinances of God, and yet have not overcome their atheistical nature so much, as to leave their swearing and filthy courses? Do we think to have communion with Christ in glory, and not get the victory over these base courses? Do we profess ourselves to be Christians, and live like pagans? Hath God such need of people to fill heaven with, that he will have such unclean persons? Shall we have such base thoughts of heaven? No, beloved. These things must be left, if ever, upon good ground, we will entertain thoughts of fellowship in this glory. There is 'a now heaven and a new earth,' 2 Peter iii. 18, for the new creature, and only for such. Let us not delude ourselves. There must be a correspondence between the head and the members, not only in glory, but in grace; and the conformity in grace is before the conformity in glory. Will God overturn his method and order for our sakes? No, no; all that come to heaven, he 'guides them by his Spirit' here, in grace, and then he brings them to glory.' He gives 'grace and glory, and no good thing shall be wanting to them that lead a godly life,' Ps. lxxxiv. 11; but first grace and then glory.

Therefore let not the devil abuse us, nor our own false hearts, to pretend a share in this glory, when we find no change in ourselves, when we find not

so much strength as to get the victory over the base and vile corruptions of the world. The apostle from this ground infers mortification of our 'earthly members:' 'You are risen with Christ,' 'Your life is hid with Christ in God,' and 'we are dead with Christ.' Therefore we ought to mortify our sinful lusts. For the soul being finite, it cannot be carried up to those things that are of a spiritual, holy, and divine consideration; but it must die in its love, and affection, and care to earthly things and sinful courses. Therefore let us never think that we believe these things indeed, unless we find a disposition, by grace, to kill and subdue all things that are contrary to this condition. Though somewhat there will be in us to humble us, or else why are the precepts of mortification given to them that were saints already, but that there is somewhat will draw us down to abase us? But this is no comfort to him that is not the child of God, that lives in filthy courses, that he might easily command himself in. Let him abandon the name of a Christian. He hath no interest to the comfort of this, that Christ is 'received up to glory.'

Again, The mystery of Christ's glory it tends to godliness in this respect, to stir us up to heavenly-mindedness. The apostle doth divinely force this in the fore-named place, Col. iii. 1, 'If ye be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above.' From our communion with Christ, rising and ascending into heaven, and sitting there in glory, he forceth heavenly-mindedness, that our thoughts should he where his glory is, where our Head and husband is; and certainly there is nothing in the world more strong to enforce an heavenly mind than this, to consider where we are, in our Head. Christ, our head and husband, is taken up into glory. There is our inheritance; there are a great many of our fellow-brethren; there is our country; there is our happiness. We are for heaven, and not for this world. This is but a passage to that glory that Christ hath taken up for us; and therefore why should we have our minds grovelling here upon the earth? Certainly if we have interest in Christ, who is in glory 'at the right hand of God,' it is impossible but our souls will be raised to heaven in our affections before we be there in our bodies. All that are Christians, they are in heaven in their spirit and conversation beforehand. Our heavy, dull, earthly souls being touched by his Spirit, they will ascend up. The iron when it is touched with the loadstone, though it be an heavy body, it ascends up to the loadstone, it follows it. The sun it draws up vapours, that are heavy bodies of themselves. Christ as the loadstone being in heaven, he hath an attractive force to draw us up. There is not the earthliest disposition in the world, if our hearts were as heavy as iron, if we have communion with Christ, and have our hearts once touched by his Spirit, he will draw us up, though of ourselves we be heavy and lumpish. This meditation, that Christ

our head is in glory, and that we are in heaven in him, and that our happiness is there, it will purge and refine us from our earthliness, and draw up our iron, heavy, cold hearts.

It is an argument of a great deal of atheism and infidelity in our hearts, as indeed our base nature is prone to sink down, and to be carried away with present things, that professing to believe that Christ is risen and ascended into heaven, and that he is there for us, yet that we should be plodding and plotting altogether for the earth, as if there were no other heaven, as if there were no other happiness but that which is to be found below. There is nothing here that can satisfy the capacious nature of man. Therefore we should not rest in anything here, considering the great things that are reserved for us, where Christ is in glory. Therefore when we find our souls falling down of themselves, or drawn downward to base cares and earthly contentments, by anything here below, let us labour to raise up ourselves with such meditations. I know not any more fruitful, than to consider the glory to come, and the certainty of it. Christ is taken into glory, not for himself only, but for all his; for 'where I am,' saith he, 'it is my will that they be there also,' John xvii. 24. Christ should lose his prayer if we should not follow him to heaven. It is not only his prayer but his will, and he is in heaven to make good his will. The wills of men may be frustrate, because they are dead; but he lives to make good his own will, and his will is, that we be where he is. Now, if a man believe this, can he be base and earthly-minded? Certainly no. 'Where our treasure is, our hearts will be there also,' Mat. vi. 21, by the rule of Christ; 'Where the body is, the eagles will resort,' Mat. xxiv. 28. If we did make these things our treasure, we would mount above earthly things. There is nothing in the world would be sufficient for us, if we had that esteem of Christ, and the glory where Christ is, as we should and might have.

And it is not only meditation of these things that will cause us to be heavenly-minded; but Christ, as a head of influence in heaven, conveys spiritual life to draw us up. 'When I am ascended, I will draw' all men after me,' John xii. 32. There is a virtue from Christ that doth it. There is a necessity of the cause and consequence, as well as strength of reason and equity. There is an influence issuing from Christ our head, to make us so indeed. Therefore, those that are otherwise, they may thank themselves. The best of us, indeed, have cause to be abased, that we betray our comfort, and the means that we have of raising up our dead and dull hearts, for want of meditation. Let us but keep this faith in exercise, that Christ is in heaven in

glory, and we in him are in heaven, as verily as if we were there in our persons, as we shall be ere long, and then let us be uncomfortable, and base, and earthly-minded, if we can.

To conclude all. As the soul of man is first sinful and then sanctified; first humble and then raised; so our meditations of Christ must be in this order: first, think of Christ as abased and crucified, for the first comfort that the soul hath is in Christ 'manifested in the flesh,' before it come to 'received up into glory.' Therefore, if we would have comfortable thoughts of this, 'Christ received up in glory,' think of him first 'manifest in the flesh.' Let us have recourse in our thoughts to Christ in the womb of the virgin; to Christ born and lying in the manger; going up and down doing good; hungering and thirsting; suffering in the garden; sweating water and blood; nailed on the cross; crying to his Father, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' finishing all upon the cross; lying three days in the grave; have recourse to Christ thus abased, and all for us, to expiate our sin; he obeyed God to satisfy for our disobedience. Oh! here will be comfortable thoughts for a wounded soul, pierced with the sense of sin, assaulted by Satan; to think thus of Christ abased for our sins, and then to think of him 'taken up into glory.'

In the sacrament, our thoughts must especially have recourse, in the first place, to Christ's body broken, and his blood shed, as the bread is broken and the wine poured out; that we have benefit by Christ's abasement and suffering, by satisfying his Father's wrath, and reconciling us to God. Then think of Christ in heaven, appearing there for us, keeping that happiness that he hath purchased by his death for us, and applying the benefit of his death to our souls by his Spirit, which he is able to shed more abundantly, being in that high and holy place, heaven; for the Spirit was not given in that abundance, before Christ was ascended to glory, as it hath been since. In this manner and order, we shall have comfortable thoughts of Christ. To think of his glory, in the first place, it would dazzle our eyes, it would terrify us, being sinners, to think of his glory, being now ascended; but when we think of him as descended first, as he saith, 'Who is he that ascended, but he that descended first into the lower parts of the earth?' Eph. iv. 9. So, who is this that is taken 'up in glory?' Is it not he that was 'manifest in our flesh' before? This will be comfortable. Therefore let us first begin with Christ's abasement, and then we shall have comfortable thoughts of his exaltation.

These points are very useful, being the main grounds of religion; having an influence into our lives and conversation above all others. Other points

have their life and vigour and quickening from these grand mysteries, which are the food of the soul. Therefore let us oft feed our thoughts with these things, of Christ's abasement and glory, considering him in both as a public person, 'the second Adam,' and our surety; and then see ourselves in him, and labour to have virtue from him, fitting us in body and soul for such a condition. The very serious meditation of these things, will put a glory upon our souls; and the believing of them will transform us 'from glory to glory,' 2 Cor. ix. 18.