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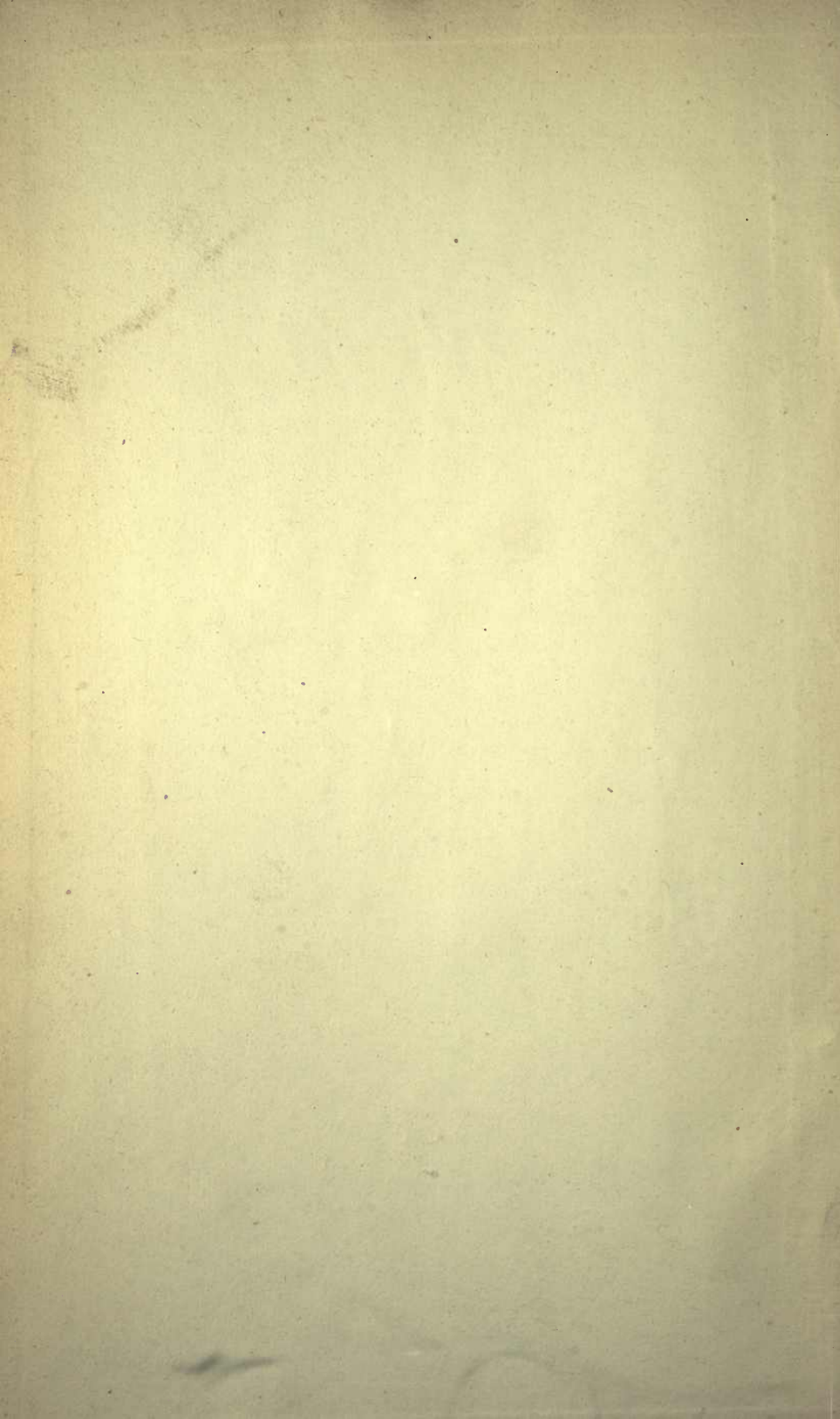
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THE COMPLETE WORKS

OF

THOMAS MANTON, D.D.

VOLUME XXII.

CONTAINING

SERMONS ON SEVERAL TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE;

TOGETHER WITH

COPIOUS INDEXES OF SUBJECTS AND TEXTS TO
DR MANTON'S WORKS.

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THE COMPLETE WORKS
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CONTENTS.

SERMONS ON SEVERAL TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE—		PAGE
SERMON UPON PROVERBS vi. 6-8,	3
” ” PROVERBS iii. 18,	. . . . .	13
” ” PSALM xci. 1,	. . . . .	22
” ” JOHN xix. 34-37,	. . . . .	33
” ” MATTHEW xix. 30,	. . . . .	41
” ” 1 JOHN i. 7,	. . . . .	50
” ” JOB x. 2,	. . . . .	61
” ” ACTS vii. 55, 56,	. . . . .	70
” ” 2 SAMUEL xxiv. 24,	. . . . .	81
” ” 1 JOHN ii. 20,	. . . . .	95
” ” HEBREWS xii. 24,	. . . . .	106
FUNERAL SERMON PREACHED UPON THE DEATH OF DR MANTON,		123
<hr/>		
INDEX OF SUBJECTS,	. . . . .	149
INDEX OF TEXTS, .	. . . . .	373
INDEX OF PRINCIPAL TEXTS,	. . . . .	455

CONTENTS

149	Index of Names
178	Index of Texts
188	Index of Original Texts
<hr/>	
123	THESE THINGS WERE SAID BY THE DEATH OF DR. MANTON
108	Matthew xii. 21
83	1 John ii. 22
81	2 Samuel xiv. 21
59	Acts vii. 50, 51
41	Job x. 2
37	1 John i. 7
36	Matthew xii. 20
35	Job xii. 24, 25
34	Psalm xlii. 1
33	1 Thessalonians iii. 12
32	Matthew xii. 22
31	1 Thessalonians ii. 16
30	Matthew xii. 23
29	1 Thessalonians ii. 17
28	1 Thessalonians ii. 18
27	1 Thessalonians ii. 19
26	1 Thessalonians ii. 20
25	1 Thessalonians ii. 21
24	1 Thessalonians ii. 22
23	1 Thessalonians ii. 23
22	1 Thessalonians ii. 24
21	1 Thessalonians ii. 25
20	1 Thessalonians ii. 26
19	1 Thessalonians ii. 27
18	1 Thessalonians ii. 28
17	1 Thessalonians ii. 29
16	1 Thessalonians ii. 30
15	1 Thessalonians ii. 31
14	1 Thessalonians ii. 32
13	1 Thessalonians ii. 33
12	1 Thessalonians ii. 34
11	1 Thessalonians ii. 35
10	1 Thessalonians ii. 36
9	1 Thessalonians ii. 37
8	1 Thessalonians ii. 38
7	1 Thessalonians ii. 39
6	1 Thessalonians ii. 40
5	1 Thessalonians ii. 41
4	1 Thessalonians ii. 42
3	1 Thessalonians ii. 43
2	1 Thessalonians ii. 44
1	1 Thessalonians ii. 45

SERMONS
ON
SEVERAL TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE

SERMONS

BY

SEVERAL TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE

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SERMON UPON PROVERBS VI. 6-8.

Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.—PROV. vi. 6-8.

MAN being fallen from God, and the primitive perfection of his nature, may be taught his duty by the meanest creatures; therefore in scripture we are often referred to the beasts of the field and fowls of the air. As, for instance, to cure our ingratitude, the prophet bids us consider the beasts: Isa. i. 3, 'The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.' And to cure our distrust, Christ sends us to the ravens: Luke xii. 24, 'Consider the ravens: for they neither sow, nor reap; which neither have storehouse, nor barns; yet God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls.' And to cure our insensibility and improvidence in the season of action, and to put us on using fit remedies, we are sent to the stork and crane: Jer. viii. 7, 'The stork in the heavens knoweth her appointed times, and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow, observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the Lord.' These creatures know the time of coming and going, but man is stupid and senseless. Now here we are sent to school to a far more inferior creature, the ant or pismire. Certainly there is a great deal of morality in the bosom of nature, if we had the skill to find it out. There are in most of the creatures shadows both of virtues and vices; and if I may speak my mind, these are the true layman's books, and the images from whence we may learn understanding and the knowledge of God.

Here, to shame him, the sluggard is sent to the ant—'Go to the ant, thou sluggard,' &c.

In which words we have—(1.) The learner, the sluggard. (2.) The teacher, the ant. (3.) The manner of address directed, 'Go, consider her ways, and be wise. (4.) The lesson to be learned, diligence and labour, or providence and foresight. Diligence and labour, in that 'she provideth her meat, and gathereth her food.' And providence and foresight, that this is done in 'harvest and summer;' in the time when it is to be had, when there is much grain spilt or shed. (5.) The enforcement of this lesson; that the ant doth this though she hath 'no guide, overseer, and ruler.'

1. The scholar or learner is the sluggard, who is averse and back-

ward to his necessary duty, both in temporals and spirituals; and so sins not only against the law of God, but his own nature; for a living soul was never given us to be idle. Nature made our faculties for use. All the world about us is in action; the sun runneth his course, the waters flow for our use and benefit, the winds blow, the earth bringeth forth, cattle labour for us; but the sluggard is the shame of the creation; every creature is a witness against him to condemn his sloth. But here the slothful are sent to the ant to learn to labour, and make provision for futurity. And thus, to correct our stupidity and folly, God sendeth us to the least of the dumb and unreasonable creatures.

2. The teacher is the ant, a sedulous and sagacious creature. Wonders are spoken of them in writers, which I list not to trouble you with; as what skill they show in framing their cells, that they may not be drowned by wet; what order and discipline they use among themselves; what diligence they use to get provision, not only by day, but by night, as Ælian tells us. In the full moons of summer and harvest they rest not. What sagacity they have in biting off the ends of the corn, that it may not grow; how they perish not, but live in the wettest and coldest winter. The grasshopper, that singeth away the summer, dieth whilst they supply themselves out of the store which they have gathered by their industry. To dilate on these things at large would savour more of the natural historian than the divine.

3. The direction, or the manner of address; in three things—(1.) Go; (2.) Consider her ways; (3.) Be wise.

[1.] For the first, 'Go;' as their fashion was to go to their doctors and teachers: 1 Kings xiv. 3, 'Go to the prophet, and he shall tell thee what shall become of the child.' In those days the party, if capable, did not send for the prophet, but went to him. So here, 'Go to the ant;' to shame the sluggard, as if he needed to perform that office to the ant which they showed to their eminent prophets. But when they come, what must they do?

[2.] 'Consider her ways.' This doctor teacheth not by words, but by example; and therefore the sluggard is not bidden to hear, but to see, and consider her ways; that is, see the great diligence of this creature, and their marvellous order in passing to and fro; not crossing one another, but if any be overlaboured, helping them, as your eye will easily inform you.

[3.] 'Be wise.' Be not a spectator only, but an improver; not more learned, or able to discourse of these things, but more wise, to cure idleness and improvidence.

4. The lesson to be learned; which is—(1.) Labour; and (2.) Foresight.

[1.] Labour. In the hottest times they are most busy, and endure the trouble of it. Their industry is a pattern to us.

[2.] Their foresight. They do this in the 'summer and harvest.' They suffer not the opportunity to pass. As we are to labour if we would attain eternal life (Acts xxvi. 7, 'Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come'), so we are also to redeem the season: Eph. v. 16, 'Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.' Means, and mercies, and life itself, lie upon uncertainties.

5. The amplification of this provident industry of the ant; and so it enforceth the lesson, 'Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler;' that is, the ant doth her duty by instinct, not as compelled thereunto by any that have power to check and control her. Naturalists tell us that the bees are a feminine monarchy, but the ants a democracy and commonwealth, where every one's natural industry prompts him to seek his own good, and the good of the whole.

But to the text. Three words are used; she hath no 'guide' to go before her and show her what to do; no 'overseer' to observe whether she doth it or no; no 'ruler' to punish her for idleness or miscarriage; yet she labours. All this is spoken to aggravate the sluggish improvidence of man. We have a guide, the Lord, who 'hath showed us what is good,' Micah vi. 8. We have an inspector; God is our witness as well as our guide: Prov. xv. 3, 'The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.' We have a lord and ruler, to whom we must give an account: Rom. xiv. 12, 'Every one of us shall give an account of himself to God.' And shall we be idle and neglect our duty?

From the whole you see—

1. The argument is *a minore ad majus*, from the less to the greater, to shame us. If the creatures that want reason do for their own preservation with such diligence make preparation for time to come, how much more inexcusable are we, who are endowed with reason, and can foresee the end, and chose the means, bound to provide for the future, and forecast and foresee for those things that belong to our future happiness? And if we make not use of it to that end, we are highly culpable before God.

2. It is bound the more upon us, because this instinct of nature which prompts them to this is not their providence, but God's, who is the Creator of nature, and hath put this disposition into them. Now, hath not God put such a disposition and inclination into us much more? Surely man is made a nobler creature than the beasts, and is more fitted to his use and end; for it is said, Job xxxv. 11, 'Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven.' Beasts have instinct, but men have the gift of reason and conscience bestowed upon them, and do not only understand their own duty, but may make wise collections from what God hath put into other beings.

3. That this is binding upon us, both as to the body and soul; for we consist of both, and must make provision for the welfare of both.

[1.] That we should provide for our bodily welfare will be easily granted, and is agreeable enough with the context, which speaketh of the inconveniency of asking, and borrowing, and engaging others in suretyship; and that we should rather by our diligence and providence live by our callings, that we may not need to borrow. This application maketh the context run on smoothly. Now though it may be presumed that in these things wherein common reason and sense inviteth men to this diligence and providence, all should have a quick and tender ear, yet some idle drones there are who live without a calling, and have nothing whereby to support themselves; who are not only worse than the ant, that by labour layeth up for the time of want, but worse than

the grasshopper, that have scarce a merry life for the present, but involve themselves and their friends in manifold inconveniences, living by borrowing when they have nothing to pay, which is but a specious kind of theft and robbery. Or, if they can support themselves for the present, tempt God to forsake them in their age, when they do not employ themselves as instruments of his providence, for their own private or the public good. They that be busy in an honest calling may have to supply their own necessities, and to give to him that needeth : Eph. iv. 28, 'Let him that stole, steal no more ; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.' By stealing is meant not only downright theft, but all those fraudulent and deceitful ways whereby a man doth wrong his neighbour in his outward estate. As a remedy, he prescribeth diligence in some good and honest calling, and then he may expect God's blessing, that he will give him a competency, not only to support him in his necessities, but also to enable him to relieve others. But when men will not labour, they are cast upon temptations to use sinful shifts to keep them in their straits. Therefore it is the Lord's will that every one should betake himself to some lawful calling and employment, and serve God therein with a good conscience ; for God usually blesseth this conscientious diligence with such a measure of success, that they have wherewith to sustain themselves and be helpful to others. Whereas others cannot trust in God who neglect to use the means, for he never undertook to provide for us in our sins, or that laziness, carelessness, idleness, luxury, and neglect of our affairs should not be our ruin, for then his providence would run contrary to his word : 'He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand ; but the diligent hand maketh rich,' Prov. x. 4 ; and ver. 22, 'The blessing of the Lord maketh rich : and he addeth no sorrow with it ;' implying that God's blessing goeth with man's industry. So that though our great business be to press men to look after eternal life, yet as idleness is a sin, and a great part of sensuality, and disposeth for other sins, we need to read the lecture of the ant to many men to awaken them out of their sluggishness, and indulgence to the ease of the flesh in temporal affairs, that they neither live without a calling, nor without industrious diligence in their calling ; that they may not tempt God's providence to provide for them, when they take no course to live by ; nor become drones and unprofitable burdens of the earth, and so prove a clog and disgrace to religion, and lie also open as a prey to Satan ; for the devil employeth them whom he findeth not employed by God, or who refuse to be employed by him ; and so they prove a reproach to providence by their want, and a disgrace to religion by their carnal shifts, lies, and devices.

[2.] That we should provide for our soul's welfare, the lesson of the ant is also useful to us ; for if diligence and providence be recommended as necessary for christians, surely the best and greatest works call for most of our care : Prov. iv. 7, 'Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom : and with all thy getting get understanding.' And those things which are of most absolute necessity, which must be done or we are undone for ever, must be despatched with the greatest earnestness and diligence : Luke x. 42, 'One thing is needful.' And besides, for those that are of most profit, that conduce to eternal life, and bring

a blessing upon our present affairs, these are to be most minded in their season and opportunity. Such are spiritual affairs: Mat. vi. 33, 'Seek first the kingdom of God.' Therefore the contemplation of the ant concerneth these affairs. If we must 'consider her ways, and be wise,' surely we should mind these things; for the best wisdom is to be wise to salvation. And this doth chiefly become christians; for God that giveth instinct to the creatures, and reason to all men, hath given faith to those that live in the church: 1 John v. 20, 'He hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.' The knowledge of the true God directeth us to eternal life as our happiness. So that this life is our opportunity, our summer and harvest as to the means, the time of action, but hereafter is the time of retribution and reward. Therefore man, being born to labour, and having not only reason to guide him, but faith, and being to give an account of what he hath done in the body, he is now, while means and mercies last, to provide for the world to come. Therefore 'go to the ant, thou sluggard.' Thou careless christian, consider the manner and course of life of this poor creature, how vigilant, careful, and diligent she is in providing for the time to come, and do something proportionably for thy great hopes.

Doct. That serious diligence is required of christians in improving the present season in order to eternal life.

1. There is much work required of a christian. Christianity is not a loitering profession, but is always represented to us as a laborious thing: Phil. ii. 12, 'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;' John vi. 27, 'Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth to everlasting life;' 2 Peter iii. 14, 'Be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.'

[1.] There is much diligence required to get into a state of grace: Luke xiii. 24, 'Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for I say unto you, many shall seek to enter in, but shall not be able.' Therefore, if we are yet unconverted, we are to bestir ourselves, and use all means that we may not come short of converting grace. If we miss it, it is long of ourselves; we forfeit it by our negligence and carelessness.

[2.] There is much diligence required to keep ourselves in a station of grace. There are many soul-endangering sins which we are apt to indulge; therefore David saw need to beg, Ps. cxix. 133, 'Order my steps in thy word, and let no iniquity have dominion over me;' and the apostle warneth converted christians, Rom. vi. 12, 'Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal bodies, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.' And there are many duties required to which we are backward and averse, at least remiss and cold; therefore we need to be exhorted, Rom. xii. 11, 'Not to be slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.' We cannot be zealous enough in our pursuit after eternal happiness. If it were about riches and honours, a cold desire and dull pursuit were not amiss; but about God, and Christ, and heaven, coldness is a contempt.

[3.] There is much diligence required to get grace evidenced: 'Give diligence to make your calling and election sure,' 2 Peter i. 10. Providing comfort against the hour of death: 2 Peter iii. 14, 'Where-

fore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.'

[4.] There is much diligence required to keep up assurance, as well as to get it. It is gotten with diligence, and kept with watchfulness: Heb. vi. 11, 'And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end.' So far as we abate in our qualification, so far doth our assurance abate. Well, then, you see from first to last that there is much work required of a christian.

2. That the opportunity of doing this work is confined to this life; and when that is at an end, it presently ceaseth. There is no mending of errors in the other world. Now is the season, and therefore we should speedily, and without delay, set about our work: Isa. lv. 6, 'Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near.' There is a time of finding, which, when it cometh to an end, all opportunity is lost. The Father's season is while he waiteth; the Son's season while he offereth grace; the Holy Ghost's season while he stirreth the waters. So, on the contrary, Luke xix. 42, 'If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes.' Men know not their day and time, and so show themselves more silly and brutish than the ant. A child of God is wise in time, and the sensual and brutish worldling is wise too late; when he is in the other world, then he wisheth that he had minded God, his soul, and heaven more. What will it profit us to think of working when it is too late to work, and we are *in termino*, in our final estate?

3. We have a guide, overseer, and ruler, to whom we must render an account of what we do, which is denied to the ant.

[1.] We have a guide. Our work is such as our Creator expects from us. Surely God made not such a creature as man for nothing. He sent us into the world, and hath appointed us our business, which we are to do here; as our Lord telleth us, John vi. 38, 'I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.' So none of us come into the world to live to ourselves, but to God; not to do our own will, but to finish his work; to love, serve, glorify, and obey him. Many live in the world they know not why, and they go out of the world they know not whither.

[2.] We have an inspector or overseer, who observeth how we spend our time, and what we are continually doing: Ps. cxix. 168, 'I have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies; for all thy ways are before me.' God seeth what we do daily: he observeth with what posture of heart we rise in the morning, and converse all day, and go to bed at night.

[3.] We have a ruler that will call us to an account if we neglect our duty to him, and that provision that we should make for eternity. Unless we be found of him in peace, and without spot and blameless, we cannot enter into his kingdom; for 'without holiness no man shall see the Lord.' Every man's qualification must be judged, and a strict inquiry made into our ways, what we have done in the body, whether good or evil: 2 Cor. v. 10, 'For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.' Now seeing we know these things, or look for these things, what preparation

should we make that we may be accepted in the judgment, when we are to give an account of ourselves to our supreme Lord?

Use 1. To press us to mind our work in this our day.

1. This life is our opportunity, and when that is over, there is no more working; no praying, nor hearing, nor glorifying God upon earth: John ix. 4, 'Therefore we must double our diligence before all opportunity be lost. It must go with you for ever as you behave yourselves now.'

2. Consider how swiftly time passeth away, and we know not how soon it may have an end. The present life is always *in fluxu*, in motion; like a stream or current, that runneth as fast from us as it cometh to us. That part which is past is, as it were, resigned up to death already; that which is to come is not yet ours, nor can we make any sure reckoning of it; that which we count present is usually divided between us and death. It wasteth as we are writing, thinking, speaking, or doing anything. So that we die as fast as we live: Job ix. 25, 26, 'Now are my days swifter than a post; they flee away, they see no good: they are passed away as the swift ships, as the eagle that hasteth to the prey.' He sets forth the passing of time by a post on land, who is to make quick despatch; and by a ship under sail before the wind in the water, and by an eagle in the air. Thus is set forth the fugacity of man's life. Now should any of this time be lost?

3. We have lost much time already: 1 Peter iv. 3, 'For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the gentiles, when we lived in lasciviousness, lust, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries.' We lost much time in childhood, when we were not in a capacity to express any act of love and thankfulness to God; much in youth, when we followed after vain pleasures; and in our riper age, we are too careless and mindless of eternity. Now as travellers that set forth later ride the faster, so should we double our diligence, and be more hard at work for God.

4. Consider how comfortable it will be when we die that we have made preparation, known our season, done the things which God hath given us in charge, thought of this hour, and made provision for it before it come upon us. This was our Lord's plea: John xvii. 4, 'I have glorified thee on earth, I have finished the work thou gavest me to do.' This was Hezekiah's prayer: Isa. xxxviii. 3, 'And he said, Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight.' This was Paul's confidence: 2 Tim. iv. 6-8, 'For I am ready to be offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not unto me only, but to all that love his appearing.' Now we should be able to comfort ourselves in like manner. The remembrance of a diligent, well-spent life will be a great cordial to us in such an hour.

5. After death we shall have the fruit and benefit of it: Rev. xiv. 13, 'Their works follow them; that is the reward of their works. They

enjoy the comfort and benefit of whatever they have done and suffered for Christ; in another world, they are fully satisfied.

Use 2. Is by way of inquiry.

1. To inquire what should be the reason why men should be so silly and neglectful, when they have such great things in view and pursuit, and do no more in order to the obtaining of them, which concerneth not only the carnal world, who wholly neglect these things, but also the children of God, who are so cold in them. You see sense teacheth the ants, and reason should teach men, and grace inclines the saints, but yet they are slight and overly.

The reasons are these—

[1.] They forget or consider not what God is, or how great and good a master they serve; for if they did, they would earnestly address themselves to serve and please him. How great is he! Poor, sorry service is a contempt of his majesty: Mal. i. 14, 'Cursed be the deceiver that hath in his flock a male, and voweth and sacrificeth to the Lord a corrupt thing; for I am a great king, saith the Lord of hosts.' So also how good is he! Who hath done so much for them: Col. i. 10, 'That ye walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing;' 1 Thes. ii. 12, 'That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you to his kingdom and glory.' And he will do more: Heb. xi. 6, 'He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.' These are the considerations that may serve to cure our neglect, and show we can never do enough for God; surely never too much for him.

[2.] They do not consider the end and consequence of their work. Eternity should quicken and put life into the dullest creatures. It is hell you are avoiding, heaven that you are seeking after: Prov. xv. 24, 'The way of life is above to the wise, that they may depart from hell beneath.' Now in the case of heaven and hell, flight and speed is always necessary, or the most serious and earnest diligence that we can use: Mat. iii. 7, 'Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?' Heb. vi. 18, 'Who have fled for refuge to take hold of the hope set before them.' Now it is not a wet winter that we provide against, but everlasting torments.

[3.] They do not count negligence and slothfulness so great and so dangerous an evil. If they do not oppose God, or break out into open sin, they think no great harm will come of it; but, Heb. ii. 3, 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation.' Oh, there are millions in hell lamenting their carelessness! And the great fault of the world is to make light of those things: Mat. xxii. 5, 'And they made light of it;' and Mat. xxv. 30, 'Cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' How many poor creatures knock and cry when it is in vain. They neglected their season, got not oil in their lamps while it may be had. When their lamps should have been burning, their oil was to buy; and so they perish for ever.

[4.] They are diverted by worldly business, providing for the bodily life. They are too much like ants in one thing; all their care is what they shall eat and drink, and how they may live in pomp, and ease, and honour; and then by the cares of this world and voluptuous living, 'they bring forth no fruit to perfection,' Luke viii. 14. They have

some religion, but not such as is carried on in the way of sincere and serious diligence.

[5.] There is not a sound belief of the world to come. When the apostle presseth to diligence, 2 Peter i. 5, 'And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue,' &c. ; and ver. 10, 'Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall;' he urgeth this argument, ver. 16, 'For we have not followed cunningly-devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ;' implying that men will see a reason for their diligence if they have a sound persuasion of the truth of religion; and if we do not with zeal and constancy seek to add to faith virtue, and to make our calling and election sure, to enter abundantly into the kingdom of heaven, we dishonour the gospel, as if it were but a fable. Sense teacheth the creatures to shun misery and seek their happiness, and reason doth much more teach man, who can foresee the good and evil to come; but where the good lieth in the other world, there faith must interpose. Now if faith be either none or weak, so will our endeavours and pursuits be. Most men have but a weak persuasion of the world to come, and the truth of eternal life, and therefore their endeavours are so overly.

2. To seek for a remedy of this.

[1.] Live in the continual remembrance of God, who is our guide, overseer, and ruler. It is his work we do, as well as our own, for he hath appointed it, and he always looketh on to see how we do it. And will you loiter in his sight, when a very eye-servant will work while his master standeth by? Besides, in the close of our life we must give up our account; that should be oftener thought of: Job xxxi. 14, 'What then shall I do, when God riseth up; and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him?' Such an eye should we always have to God's approbation and condemnation, and entertain frequent, serious thoughts of being called to an account by God, and the inquiry that shall be made, how we have spent our time, how we have improved our talents and interests, what our ways have been. This is as the cold water cast into the boiling pot, to stop the fervours of youthful lusts: Eccles. xi. 9, 'Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee to judgment.' This bindeth the whole duty of man: Eccles. xii. 13, 14, 'Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment,' &c. This maketh God's servants more careful to do their work in its season: 2 Cor. v. 10, 11, 'For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men,' &c.

[2.] Whenever we feel a loathness and backwardness to our work, let us set about it the more earnestly; for the more we give way to it, the more we contract an habit of idleness and sloth. It is an industrious creature that is here set before us to shame us, a creature always busy; so should we be. Therefore when you find any sluggishness, let not the ease of the flesh overcome you, but do you overcome it. This evil

is best avoided by resistance ; and a duty recovered out of the hands of difficulty is the sweeter, and maketh labour for the future more easy to us ; for the more we stir up ourselves, the more we get a sedulous disposition : Isa. lxiv. 7, ' There is none that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee.' It may be at first you will have much ado with a backward heart ; but urge it on, and you gain upon it, and what seemeth impossible or difficult at first becometh easy afterwards. The way to godliness is by godliness, and duty fitteth for duty.

[3.] Think oftener of heaven and hell, what we shun and what we seek after. We are so dull and lazy because we see not the rest we hope for, nor the torments that we fear. If both were before our eyes, we should be other manner of christians in all holy conversation and godliness. But what we see by faith should in some measure affect us, as if it were before our eyes: 2 Cor. iv. 18, ' While we look not to the things that are seen, but at the things which are not seen,' &c. ; and 2 Peter iii. 14, ' Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blemish.'

[4.] Consider the great sin of negligence. Not to do good is to do evil ; for it is an omission of necessary duties : ' Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be hewn down,' &c., Mat vii. 19. If you had a servant, though he did not steal, nor answer again with contradiction, nor drink with the drunken, &c., yet if he should sit always idle, and not do those things you require of him, he would be counted a bad servant : Mat. xxv. 30, ' Cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness.' Not the thief, the drunken, but ' the unprofitable servant.' If you hire a man to labour in the vineyard, will you be contented if he doth not steal your fruit, though he standeth idle all the day, and neither destroyeth the weeds, nor pruneth the vines, nor manureth the ground ? Much more must neglect of God's service be a great sin.

[5.] To overcome worldly affections, consider not only how sure and near, but how great our reward is. This will make us more diligent : 1 Cor. xv. 58, ' Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord ;' that is, this will oblige you to the utmost industry and diligence in God's service. If a poor man will work so hard for a shilling a day, shall we be so sluggish when we seek after the kingdom of God and eternal happiness ? Alas ! what are all our labours to the glory that shall be revealed in us ? Our reward is great in itself, and is greater according to the proportion of our labour : 1 Cor. iii. 8, ' Every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour.' So Eph. vi. 8, ' whatsoever good thing any man doth, the same shall he receive of the Lord.'

SERMON UPON PROVERBS III. 18.

She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her ; and happy is every one that retaineth her.—PROV. iii. 18.

THE context is spent in an exhortation to wisdom, to get spiritual and heavenly wisdom. The argument is first generally proposed and particularly amplified. Generally proposed, ver. 13, 'Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding ;' secondly, particularly amplified—

1. By the worth and excellency, ver. 14, 15, 'For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies ; and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared with her.

2. From the utility and profit, ver. 16, 'Length of days is in her right hand ; and in her left hand, riches and honour.' She is represented as a queen having both hands full of blessings, 'Length of days in her right hand ; and in her left, riches and honour.'

3. The pleasantness of wisdom, ver. 17, 'All her ways are pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.' Which is added to sweeten the difficulties in attaining or pursuing after it, or regulating our lives and actions according to the tenor of it.

4. Here is another special benefit which we have by wisdom, or the saving knowledge of God in Jesus Christ, above all hitherto mentioned before : as pleasantness and peace during our service, so eternal life and happiness as our final reward. Here it is metaphorically expressed, with allusion to the tree of life in paradise, 'She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her.'

In the words we have—(1.) The benefit we enjoy by wisdom ; (2.) The persons qualified.

1. The benefit is expressed metaphorically and literally ; the latter explaineth the former. It is 'a tree of life,' and 'happy is every one.' She is so a tree of life as to make them happy that get her ; as it is usual with Solomon to express any great felicity by a tree of life : Prov. xiii. 12, 'Hope deferred maketh the heart sick ; but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life ;' that is, the man is pleased and satisfied, as if he were fed with apples in paradise. So Prov. xi. 30, 'The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life ; and he that winneth souls is wise.' Therefore by this metaphor Solomon understandeth some great felicity, and ordinarily eternal felicity, as the latter clause mani-

festeth, 'And happy is every one.' He meaneth it of our chief happiness; that is, all and every one that so do, how despicable soever in the world, they shall not be forgotten and passed over by God.

2. The persons qualified to enjoy this happiness. They that 'lay hold on her,' or they 'that retain her.' The one expression noteth the getting of wisdom, the other the keeping of it; and they both imply the manner also, diligence in getting, and constancy in keeping.

[1.] In getting. Wisdom is not profitable to them that only see her at a distance, or lightly salute her, but to those that with singular industry seek after her, and labour to get her: Prov. iv. 7, 'Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom; and with all thy getting get understanding.'

(1.) Get it above all things; that is, whatever you go without, be sure you be not without wisdom or saving grace: Luke x. 42, 'One thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen the better part, which shall not be taken away from her.' You may do well enough though you want worldly honour and greatness, but you cannot do well enough if you want spiritual wisdom: Mat. xvi. 26, 'But what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?'

(2.) Get it upon any terms, though with the loss of all other things: Mat. xiii. 45, 46, 'The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman seeking goodly pearls; who, when he had found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all and bought it.' You must get wisdom, though at the expense of all that you have gotten.

(3.) Get it by any means, with all the care and diligence that you can use: Prov. viii. 34, 'Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.' Begrudge no labour and pains to get into the gospel-state.

[2.] In keeping, constancy is required. We must not be put off till we have it; and when we have it, we must not let it go, but persevere in the way that wisdom prescribeth, and obey God at the dearest rates. We must retain her, though despised, though opposed by the world: Heb. x. 39, 'For we are not of them that draw back to perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.'

To the purchasing of the soul: we do not purchase it from God, for we have it by mere gift, but we purchase it from the world; liberty to save the soul at hard terms. But if we have gotten wisdom, we must never part from her, whatever it cost us. Well, then, get this wisdom we must, with all earnestness of endeavour, with all watchfulness and care, and firmness and certainty keep it. He that doth not do both is not blessed; that is, that doth not make it his main work and business to get wisdom, and doth not hold out and overcome temptations.

Doct. That wisdom doth restore men to that life and happiness which they lost in Adam.

We shall explain the point.

1. By wisdom may be understood Christ, who is the wisdom of the Father, 1 Cor. i. 24, and is both the object and fountain of happiness of the saints. He is the fountain of happiness as being the procurer and author of it: Col. iii. 4, 'When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.' And the object of it:

John xvii. 24, 'Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me may be where I am, and behold my glory;' and is truly and properly the tree of life, whose fruit is for food and leaves for medicine: Rev. xxii. 2, 'And in the midst of the street of it, and of either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bore twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.' There is no inconvenience to understand it of Christ, or else of the saving knowledge of God in Christ; as one is the author, the other is the means to bring it about: John xvii. 3, 'And this is life eternal, that they may know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.'

2. By life is meant the life of grace, begun here by the Spirit, and perfected in heaven. By wisdom we begin the life of grace here, and hereafter shall obtain the life of glory. In the Hebrew the word for life is in the dual number, the tree of lives; of both the lives, the life of holiness and the life of happiness, of grace and of glory. How this agreeth with the metaphor here used I shall show you by and by. This life is begun in regeneration when Christ cometh to live in us by his Spirit: John iii. 3, 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' The immediate effects of the new birth are life and likeness to God; and it is perfected in heaven: Col. iii. 3, 4, 'Our life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory.' This life is safely laid up in God, through Christ, in due time to be manifested in all its glory.

3. That this life is restored to those that live under the evangelical dispensation, provided they use the means, which are to lay hold on her and retain her. These are the things we must press upon you, to apprehend and retain, that is, we must receive the faith of Christ, and live accordingly. First be engaged in a course of godliness, and then hold it on, whatever temptations we have to the contrary. And accordingly two ordinances are required in the gospel—baptism, which signifieth our entrance, and the Lord's supper which confirmeth our vows of a new life, and bringeth down more grace for the performance of them; or, as our Lord sets it forth, by the gate and the way: Mat. vii. 14, 'Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life; and few there be that find it.' The gate by which we enter is faith and repentance. The narrow way is a strict obedience, doing the will of God, and not our own. And though few mind these things, we must mind them. It is elsewhere represented by making and keeping covenant. Making covenant: Ps. xl. 5, 'Gather my saints together unto me, those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.' Keeping covenant: Ps. xxv. 10, 'All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, even to such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.' We make it by faith; we keep it by a resolved, holy, and heavenly life: Rev. xxii. 14, 'Blessed are they that do his commandments; that they may have a right to the tree of life.' They that believe, repent, and obey, they have a right to the apples of paradise, to eat of this blessed tree; as (to accommodate the notions of the text to these things) many as take hold of Christ by a lively faith, and resolve to live holily; and this resolution must be made whatever difficulties we have to fight with in the

accomplishing of it : Rev. ii. 7, 'To him that overcometh I will give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God.' It is promised to the conqueror who overcometh the world, and is faithful to death.

1. Let me confirm it—(1.) By showing what the tree of life was to Adam ; (2.) What Christ will be to us if we choose him and walk in his ways.

[1.] What the tree of life was to Adam. That there was such a tree in paradise appeareth, Gen. ii. 9, 'And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food ; and the tree of life in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.' For the physical use of it, whether it might be wholesome, and a natural means to prolong life, we meddle not with ; the mystical use is that which falleth under our consideration, as it was a sacrament of immortality, or a sign of eternal life to man, if he had obeyed God his Creator. Now sacraments have a mutual respect to privileges and duties. As it relateth to his duty, Adam had two things enjoined him ; the one *præesse creaturis*, to rule over the creatures, the other *subesse creatori*, to be subject to his Creator. He had no need of a caveat for the one ; he was ready enough to govern and bear sovereignty : but for his duty to God, he had great need to be put in mind of that ; therefore under the condition of obedience, life present and future was promised to him. Those were his privileges : as he had received a natural life, *in esse*, in being ; so an eternal life, *in posse*, in power, and so had matter and just occasion of thankfulness and obedience. For this end served the tree of life as a token and pledge that he had received and should continue his life at God's will and pleasure. The tree of life sealed the continuance of his natural life during his abode upon earth ; and eternal life, when he should be removed thence, to enjoy the fulness of God's blessed presence for ever in heaven ; for in all probability the life promised answereth the death threatened. Now the death threatened is eternal, and therefore the life promised is eternal also. In short, it was God gave him life, and not the tree ; working not by physical efficacy, but by sacramental representation. It represented to Adam that God was his life and the length of his days, as he is also to us : Deut. xxx. 20, 'That thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him ; for he is thy life, and the length of thy days ;' Job x. 12, 'Thou hast granted me life and favour, and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit.' Expressing thereby God's care in preserving his natural life. His life could not be preserved but by God's immediate power, care, and love, which Job calleth his 'visitation,' or looking after us, as a parent overseeth his child *conditione corporis*. Adam was mortal as other men are, and no temporal thing could preserve him but immortal *beneficio conditoris*, by the bounty of his Creator, and the tree of life was the sign and assurance of it.

[2.] When Adam sinned, this privilege was forfeited : Gen. iii. 22, 'And the Lord said, Behold, the man is become as one of us to know good and evil ;' that is, he will be at his own finding and know what is good or evil for himself, and not take my direction, but live according to his own will : 'And now, lest he put forth his hand, and take

also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever. Therefore the Lord sent him forth from the garden of Eden.' That expression might seem to intimate that if Adam, in a state of sin and mortality, had tasted of the tree of life, he should now, notwithstanding his fall, live for ever; but God respected not the event in that speech, but the opinion of Adam, or the use for which the tree was ordained. Possibly man might believe Satan suggesting that Adam notwithstanding his fall might be immortal still by the use of that tree; therefore God drove him out of paradise. But the true reason is, God would not suffer Adam to make use of the token of life when he had forfeited life itself by his transgression. The tree had lost its use; it was the sign of life to Adam; therefore to prevent his sin in profaning the holy ordinances when he had no right to them, God drove him out. Thus our first parents, being separated from God, they were separated from life, for God was their life.

2. What Christ will be to us if we choose his ways, and walk in them. Take that in these propositions—

[1.] That we, that did once partake of life (which lieth in the fruition of God) in our common root and first father Adam, are now excluded by sin: Eccles. vii. 29, 'Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions.' In our mere natural estate we are deprived of life: Eph. ii. 1, 'And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins.' And the longer we live in our unrenewed estate, we are the more estranged from it: Eph. iv. 18, 'Being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them because of the blindness of their heart.' And so made incapable in a further degree: Ps. liii. 2, 'God looked down upon the children of men to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God.' Every sin maketh the breach and distance between us and God broader and wider.

[2.] In pity to lost mankind God hath set up a new tree of life. Though we are deprived of the first tree, yet God hath planted a better, which yieldeth better fruit, to be enjoyed in a better place. This better tree is Christ: Rev. xxii. 2, 'And in the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for healing of the nations.' This tree can be no other but Christ, who by his ordinances dispenseth all manner of blessings and comfort to his people at all times. His fruit, abundance of spirituality in obedience to the doctrine of the twelve apostles: the leaves, the mere outward and civil conversation, is so excellent that it draweth others to imitation and conversion. And it is said, 1 John v. 12, 'He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son hath not life.' His fruit is better; the fruit of the first tree was corporeal, and did only represent spiritual and heavenly things; but this fruit is the things themselves, saving grace and eternal life: Cant. ii. 3, 'I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.' And we have this life and immortality in a better place than Adam had. Not in an earthly paradise among beasts, but in an heavenly paradise, in the immediate presence of God and his holy angels: Eph. i. 3, 'Blessed be the God and Father

of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.' Therefore heaven is called paradise: Luke xxiii. 43, 'This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.' And Paul was caught up into paradise, 2 Cor. xii. 4, 'Which is the same with the third heaven,' ver. 2. Oh! what should we do but take hold of this tree, gather the fruit of it? What greater thing can be given us than Christ, and what shall we want if we have him for our Redeemer and Saviour?

[3.] This grace is offered to all that lay hold of him, and will not let him go, but still cleave to him by an entire dependence and close adherence. There are two things qualify us for the grace of Christ—thankful acceptance and close adherence; and the heirs of promise are described sometimes by the one, and sometimes by the other.

(1.) Acceptance: John i. 12, 'To as many as received him.' Whosoever do broken-heartedly, thankfully, and heartily take the Lord Jesus to be their Lord and Saviour, and are resolved to seek their happiness in God through him, are adopted into his family, and are made heirs according to the hope of eternal life: Heb. vi. 18, 'Who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us.' They have a heaven of glory at their lives' end. They cannot be satisfied till they are in their city of God, till they have a right, and get some possession of Christ and his benefits, which is mainly done by faith and hope. We believe Christ to be that to us as the gospel sets him forth to be; consent he shall be such a one to us, and therefore trust in him, and resign up ourselves to him, that he may do the works of a saviour for us and in us. Well, then, do you heartily entertain him in your souls for these ends? and do you depend upon him, that he will according to his word accomplish these ends? namely, deliver you from the guilt, and power, and punishment of sin; also work grace, and preserve, and quicken, and strengthen it unto eternal life. Then we begin to live in him: Gal. ii. 20, 'The life that I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.'

(2.) Adherence. There is first choosing and then cleaving: Acts xi. 23, 'And exhorted them all that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord;' Cant. iii. 4, 'I found him whom my soul loveth; I held him, and would not let him go.' Abiding in him: John xv. 4, 'Abide in me.' There is no fear of breaking the union on his part. His gracious presence is secured by his love and promise. All the danger is in breaking on our part. And though Christ doth finish the work he hath begun, yet we must use caution and watchfulness; not consent to quit him upon any terms. This adherence is a continuance in faith, and love, and strict obedience.

(1st.) In faith: Col. i. 23, 'If ye continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel.' He had spoken of their reconciliation with God through Christ; now the comfort did depend on their perseverance. It is not enough for us to assent to the truth of the gospel, and once to embrace Christ, and choose the good things offered by him for our portion, but still Christ must be precious to us, and our faith firm and fixed.

(2d.) Love: Rom. viii. 35, 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or

nakedness, or peril, or sword?' Cant. viii. 7, 'Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it; if a man would give all the substance of his house, it would be utterly contemned.' Love cannot be bribed nor quenched; nothing can unclasp those mutual embraces.

(3d.) Strict obedience and holiness: Rev. xxii. 14, 'Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have a right to eat of the tree of life.'

[4.] And this when there are sore temptations to drive us from God: Rev. ii. 7, 'To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God.'

Use 1. To persuade us to get and keep this wisdom, and this saving knowledge of Christ, which may produce faith, love, and obedience.

1. Consider the motives propounded, life and blessedness. These are most desirable things. All would be happy, and all would live to enjoy them; yea, the general desire of all men is to prolong their life, though in misery; but this life is happy, and it is eternal, and recommended to us with all the advantages which the place heaven can afford us. The tree of life is gone, when paradise was defaced by the flood; but God hath provided a better life by the death of his Son, that we shall live for ever, both in body and soul, eternally in heaven. Nothing else but this deserveth to be called life. The bodily life is short; it is a dying life or a living death. It floweth from us as fast as it cometh to us; but this never fadeth, but endureth for ever. The bodily life is subject to pain and misery, but the heavenly, full of joy and endless glory. The bodily life is supported with meats and drinks, but there God is all in all. The bodily life is consistent with sin, but this life is pure and perfect: 'We shall see God as he is, and be like him,' 1 John iii. 2; Jude 2, 4, 'Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.' In the bodily life we have a mixture of sorrow with all our comforts, but here is full contentment and satisfaction: Ps. xvi. 11, 'In thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.'

2. It is a new recovery of life lost and forfeited. After our long exile from God, he hath found out a way how we may return to him again, and live in communion with him. The work of redemption Christ himself hath performed for us, without asking our consent, or imposing any conditions upon us. He took our nature, fulfilled the law, satisfied the offended lawgiver, merited grace, conquered death, the devil, and hell. But to apply the comfort of these benefits, somewhat is required of us; for a neglected Christ will not profit us. Of how much sorer punishment shall we be thought worthy if we despise God's second dispensation? Then to the breach of our duty will be added the slighting of our remedy: John iii. 18, 'He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.' And if salvation itself cannot save us, nor life quicken us, what will become of us? If God offereth his grace, and we will not lay hold of it and retain it, we are justly miserable.

3. Here is motive enough to recompense all the difficulties and troubles in getting and keeping Christ.

[1.] In getting. Christ is not to be had with a large wish or a cold prayer. There is much waiting and striving, and praying and meditating ere the soul is well settled, and can be brought to trample upon all things so we gain Christ. The tree in paradise was provided by God, and planted in the midst of paradise without Adam's labour: so is Jesus Christ provided for us by the mere grace of God; but before we get to him, we must conquer guilty fears, rebellious lusts, and much averseness of heart; many a bitter pang before we come to lay hold of this grace, which is troublesome to them which would sleep quietly in their sins. But if you will set yourselves in good earnest to get him, it will be worth your pains; for 'he is a tree of life to them that take hold of him,' and your first faith is rewarded with a sweet taste of this blessed fruit.

[2.] In keeping. The trouble will be recompensed: Ps. cxxvi. 5, 'They sow in tears, but they shall reap in joy.' You have your temptations to overcome; you make your way to heaven by conflict and conquest every step: 'Without are fightings, within are fears.' Now we have the wrestling life, overcoming first one difficulty and then another. We make a snare to ourselves if we look for too much satisfaction in the world: but the clearer sight we get of heaven by faith and hope, the more we are strengthened. Here we must expect our conflicts, but there our quietness and rest. Now the happiness God hath provided for his people in heaven is enough to sweeten our crosses and encourage our obedience. Surely if we kept this recompense in our view it would strike temptations dead: Rom. viii. 18, 'For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.' The reward is sufficient, though we lay down our lives for Christ; for the case is, whether we will yield it as a debt to nature, or resign it to Christ, who hath promised to render it again with advantage.

4. There is wisdom in it. Surely they walk most wisely that are guided by God's counsel. Carnal men think their own way to be wisest, who spend all their time and care in attaining profit, and pleasure, and preferment in the world. There is present advantage, and they judge the way of the godly to be mere folly, who spend their strength in looking after spiritual and heavenly things, which they count to be but fancies; but a little time will discover this error. They who thought themselves to be the only wise men shall certainly be found to be mere fools, and the godly the wisest adventurers, whose wisdom shall be to them a tree of life. Oh, what poor things are present delights, which draw away the carnal, if compared with these choice satisfactions and pleasures which are to be had at God's right hand for evermore! Death will soon show that they are in an happier condition that suffer all things for an unseen world and the life to come, than the sensual and ungodly, that have their good things here: Luke xii. 20, 'Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall these things be which thou hast provided?' Jer. xvii. 11, 'At his end he shall be a fool.'

Use 2. To inform us that life is to be had and best preserved by

obedience and close adherence to God. Which, though it be principally meant of life eternal, which is God's gift: Rom. vi. 23, 'The gift of God is eternal life;' assured to us by promise, if we believe in Christ, and obey the gospel: 1 John ii. 25, 'And this is the promise that he hath promised to us, even eternal life;' yet in its proportion it holdeth good of life natural also. Our life and breath is in his hand: Dan. v. 23, 'And the God in whose hand thy breath is,' to take it away or continue it at his own pleasure: Ps. civ. 27, 'Thou takest away their breath, and they die.' The sound in the pipe continueth no longer than he that pipeth bloweth in it. Now obedience or disobedience are the terms of communicating or withholding of it. It is said, Job xxxvi. 6, 'He preserveth not the life of the wicked.' Though it be continued by him, yet it is not out of any respect to them. They have not a moment's assurance of the continuance thereof. If therefore we live by him, let us live to him and for him, and then, when he is pleased to put a period to this natural live, we may live for ever with him.

SERMON UPON PSALM XCI. 1.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

More particularly, this dwelling in God—

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SERMON UPON JOHN XIX. 34-37.

But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water. And he that saw it bear record, and his record is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, a bone of him shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.—JOHN XIX. 34-37.

I HAVE taken occasion upon these opportunities to go over the story of Christ's passion by several paragraphs. This paragraph treateth of the things which happened between the death and burial of Christ: and the main thing offered therein is that notable circumstance that happened immediately after Christ's death, the flowing of water and blood out of Christ's side.

In the words you have—

1. The occasion of this circumstance, ver. 31-33, 'The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross upon the sabbath-day (for that sabbath-day was an high day), besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other that was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs.'

2. The circumstance itself, 'But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water.'

3. A solemn attestation of it, ver. 36, 'For these things were done that the scriptures should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.'

4. The ends of God's providence, which are two—the fulfilling of the prophecies of scripture, confirmed by the citations of many places.

[1.] That Christ should die without breaking of a bone, ver. 36, 'A bone of him shall not be broken.'

[2.] That yet his body should be pierced with a spear, ver. 37, 'Again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they have pierced.'

I shall go over these circumstances in my accustomed method, with brief observations or hints of meditation.

First, The occasion of the words, which was the niceness and scrupulosity of the Jews, that the dead bodies might not hang upon the

cross upon the sabbath-day, especially that high sabbath of the passover. Therefore they go to Pilate to hasten the death of the malefactors by breaking their legs ; which is readily granted, and accordingly executed upon the two thieves, but not upon Christ, because he was dead already. I shall not stay on the occasion, only observe—

1. That superstition is fuller of ceremony than mercy. We find the Jews very tender in the lesser points of the law. They made no conscience of spilling innocent blood, yet by no means would put the price of blood into the treasury. They made no conscience of bringing Christ to the cross, but are zealous not to have him hang there on the great sabbath of the passover ; as if God would accept their eating the typical lamb, when they had slain the Shepherd of the flock and of the church.

2. That the worst of men are usually very solicitous about external worship. The wicked Jews, that crucified the Lord of life, would not have the passover profaned with an unseemly spectacle. Every man must have somewhat of religion, or else conscience will not be quiet ; and externals are very easy. We find it in our carnal people, that with much reverence observe the externals of the sacraments ; though they altogether neglect the obligation of them. They are as zealous for the supper as the Jews for the decency of the passover, and yet are false and faithless in their allegiance to Christ ; like madmen, tear the bond, and yet prize the seal.

3. From their going to ask leave of Pilate for the additional punishment, we learn that malefactors are not to be taken out of the hands of justice. Every degree of punishment and torment is left to the magistrate, and not to the malice of the executioner or the fury of the multitude : Deut. xxv. 2, 3, 'And it shall be, if the wicked man be worthy to be beaten, that the judge shall cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face, according to his fault, by a certain number. Forty stripes he may give him, and not exceed : lest if he should exceed, and beat him above these with many stripes, then thy brother should seem vile unto thee.' Therefore the judge was to be present when the malefactor was beaten, that they might not receive more or less stripes than the law awarded.

4. From Pilate's grant observe, that when once a man giveth up himself to please men, there is no end of compliance. Pilate, by the importunity of the Jews, is first drawn to scourge Christ, and then to crucify him, and now to sign an order for breaking his legs, a torment unusual, and contrary to the custom of the Romans. When we are tempted to serve men, we have need consider the issue. The first temptations are modest and plausible, but afterwards more servile and odious. It is good to break off at first, unless we mean to keep time and pace with every lust of men.

5. From Christ's being dead already, before the others crucified with him, we learn his willingness to die for us. His love made quick despatch. He could have retained his life longer, but he was willing to let it go, that everything might be finished that was necessary for our comfort and restoration.

6. We learn also from hence, the voluntariness of his death. If his legs had been broken, his death would have seemed an effect of violence

rather than willing resignation. He had said, John x. 18, 'No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.' It is meant of his divine power, and to notify that there was no force put upon Christ, but he would undertake it, and appear in this circumstance. In this oblation Christ would be the priest; his legs were not broken, but he gave up the ghost. Thus I have opened the occasion.

Secondly, The circumstance itself, in the 34th verse, 'But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout water and blood.' They brake not his legs, but to make an experiment whether he were truly dead, and had any sense and feeling left, and to put some scorn upon his body, one of the soldiers, out of malice, and beyond his commission, pierced his side with a spear; and the heart being pierced, together with the bag of water that encircleth the heart, and Christ's body not being cool, there followed a flux of water and blood.

I shall look upon this circumstance under a threefold consideration—

1. As an act of Christ's love and condescension, that he would expose his body to the malice and violence of wicked men. He might have withered and dried up the soldier's arm, as he did Jeroboam's when he stretched it out to reach the prophet; but by this stroke Christ would have his heart and bowels opened to us, to show how full of love he was to sinners. Look, as at the beginning Adam's side was opened, and Eve was taken out of Adam's side, so is the church out of Christ's side. He suffered his side to be opened that he might open to us the gate of life. Some of the ancients compared this wound in Christ's side to the door in the side of the ark, by which all the creatures that were not to perish in the flood found entrance. By this door we have entrance into the heart of Christ, and by Christ presented to God the Father. *Patet arca cordis per foramina corporis*, saith Bernard. By the hole of his side we may espy the secret of his heart. He opened his side, that we might see his heart. He would have sinners know that he had not a drop of blood which he accounted too good for us. He would now let out the residue, that he might not keep a drop. His heart was first pierced with love, and then with a spear. It had never been pierced with a spear if it had not been first pierced with love. Christ saith, Cant. iv. 9, 'Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse.' First wounded with love to the church, and that brought him to the cross, and there he was wounded and pierced with the malice of men. Other members were wounded before, and now his heart. His hands and feet were pierced with nails, and his life-blood dropped out by degrees; but now his side is pierced, and through his side his heart, which caused the flux of water and blood.

This circumstance is useful to beget hope and thankfulness.

[1.] Hope for all wounded sinners. It is said of those converts, Acts ii. 37, 'That they were pricked in their hearts.' This is the usual case of all the saints in pangs of the new birth; they are pricked, and wounded in heart with a sense of their sin and rebellion and unkindness to God. Now this is some ground of comfort; Christ's own heart was wounded. The bowels of mercy were now set open by a spear, and

to penitent sinners they shall never be shut more. Therefore when you are wounded, think of the wounds of Christ. These are the clefts of the rock in which a poor guilty creature may lie hid when wrath maketh inquisition for sinners. When God caused his glory to pass by, he put Moses in a cleft of the rock, Exod. xxxiii. 22; and the spouse is described to lie hid in 'the clefts of the rock, and the secret places of the stairs,' Cant. ii. 14; which certainly is meant of some secret hiding-place in time of danger, wherein God is wont to protect his people. Your hiding-place is the wounds of Christ. Here you may run for shelter. Oh, it is sweet to be found in him, by his side to get into his heart, and there to lie hid till the pursuit of wrath be over. Everything that was executed upon the person of Christ should be some advantage to faith, for it maketh up a part of his merit. The wounds of Christ are the best cure for the wounds of a sinner. The prophet saith, 'By his stripes we are healed,' Isa. liii. 5.

[2.] It yieldeth matter of thankfulness that Christ would expose his body to so many violences and indignities for man's sake. It is mangled with whips, because one prophet speaketh of stripes. It is nailed to the cross, because it is said in another, 'They pierced my hands and my feet,' Ps. xxii. 16. Wounded with a spear, because it is said again, 'They shall look upon him whom they have pierced,' Zech. xii. 10. Christ's body, though it were excellently tempered, seemeth to be assumed for no other purpose but to be harassed with sorrows and extremities. How should this increase our thankfulness! Soldiers, to endear themselves to their country, are wont to show their wounds and scars received in public service. Christ hath wounds and marks to show: as he said to Thomas, John xx. 27, 'Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless, but believing.' In the sacrament these things are represented to faith. Christ doth, as it were, show you his marks and his wounds. Remember Christ retaineth them in his glorious body as tokens of his sufferings and combats, and this body you are to look upon by faith. Remember it, and cry out, O my dear Lord, and my God! with Thomas; a vehement, abrupt speech, noting an admiration of Christ's mercy. Twice in that chapter we read that he showed his wounds, ver. 20 and 27. Christ loveth to show his wounds. *Quanto vilior pro nobis factus est, tanto charior esse debet.* By how much the cheaper he was made for us, so much the dearer he ought to be to us.

Let all this endear him to your souls. When you take the cup of blessing, remember that cup was filled out of the side of Christ. When thou art drinking, thou art spiritually drinking his blood, that thou mayest indeed bless God.

2. I look upon this circumstance as a certain pledge of Christ's death. The flowing of water and blood showeth the pericardium was pierced, a bag which keepeth water about the heart. The place in which the heart is enfolded is full of a waterish matter, which by this stroke was let out; so that it did not appear by the former passages that Christ was dead, but this was a certain evidence which made it manifest; his heart being pierced, which is certainly mortal, if he had been living before. Now his enemies could not say he was half dead, and that his

resurrection was but a reviving out of a swoon. And this is one reason St John is so earnest in his attestation of this circumstance, because all our faith and hope is built on the truth and certainty of Christ's death. Beyond death there can be no more required. They that are thirsty of revenge can never be quiet till the party be dead. God's justice was thirsty of satisfaction, but now Christ is dead all is finished. What would you have more? The flux of water and blood is a certain seal and confirmation. Divine justice pursued Christ, and the affronts and injuries of men are not ended till the bag about the heart be pierced, and there issue out water and blood, so that all the world should have a visible testimony that Christ was really dead.

From this circumstance I shall a little speak of the certainty and the necessity of Christ's death, and the comfort thereon depending, a matter weighty and of great importance in religion: 1 Cor. xv. 3, 'I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scripture.' There was a real expiration and delivery up of his soul to God, which was now showed openly and truly, and not done in show and fiction. To confirm the truth his heart is pierced, and he remained three days in the grave, under the power and dominion of it. However, Christ died, yet not whole Christ died, but only according to his human nature. Though he yielded up the ghost, that is, the natural human life, yet the hypostatical union was not dissolved. There was a separation of the soul from the body, yet both remained united with the divine nature. So that here was no dissolving of the person of Christ; and therefore he is said to raise himself. His human body, though it lay in the grave, was still a part of his person.

3. The necessity of Christ's death. I shall instance but in a double relation to the covenant—

(1.) As a surety; and (2.) As a testator. Christ was to die—

[1.] As a surety. We had deserved death, but our surety was to pay our debt. The sentence under which man lay was a sentence of death; therefore his life was laid down to redeem ours. As Paul undertook for Onesimus, Philem. 18, 'If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account;' so Christ for us: 'He suffered for our sin, the just for the unjust,' 1 Peter iii. 18. He died in our room and stead: 1 Tim. ii. 6, 'He gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.' He died not by any weakness of nature, but by voluntary consent. Christ had to do with several parties, and so died under several relations. He had to do with the devil and his agents, so he died as conqueror; with the Jews, and so he died as a martyr; he had to do with his Father, so he died as a surety; and as a person in covenant with the elect, so he died as a sacrifice. The devil was his enemy, God his judge, and himself his own priest. The Father issued out a process, and Christ offered up himself to be killed by the Jews.

[2.] As a testator or maker of the new testament. We could never have had the great blessings of the covenant if Christ had not died: Heb. ix. 16, 'For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.' Till then the testament is not in force. Christ promised to make a new testament, therefore to die, or else he

could not make good his word. Christ is lifted up to the cross as upon his deathbed, and there he dieth of love, and leaveth great legacies to the church—pardon, grace, and glory; disposeth of heaven, and all things conducing thereunto. This testament is engrossed, and a formal instrument made of it in the gospel, sacraments, seals. The apostles were the notaries to witness from heaven in a glorious way by miracles on earth, by the Spirit, water, and blood, 1 John v. 6-8. Christ, because of the duplicity of his nature, may be allowed to be a witness to his own will. The Spirit descending like a dove, appearing in cloven tongues of fire. And there are three which confirm this truth in the hearts of believers—the Spirit, the water, and blood. Ease in conscience by the blood of Christ, the work of holiness in the heart, and the certioration of the Spirit.

Use 1. Oh, let us make use of this great comfort, Christ is dead! The apostle beginneth his triumph thence: Rom. viii. 34, 'Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died.' He died in our name and stead, whereby we are absolved; as the ram was taken, and Isaac let go: Job xxxiii. 24, 'I have found a ransom.' God will not exact the debt twice. Believers do not live as if they had a surety to die for them, or a testator to make them such great and rich legacies. If we would meditate on the death of Christ with comfort and profit, we must consider these things; for still we must consider with respect to the covenant and the transactions of God with men.

1. The horrible deserving of sin, and the hatefulness of it to God. We must have a redeemer, or be all lost. This redeemer must make full satisfaction, both in respect of the infinite value of his person, which was not the blood of an angel, but the blood of God, and the extremity of his sufferings. The great almighty God, the author of life, must come and die himself: Isa. xliii. 24, 'Thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, and hast wearied me with thine iniquities.' Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, must come and be put upon an harsh service. Life itself must assume death. The Lord Almighty, filling the whole world with his glory, hung dying upon the cross.

2. The great love of God, that, when we wanted a ransom, God gave it us out of his own treasury. Among all the treasures of heaven nothing more precious and excellent than Jesus Christ. Christ must pay for the rest. He sendeth his own Son to endure the shameful death of the cross; the natural Son for the adopted sons: 1 John iv. 9, 10, 'In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins;' Rom. v. 8, 'God commendeth his love to us, that while we were sinners Christ died for us.' This was a circumstance to set out love.

3. The unspeakable love of Jesus Christ, his meekness and patience. How may we admire the ready mind of Christ! Heb. x. 5-7, 'Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offerings thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me. In burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure; then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God.' If nothing but the shameful death of the cross will do,

yet it was readily agreed to. If any had cause to love his life, Christ had; it dwelt with God in a personal union.

4. The sufficiency of this sacrifice: Heb. x. 14, 'By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.' Christ hath no more work to do, but only to look for the travail of his soul. He hath paid the full price, made a full purchase. The vessels of honour cannot be dashed. No satisfaction remains to be paid by ourselves; there needeth nothing by way of satisfaction.

Use 2. Let us not be quiet till we feel Christ is dead. Great reports without experience beget atheism: Rom. vi. 5, 'If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death;' Gal. ii. 20, 'Who hath loved me, and gave himself for me.' Is the heart of our corruptions wounded? is Christ incarnate? is Christ formed in us? is Christ dying, and we feel nothing? It availeth us nothing.

Thirdly, I look upon it as a symbol and type of his mediatory office. Christ was in every part furnished: 1 John v. 6, 'This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ: not by water only, but by water and blood.' Now this water and blood are two of the witnesses: ver. 10, 'Hath this testimony within himself.' It setteth forth the double benefit of Christ's death. He came to satisfy and to sanctify; by water noting the force of grace upon the heart, and by blood noting peace and ease of conscience. These flowed so distinctly as they might be discerned. *Aqua que diluat, sanguis qui redimat*—Ambrose. Water to wash, blood to redeem: an allusion to the ancient Jewish rites. There were under the law ablutions and oblations; there was a purification by water to take away the filth of sin, and an expiation by blood to take away the guilt. Now water and blood, that issued from Christ's side, prefigured both these. He came not only to justify, but to sanctify. By a double symbol Christ would teach us that he is the true expiation and laver, *λουτρον και λυτρον*. So suitably there are two ordinances in the gospel—baptism and the Lord's supper. Out of Christ's side, saith St Austin, came the two sacraments. Christ came not only to disannul guilt and the curse, but to destroy sin; to cleanse from inward corruption, as well as procure their reconciliation with God. Of the first, the legal washings were a type; of the second, the sacrifices.

Use 1. To rejoice in Jesus Christ, because we are complete in him.

1. There is 'a fountain open for sin and for uncleanness,' Zech. xii. 1, and it is a fountain ever springing and overflowing. When Christ was pierced upon the cross, like a full vessel he sent out water and blood; water to purify the church, and blood to feed it. From the same source there flows a double fountain—*De eadem origine, aqua et sanguis emanant*. Let us draw water hence with the buckets of faith, and do it with joy: Isa. xii. 3, 'Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.' The Jews in the feast of tabernacles, they were to go to Siloam and draw water. He that brought the water did it that it might be poured out before the Lord upon the altar with wine. They did it with trumpets and hymns, and hosannas often repeated. Thence Christ saith, John vii. 37, 'And in the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.' With great

variety of melody they went to fetch water from Siloam to the temple in golden vessels. Oh, consider here is a double stream say, as it is Isa. xlv. 24, 'Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength.' Enough to justify, enough to sanctify. Oh, come again and again to this fountain!

2. To teach us what to expect from Christ. Come for this double benefit. It is sad to have Christ in one quality of a mediator and not in another. Say, Lord, out of this side of thine there flowed not blood alone, but water and blood; as they flowed together out of thy pierced side, so let them ever flow together into my wounded soul, justification and sanctification: those things which thou hast joined let me not ever put asunder. Consider it is dishonourable to Christ when these two are severed. Celsus and others reproached the church as a common sanctuary for villains and profligate persons. No; it is a school of discipline, an hospital to cure them, not shelter them in sin. Both go together. It was convenient that, before he sanctified man in himself, he should justify him before God; first reconciled, and then receive privileges of grace; and after reconciled, it is again convenient they should be sanctified, lest Christ should have an ulcerous body. When Esther was chosen to be queen, she had garments given her out of Ahasuerus' wardrobe, and she was to accomplish the months of her purification.

3. Whenever we beg pardon, there is always a serious study of sanctification; they are inseparably joined in God's dispensation: 1 Cor. i. 30, 'But of him ye are in Jesus Christ, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption;' 1 Cor. vi. 11, 'And such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' Whosoever truly repenteth of sin doth not only seek the judicial abolition of it, but the real. A serious aim at the glory of God doth carry the soul more against the corruption of sin than the guilt of it. The abolishing of the guilt doth directly respect our profit, but the abolishing of corruption doth profit the glory of God, that we may not offend him.

SERMON UPON MATTHEW XIX. 30.

But many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first.—
MAT. XIX. 30.

THESE words are a part of Christ's answer to Peter's question, ver. 27, 'Behold, we have forsaken all and followed thee: what shall we have therefore?' What had Peter to forsake? a cottage, a net, a fisher-boat: a great all! But we are apt to think much of what we part with on Christ's score, if it be but the superfluity of our estate, if we suffer a disgraceful word or a small inconveniency, or be but browbeaten with a frown, we are apt to inquire, 'What we shall have therefore?' as if God were greatly indebted to us. We need not seek another paymaster; Christ will not be behindhand with us. Christ's answer is—

1. To their particular case, as apostles, ver. 28, 'Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.' We do not enough think of the general renovation of all things. It seemeth the number of the apostles ought to be twelve. Therefore Matthias was chosen in the room of Judas. And that the apostles shall have eminent honour in that day.

2. As to the general case, ver. 29, 'And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. None can be a loser by God, no, not in the midst of his troubles and persecutions, but hath the comforts and experiences of God by the way: Mark x. 29, 30, 'And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands with persecutions, and in the world to come eternal life.'

3. By way of admonition, not to reckon too much of their present fidelity to Christ, for temptations might come; others later called might exceed them: 'Many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first.'

In the words observe two things are asserted—(1.) The 'first shall

be last;’ those in the first rank might be cast back; (2.) The ‘last shall be first;’ advanced to the highest place in christianity.

First, For the former proposition, ‘Many that are first shall be last.’ For explaining of it, observe—

1. That it doth not universally and necessarily prove so, but for the most part it will be so; not all without exception, but many that are first shall be last. Therefore: Luke xiii. 30, ‘And behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.’ You may keep your priority and precedency to the end, if you do not grow dead, and drowsy, and sleepy. If they that began early acquit themselves with any zeal and industry suitable to their beginnings, the saying shall not prejudice them. Proverbs hold, *ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ*, for the generality; and this is a proverbial speech, adapted and used by our Saviour with an holy purpose, to caution his disciples against pride in what they had already done and suffered for his sake: they were too well conceited of their forsaking all to follow Christ.

2. Observe, that it is applicable not only to persons, but nations and societies and communities of men; for in Luke it is applied to the rejection of the Jews and the calling of the gentiles: Luke xiii. 29, 30, ‘And they shall come from the east and from the west, and from the north and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. And behold, there are last which shall be first; and there are first which shall be last.’ Many nations, cities, and countries that have embraced the true worship and service of God may lose their crown, and suffer their candlestick to be removed to others. In a little succession of time there are strange changes and revolutions as to the state of religion among a people: Mat. xi. 23, ‘And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shall be brought down to hell.’ The gospel is the honour of any country, city, or town; and where it is most clearly preached, that place is exalted most, and made nearest heaven; but through their unthankfulness, unfruitfulness, and contempt, this honour and glory may be taken from them, and they sunk as low in judgments as formerly exalted for privileges; and thus it may be interpreted as to the enjoyment of means, ‘They that are first shall be last;’ that is, they that get away the gospel from them.

3. Observe, that this firstness and lastness is to be understood with respect to matters of religion. In the world it is often verified that they who have had the precedency of others may afterwards be set far behind them: 1 Sam. ii. 7, 8, ‘The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up. He raiseth the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the Lord’s, and he hath set the world upon them.’ That prosperity may not be without a curb, nor adversity without a cordial in the government of the world, God turneth things upside down, and the mighty and opulent are brought low, and the base and despicable raised to great riches, dignity, and honour; which should quiet our minds whenever it falleth out, because the great sovereign of the world hath so appointed it, and will take his own course without asking our leave or waiting for our consent. But here it is meant of religious matters, or things appertaining to God. First and last often shift places.

4. In matters of religion it may bear a good sense, that God's latter dispensation is better than the former, and those that live under it excel the other.

[1.] Our condition under the covenant of grace is better than that in innocency under the covenant of works; as a vessel that is soldered is strongest in the crack, or an hedge that is mended is more firmly fenced than it was before the gap or breach. Take, for an instance, Adam and Job. Job is more happy in his misery than Adam in his innocency; he was victorious on the dunghill, when the other was defeated on the throne; he gave no ear to the counsel of his wife: Job ii. 10, 'Curse God, and die,' when the woman seduced Adam. He despised the assaults of Satan, when the other suffered himself to be worsted at the first temptation; he preserved his righteousness in the midst of his sorrows, when the other lost his innocency in the midst of paradise, where he had all manner of delights and pleasures. So that the grace of the Redeemer doth much excel the innocency of Adam.

[2.] The last edition of the covenant doth excel the former, and they that live under the gospel of Christ are in a much better condition than those that lived under the economy of Moses. They had more of outward prosperity, but these have more of the Spirit. They were more exempted from suffering, but these are more fortified against sufferings; Christ hath not taken away the fight, but secured the victory; and though all that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution, yet they have an hundredfold in this life, and in the world to come life everlasting: 'For many that are first shall be last, and the last first,' Mark x. 30, 31.

5. In matters of religion some may have the precedency of others; either—(1.) In reality and truth; or (2.) In appearance only; or in their own opinion; or in the opinion of others.

[1.] In reality and truth. Some may have the precedency two ways; either—(1.) As to time; (2.) As to zeal and fervency in the profession of religion.

(1.) As to time. As they began sooner, or have served God longer, so they are first. Surely this is a precedency and a privilege. The apostle saith of Andronicus and Junia, they 'were in Christ before him,' Rom. xvi. 7; Eph. i. 12, 'That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.' Those who do not retard or delay their conversion, but are converted early to God, are more obliged by his mercy to serve and honour him, because he did so soon break off the yoke of their slavery to sin and Satan, and also they take the way to honour and obey God sooner than others that yet lie in their sins. They are sooner capacitated to serve him, and therefore it is their honour and glory that they are first.

(2.) As to zeal and fervency in the profession of religion. Some are in the first rank of christians, and are more forward than others; as the apostle made boast of the forwardness of the Corinthians, and thereby stirred up other people, yet was afraid this boasting might seem a vanity and over-confidence of them: 2 Cor. ix. 2-4, 'For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked very many. Yet have I sent the brethren, lest our boasting of

you should be in vain in this behalf ; that, as I said, ye may be ready : lest haply if they of Macedonia come with me, and find you unprepared, we (that we say not, you) should be ashamed in this same confident boasting.' This the apostle doth lest the rich Corinthians would be disgraced before the poor Macedonians, the business cooled again ; he was forced to quicken them. We see many in their youth are eminently zealous, willing to run all hazards with Christ ; but when their first heats are spent, grow worldly, careless, if not greatly profane, and are strangely withered and blasted in their age.

6. Those that have these advantages of being first may become last.

[1.] Some that come after them in time may exceed them in labour and christian diligence ; and though the other keep up the life of grace still, yet they may be much outshined, and outstripped ; as, for instance, these apostles of our Lord who left their all, and seemed to deserve so much of him, were exceeded by Paul, who professed himself to be 'one born out of due time,' 1 Cor. xv. 8, yet laboured more abundantly than they all, ver. 10. Well, then, the first may be last ; though called sooner, yet may do less service than those that were called afterwards ; so to be last doth not imply a loss of grace, but an excellency in latter converts.

[2.] As to zeal in profession and practice. Certainly it is our duty to keep up our vigour to the last, for they that 'are planted in the house of the Lord should bring forth fruit in old age,' Ps. xcii. 14. The older they grow they should be the more fruitful. Enoch kept up his communion with God throughout his whole life : Gen. v. 23, 'Enoch walked with God,' after he begat sons and daughters. And it is the commendation of Mnason of Cyprus, that he was 'an old disciple,' Acts xxi. 16 ; one that was rooted in the doctrine of the gospel, and had for a long time owned Christ. But oftentimes it falleth out that they that are longest at work do not always the most or best service.

This may fall out two ways—

(1.) By the larger measures of grace vouchsafed to the latter converts above others, of which no reason can be given but God's will. He is arbitrary in his gifts, but not in his judgments. In converting grace, as to time and degree, he acts *ut dominus*, as a free lord : Rom. ix. 16, 'It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.' But in rewarding grace, he acteth *ut rector et judex* : 1 Cor. ix. 24, 'So run that you may obtain.' They that have done most, and served him longest, are most richly rewarded. But in mere donatives God will do with his own as he pleaseth. Instances in David : Ps. cxix. 98–100, 'Thou hast made me wiser than mine enemies, wiser than my teachers, wiser than the ancients.' God may furnish the younger with larger gifts of prudence, knowledge, boldness, zeal, and industrious activity. So Paul : 1 Cor. xv. 10, 'But by the grace of God I am what I am : and his grace which was bestowed on me was not in vain ; but I laboured more abundantly than they all ; yet not I, but the grace of God which was in me.' Now this might affect the apostles, who being leavened with carnal conceit, dreamed of great offices in the kingdom of the Messiah, that might become others more worthy than they, richly furnished to do God and the church service.

(2.) By the fault of those that did formerly excel ; by their pride,

carelessness, and security, they may be thrown back behind many, who for a time had nothing of God and goodness in them.

(1st.) For their pride; if they be conceited that they deserved more at God's hand than others. Many who, in the conceit of their own merit, were first, shall, in the course of God's dispensations, be found last: James iv. 5, 6, 'Do ye think the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? But he giveth more grace.' The envious, proud spirit is blasted: 'The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy, but he giveth more grace; wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.' Now, of all pride, spiritual pride is most provoking: as the pride of the legal justiciary: Luke xviii. 9, 14, 'And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.' The humble publican is preferred before the conceited pharisee. So the elder brother, who impersonateth those who grow conceited of their own profession, and envieth the grace of God to others: Luke xv. 29, 'And he answering, said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment, and yet thou never gavest me a kid that I might make merry with my friends.' If any of this leaven get into the hearts of God's children, God will prefer others before them. He will have his grace magnified and adored. And we must cherish an humble sense of all that we suffer and do for him, that we are nothing and that he is all.

(2d.) Their laziness. They do not improve and grow according to their standing, and the many advantages they have by so long acquaintance with God; but are apt to grow dead, drowsy, formal, and customary, and go on in a tract of duties without any life and vigour, Luke viii. 18. He that useth not grace shall not increase it; whereas others' diligence shall be blessed. Some start up that have more grace in a little time than they that have been getting many years.

(3d.) It may come to pass through their security. When they have had some losses for Christ, they may think all their trials are over. A man of long standing, being secure of salvation, may grow negligent, and supposing that he hath grace, and is possessed of the love of God, there needeth not such diligence as when he was doubtful; and if he go round in a course and tract of duty, and avoid grosser sins, it is enough, and he is now past all danger; and so is tempted to leave his first love and zeal, Rev. ii. 4. After the first labours of regeneration, and the difficulties of reconciliation with God, are past over, and he hath gotten some peace, and confidence, and freedom from the terrors of the law, then he is in danger of security, by which means all runneth to waste in the soul, and our nakedness will soon appear. Take, for an instance, David and Joseph. The one will show us the danger of laying aside of our fear and caution, the other the benefit of a constant watchfulness and circumspection: 2 Sam. xi. 2, 3, 'And it came to pass in an eveningtide that David arose from off his bed, and walking upon the roof of the king's house; and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon. And

David sent and inquired after the woman : and one said, Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite ?' Gen. xxxix. 7-9, ' And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph, and she said, Lie with me. But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, My master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand. There is none greater in the house than I ; neither hath he kept back anything from me but thee, because thou art his wife : how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God ?' The one was a young man, the other old, and well experienced in the ways of God : Joseph a single man, David had a multitude of wives ; Joseph had the advantage of secrecy, David was fain to make way to his adultery by other sins ; Joseph was solicited, David the solicitor ; yet how foully did the one fall, because secure ? The other had his heart possessed with the fear of God.

2. In appearance only. I have spoken to you of the softest interpretation of the words ; now I shall show you how they may be understood of those that are first in their own opinion only, or in the opinion of the world ; and so they that are first, that made a great blaze of profession for a while, and at length, last ; and so to be last is to be nothing. It is not meant of gradual declinings, but total apostasy, which is the end of many that are forward in outward show and profession of Christ and the gospel, do, after they have professed a religion awhile, suffer it to die away, and vanish into nothing ; a greater abuse and mischief to the church of God than if they had never professed : so they come to be least in the kingdom of heaven ; that is, to have no room nor place there, Mat. v. 19 ; and elsewhere, to reap sparingly is not to reap at all, 2 Cor. ix. 6 ; and Mat. xxi. 31, ' Publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.' It is not to be understood as if the one made haste into the kingdom of God, and the other were only slow and remiss, but did at length enter. No ; they were opposite, and averse, and never entered : ' This man went to his house justified rather than the other,' Luke xviii. 14. Not as if the pharisee was justified ; but the meaning is, not justified at all. There are many such speeches : so that many that have begun well for the present shall afterwards fall away, and be utterly excluded from the kingdom of heaven. Such as are foremost in outward shows and profession of religion are not always the best christians : Gal. iii. 3, 4, ' Are ye so foolish ? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh ? Have you suffered so many things in vain ? if it be yet in vain.' All former profession, praying, hearing, suffering, is lost, if we by one afterchange should reproach our former practice : Gal. v. 7, ' Ye did run well ; who did hinder you ?' They had made some progress in the ways of God ; their after-carriage may be no way answerable to their promising beginnings ; they may not only grow remiss and lazy, but strangely perverted by the allurements of the flesh and the world. A carnal and unsound heart will either take some offence, or by some temptation or other be taken off from the profession and practice of godliness, by sensuality, error, or worldliness : John vi. 66, ' From that time many of the disciples went back, and walked no more with him.' Demas for a time made a good profession, but afterwards was blinded by the world : 2

Tim. iv. 10, 'For Demas hath forsaken us, having embraced the present world.' So the scripture taketh notice of many other blazing meteors that fell from heaven like lightning. It will be so; all that are called are not elected: Mat. xx. 16, 'So the last shall be first, and the first last; for many are called, but few are chosen.' Therefore we should not be contented with the beginnings of christianity only; many times there are plenty of blossoms, and yet but little fruit, and those that have had good beginnings may afterwards greatly dishonour the name of Christ by their scandal or defections from him. They may seem to be first in the kingdom of heaven, and to be the very flower of christianity, but prove afterwards the very dregs of christianity. The foolish virgins had their lamps as well as the wise, but their oil failed; they went forth to meet the bridegroom as the wise did, but they were afterwards shut out, Mat. xxv. 10. It is not enough to make the profession plausible, but to see the practice be real and the heart sound. Some in an hopeful way went far, but at last all is lost.

Use 1. See that you do not make an ill use of it.

1. It is not to discourage men from beginning betimes, or remembering their Creator in the days of their youth. No; we should believe with the first. Epenetus is called the first-fruits of Achaia, Rom. xvi. 5. Surely it is an honour to be first in the service of God. The sooner the better. The more experience of God, the more inured to his blessed yoke. All the sacrifices of the law were to be offered to God young, and in full strength. We expect eternal life, and therefore no part of our temporal life should be diverted from God. Therefore to discourage beginning early were to play the devil's game, who would fain feast upon the flower and freshness of our youth, and leave God the scraps and fragments of old age. No; begin betimes; but hold on and keep your crown.

2. Not to quench your zeal and forwardness in profession of godliness, provided it have a root: Deut. v. 29, 'Oh that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and their children after them.' And that you keep up this life and vigour, and still stir up yourselves that you may not grow dead, and drowsy, and sleepy, but acquit yourselves with a like affection in the progress as in the beginning: Heb. iii. 14, 'For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.' An old disciple keepeth up his dignity still; it is not the newness of the thing affected him. No forwardness in religion is good, if you do afterwards grow remiss and lazy.

Use 2. The right use that we should make of it—

1. Is to excite men to a perseverance in a course of holiness and righteousness, that the end may answer the beginning. Do not break off the race till you come to the goal: Heb. iv. 1, 'Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left with us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it;' Phil. iii. 14, 'I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.' If you trust to your former righteousness, and commit iniquity, all is lost, Ezek. xxxiii. 13. No; this work must be brought to an end, that you

may not be rejected and disallowed at last, after all that you have done and suffered for Christ. They came into the vineyard at several hours, Mat. xx., but all tarried till the close of the day. Some are converted sooner, some later; but all hold out to the end. In the work of redemption Christ never gave over till all was finished, John xix. 30. So must we never give over till we can say, It is finished; or, with Paul, 2 Tim. iv. 8, 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.' We have no licence to slacken our course and give over till all be finished, and then we keep our precedency to the last.

2. To press you to diligence in growth and progress, that you may still go on from strength to strength, Ps. lxxxiv. 7; for this is the way to keep up your precedency. Many do not fall off, nor make shipwreck of the faith; yet they make no progress, but are soon outstripped by those that come after; they do not provoke them to an holy emulation: Heb. x. 24, 'Let us consider one another to provoke to love and good works.' Actively we must provoke others by our example, and passively we must provoke ourselves; we must not justify and encourage that common negligence and forgetfulness of God which prevaieth in the world. Cold dealing in christianity doth so; but when zealous in the best things, we enkindle one another, and awaken one another to a greater zeal and mindfulness of God and the world to come. You should condemn the world by your seriousness, and you harden them in their impenitency by your straitness and worldliness, as if you had no other hope than what the world can afford you.

3. To an humble sincerity, thinking meanly of yourselves, or anything that you do or have done. Surely the first are last in their own account. If you are low and poor in your own eyes, affect not to be great in the eyes of others. God will show you that it is his grace made the difference, by raising up other instruments of his glory that have not half your advantages, and yet how do they grow both in the knowledge and love of Christ. Twice Christ marvelled; at the faith of the centurion, having so little means: Mat. viii. 10, 'When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said unto them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel;' and at the unbelief of his own countrymen, who had so great means: Mark vi. 6, 'And he marvelled at their unbelief.' And truly it is an humbling consideration to us when others have thriven in less time, and by smaller means than you have had; though low in the esteem of the world, yet outshine you in meekness, patience, and blameless conversation, and fervent prayers.

'And the last shall be first.' The last, such as are backward as to any affection to heavenly things, yea, afar off as to any profession or sense of religion; these shall in time to come show themselves more forward than others who were in Christ before them; prove glorious christians at the last: it may be so.

Now here are 'first' and 'last.' God doth not call all his elect at once, but some sooner, some later. Andrew and Peter were first called, and then Philip. Some called young; as Timothy, 2 Tim. iii. 15. Some in elder age. Obadiah feared God from his youth, 1 Kings xviii.

12; Lydia and the jailer in middle age, Acts xvi.; Manasseh about sixty years of age, near on his death, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 19.

Use 3. Let us not despair of any.

1. Judge of nothing before the time. They may be called that are afar off: John x. 16, 'Other sheep have I.' Christ knoweth the elect, looketh upon himself engaged to bring them in. We know them not, but Christ knoweth them.

2. As soon as you are called, mind your work: Col. i. 6, 'Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world, and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you since the day ye have heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth.'

3. These last shall be first. Many late converted ones grow eminent in grace, for these reasons—

[1.] Those that have been great sinners love much, because much was forgiven to them: Luke vii. 47, 'Her sins, which are many, are forgiven her; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.' It was long ere they would hearken to God and regard his offers; therefore now they bestir themselves the more.

[2.] They live in a constant admiration of grace; whereas others may bear up themselves too much upon their own worth: James iv. 6, 'Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.'

[3.] Because they recompense their long delay by their after diligence: Eph. v. 16, 'Redeeming the time;' as travellers that set out late ride the faster: 1 Peter iv. 3, 'For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness and excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries;' 2 Sam. xix. 11, they that were last in bringing back the king to his house, were most zealous for his interest afterwards.

[4.] They look upon themselves obliged to do as much for God as they did for Satan: Rom. vi. 19, 'For as you have yielded your members servants to uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.' Therefore those that have been grievous sinners, when God toucheth their hearts, prove eminent saints and seek to excel in righteousness and holiness.

Use 1. You that are converted late should double your diligence. As you have been instances of the corrupt vigour of nature, so also of the sacred power of grace: or if recovered out of some eminent fall, as Peter, John xxi. 15, Peter had been boasting before, that if all men forsook him, yet he would not forsake him. Now Christ puts the question to Peter, John xxi. 15, 'Simon Peter, lovest thou me more than these?' He expecteth not only love, but comparatively more love; not only to check his making comparisons, but also to show that those that are recovered by grace from grievous errors should be more eminent in love to Christ. The renewed sense of pardoning mercy should sharpen their affections to Christ, and we should show more unfeigned zeal.

Use 2. Do not upbraid others with past sins, when they are afterwards more forward and earnest in the ways of God. We should not rake in that filth which God hath covered. Many a choice instrument of God's glory hath been recovered out of Satan's clutches.

SERMON UPON 1 JOHN I. 7.

And the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.—

1 JOHN i. 7.

IN the context the apostle speaketh of communion with God. Now communion with God we cannot have till we be reconciled to him by Christ, and none can be looked upon as reconciled to him by Christ, but those that endeavour conformity to God in purity and holiness; for the manner of speech is hypothetical and continual: 'If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.'

In the words observe—

1. A privilege or benefit; to be cleansed from all sin.
2. The extent, 'From all sin.' Original, actual, small, great, omissions and commissions, past sins, present infirmities.
3. The meritorious cause of it, 'The blood of Jesus Christ.'
4. The subject to which it is applied, or the parties interested; they that 'walk in the light, as he is in the light.'

Doct. That remission of sins which is promised in the new covenant to the sanctified is procured by the blood of Jesus Christ.

I. The privilege or benefit is to be cleansed from sin. The phrase importeth both justification and sanctification. Where cleansing from sin is spoken of as a duty required of us, it always importeth sanctification: Isa. i. 16, 'Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings before mine eyes, cease to do evil.' But where it is spoken of as a mercy received from God, there it implieth sometimes both benefits; for both go together: as Eph. v. 26, 'He gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.' It implieth there our whole translation from the state of sin and death to an estate of grace and life: both justification, or doing away the guilt of sin, and sanctification, or the renovation of our natures. Sometimes it implieth one benefit only or principally, which sense must be determined by the context. As, for instance, when both benefits are mentioned together, and one of them in other terms: as 1 John i. 9, 'To forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' There cleansing intendeth sanctification, which, with pardon, is made a distinct branch of our recovery.

When this cleansing is ascribed to the blood of Christ, it principally

noteth justification; when to the Spirit, sanctification. So they are distributed, 1 Cor. vi. 11, 'But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' As to give instances: Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 'I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean.' That water signifieth the sanctifying Spirit; and his cleansing work is sanctification. So Titus iii. 5, 'But according to his mercy, he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.' But when it is ascribed to the blood of Christ, it principally signifieth justification, as in the text: and Rev. i. 5, 'And washed us from our sins in his own blood;' and in many other places. Well, then, when the blood of Christ is said to be beneficial to cleanse us, it is meant of his taking off the guilt of sin, and our obligation to wrath. Sin is the whole cause of God's displeasure against us, and that which maketh us odious in his sight, as a filthy thing is to us. Therefore when we are freed from sin by the death of Christ, we are said to be cleansed. Guilt is not a quality, but a relation, or an obligation to punishment, which the law of God hath made the sinner's due, which relation and obligation ceaseth when that is done which our supreme Lord and Judge requir-eth. For man is bound to God no further than God will have him bound. And when the obligation is dissolved, the punishment is no more in force.

To understand this distinctly, we may, with respect to justification, consider three things in sin—(1.) The fault; (2.) The guilt; and (3.) The punishment.

1. The fault is a criminal action. This is not taken away, either as a natural action or a faulty action, contrary to the law of God; for that is impossible. Not as a natural action; for such a fault we committed, either by omitting good, or doing evil. *Factum infectum fieri nequit*; that which is done cannot be undone. Nor as it is a faulty action contrary to the law of God. This Christ taketh not away neither; for that were to disannul the obliging force or authority of the law. The sins we committed are sins still. Christ came not to make the law less holy, or the fault to be no fault. What shall we say then to this first thing in sin? The fault is not taken away; but it is passed by as it is the foundation of our guilt. The scripture sets it forth by the metaphor of removing it out of God's sight: Ps. ciii. 12, 'As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us;' that we may not be objects displeasing to him. And it is expressed, 'Thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back,' Isa. xxxviii. 17; as men cast behind their backs such things as they list not to look on, or remember. In humiliation we set them before our face; but in pardoning, God casts them behind his back. So in a like expression he is said 'to pass by the transgression of the covenant of his heritage,' Micah vii. 18. Pardon is a passing over, a seeing and not seeing the faults of his people. God quits the plea, doth not call to an account for them. It may further be represented by taking off the filthy garment wherewith the high priest was clothed when he stood before the Lord: Zech. iii. 4, 'Take away the filthy garments from him, and unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.' Whilst we are clothed with filthy

garments, we are displeasing objects in God's sight, therefore they are removed, that we may be accepted.

2. The guilt. There is a twofold guilt, *reatus culpæ* and *reatus pœnæ*; the guilt of sin and the guilt of punishment. The *reatus culpæ*, or guilt of sin, is seen by applying the law to the fact, and both to the person that hath committed it: 1 John iii. 4, 'Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law, for sin is the transgression of the law.' Such a fact is sin, because the law forbiddeth it, and I am a sinner because I have done it. Now this is not taken away; my faulty act is an offence, and I am an offender, and none of us can be reputed as those that never omitted any duty, or committed any sin; for the new covenant is not set up to make us innocent, but pardonable upon certain terms. And when we come to God as our offended governor, we plead not as innocent, but as sinners, desiring that in the behalf of Christ our sins may be forgiven to us. There is also *reatus pœnæ*, or guilt of punishment, which resulteth from the sanction of the law, binding us to suffer such penalties as the law hath determined. Now this may be considered, *quoad meritum, vel quoad eventum*, according to the merit, or according to the event; according to the merit of the action, what the action in itself deserveth, which is condemnation to punishment; this Christ hath not taken away, nor ever intended to take away. Every sinful action is *in se, et merito operis*, in itself, and by the desert of the work, damnable or deserving damnation; but *quoad eventum*, as to the event and effect: 'There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ,' Rom. viii. 1. By the new covenant we are discharged from the obligation to punishment, and so are said to be cleansed, purged, pardoned. This will be more clear and plain to you by considering what is required of us in suing out our pardon. We must not deny the fault or sin, but confess it: 1 John i. 9, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' And we must acknowledge the guilt and desert of God's righteous law: 1 Cor. xi. 31, 'If we judge ourselves, we shall not be judged of the Lord.' There must be self-accusing and self-judging. In self-accusing we confess *reatum culpæ*, the guilt of sin, our breach of the law. In self-judging we confess *reatum pœnæ*, that we deserve condemnation; without either of which there would be no due recourse to God for pardon, or that humiliation and brokenness of heart which the scripture calleth for, or else these would be performed perfunctorily and formally, if there were not a ground in the nature of the thing. For if the guilt of the fault were utterly dissolved, how can I heartily accuse myself of such and such things before the Lord? Or if the guilt of punishment were so far dissolved that my actions did not in their own nature, and by God's righteous law, deserve such condemnation and punishment, how can I broken-heartedly acknowledge myself to have deserved the greatest evil which his law threatened? So that this cleansing of us is not a vacating the action, as if it had never been done, or a denial of the fault, as if it were no fault, nor a disannulling of the desert of punishment, but a remission of the punishment itself, or a discharge from the penalty which sin hath made our due debt.

3. The punishment. Where sin is pardoned, there is a discharge

from the punishment due upon the guilt. Sin is not imputed to condemnation; nay, the man is dealt with before the tribunal of the judge as if he were pure and clean from all sin. He deserves indeed to be accursed, but the penitent, broken-hearted sinner is accepted to pardon, and shall be exempted from eternal punishment: John v. 29, 'He hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation;' that is, he hath escaped eternal death and shall enjoy everlasting life.

But now for the question, whether all sins be forgiven at once; past, present, and to come? I must answer negatively; sins to come cannot properly be said to be pardoned, for till they are committed we are not guilty of them, and this would be not so much a pardon, as an indulgence and licence to sin; such as the man of sin is wont to give to his superstitious adherents, indulgences for so many years to come. Then a man once converted could no otherwise than frivolously pray, 'Forgive us our trespasses.' It would take away care of avoiding sin to come, and repentance for what is past. Daily sins displease God, and deserve death. Forgiveness of sin sometimes is spoken of with respect to the purchase: Heb. x. 14, 'For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.' There needeth no more sacrifice. Sometimes with respect to the offer in the new covenant: Acts xiii. 38, 39, 'Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins. And by him all that believe are justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.' The same covenant pardoneth all; there needeth no other covenant. Sometimes it may be considered as applied as soon as we do believe: Rom. viii. 1, 'There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ;' Eph. i. 6, 'Wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.' By pardon we partake of a threefold benefit.

[1] The state of the person is altered: from a child of wrath he is put into a state of grace; from a child of the devil, made a child of God: John i. 12, 'But to as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.'

[2.] There is an actual remission of all past sins till that day.

[3.] There is a right to sue out pardon for daily failings: John xiii. 10, 'Jesus saith unto him, He that is washed needeth not, save to wash his feet.' We contract new defilement every day by going up and down in a dirty world. Well, then, the certain remedy is provided, which will pardon our sins as soon as we are capable.

II. The extent of this benefit, 'All sin.' This showeth how perfect this deliverance is. If we should be freed from some sins only, and left under the guilt of others, we could never be upon sure terms. Though the self-judging sinner seeth multitudes of sins in himself, yet that will not hinder his free and full pardon; nor need it to obstruct the peaceable estate of it in his conscience. For where God forgiveth one sin, he forgiveth all: Ps. ciii. 3, 'Who pardoneth all thy sins,' Micah vii. 18, 'Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.' Sins are of several kinds, original, actual; of omission, commission; small, great; secret, open; past enormities, and present infirmities. Look into thy bill; what owest thou? A christian is amazed when

he cometh to a serious account with God. But he needeth not be discouraged, since upon sincere and unfeigned repentance God pardoneth all that is past, and will not be severe, notwithstanding present failings and imperfections. All sins are mortal, all of them damnable: wherefore, if all sins be not pardoned, we remain in danger of the curse. Any one sin let alone is sufficient to exclude us out of heaven. Therefore, first or last, all is pardoned. Justice hath no more to seek of Christ, and we have full leave to sue out our pardon in his name.

III. The meritorious cause of it, 'The blood of Christ.'

Here let us see—(1.) What the blood of Christ doth; (2.) Whence it hath this power to cleanse us from all our sins.

1. What the blood of Christ doth. It may be considered three ways—as shed, pleaded, sprinkled.

[1.] As shed. This is necessary by way of merit and satisfaction, to obtain for us the pardon of sins. After the entrance of sin into the world, God, that is inclined to do good to his creatures, would have it manifestly appear that he hated sin, and loved righteousness: therefore, sin being already committed, and the punishment of eternal death incurred, he would show the hatred of his justice and holiness against sin, and yet spare the sinner: Rom. iii. 25, 'Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins.' Heb. ix. 22, 'Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins.' And in the gospel, Christ is the true sacrifice for sin, accepted by God for sinful man, that he may be cleansed and purified, or freed from the wrath and punishment which sin had made his due. Hereby is enough done to signify God's purest holiness, and his utter hatred and detestation of sin, and to declare his love of justice, and to keep up the authority of his law, and instruct the world that it is a dangerous thing to transgress it.

[2.] As pleaded—(1.) By Christ in heaven; (2.) By us in prayer.

(1.) By Christ in heaven; for Heb. ix. 12, 'But by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.' It is that which is presented to God as the full price and ransom of souls.

(2.) By us in prayer; for the apostle saith, Heb. x. 19, 'Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.' When we beg any blessing, especially this necessary benefit, the pardon of our sins, that which supporteth our confidence of audience and acceptance with God is the blood of Christ.

[3.] As sprinkled or applied, for so we are told: Heb. xii. 24, 'You are come to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.' It is not enough that his blood be shed, or pleaded, but it must be sprinkled. In itself it hath a cleansing power and virtue; but being sprinkled, it doth actually cleanse and purify from sin. The sprinkling of the blood of the paschal lamb saved the house from the stroke of the destroying angel, Exod. xii. 11, Heb. xi. 28. The destroying angel passed by all those whose door-posts are sprinkled. And all the elect are said to be saved 'by the sanctification of the Spirit, and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus,' 1 Peter i. 2. And the apostle reasoneth it: Heb. ix. 13, 14, 'For if the blood of bulls and goats,

and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works to serve the living God.' In the type of the red heifer there was a solemn sprinkling to the purifying of the unclean, which answereth the purging of our consciences by the blood of Christ: the one purifieth the flesh, the other the conscience: the one freed from such penalties as the law imposed for legal and ceremonial offences, the other from dead works, which are pollutions before God; and so are spiritual evils, and eternal penalties, that unfit us for communion with God. Well, then, we see there must be application; therefore let us consider how it is to be applied, or the means of sprinkling, both on God's and our part.

(1.) On God's part, the means of applying are, external or internal: for the external means we have an account of them, Eph. v. 26, 'That he might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water through the word:' that is, by the word and sacraments; so he applieth to us the virtue of his death.

(1st.) By the preaching of the word. The great duty of the ministers of the gospel is to sprinkle the hearts of the people with the blood of Christ, by the preaching of the new covenant: not only to assure them that pardon of sins may be obtained: Acts x. 43, 'To him gave all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth on him shall receive remission of sins;' but to instruct them how it may be had; that such as repent and believe, and do what becometh either duty, shall be assuredly cleansed from sin and accepted with God. The apostle telleth us the sum and substance of his preaching was, repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, Acts xx. 21. Repentance towards God is necessary, that we may acknowledge our obligation to his law, bemoaning our former sin and misery, and devoting ourselves anew to him, that we may do his will, and walk in his ways. Faith in Jesus Christ is necessary, that those that have benefit by him may own the author of their deliverance, and put their cause into his hands, that he may reconcile them unto God. Repentance is our turning to God, as faith is a thankful owning of our Redeemer. Thus the word giveth both instruction and assurance; for it is both a doctrine, and a grant or charter.

(2d.) The sacraments are the means of this sprinkling, or applying the cleansing virtue of Christ's blood. These are two; baptism: Acts ii. 38, 'Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus, for the remission of sins;' the Lord's supper: Mat. xxvi. 28, 'For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.' Both excite and assure us of the participation of this benefit by Christ. They excite as they are applied to every one; for every one that submitteth to these ordinances bindeth himself to seek after this benefit in the way wherein Christ will dispense it; and this they do assure us as they work, increase, and strengthen faith in us, and are a solemn investiture to Christ and his benefits.

(3d.) Internal; by the effectual operation of the Spirit, as the fruit of Christ's intercession. Therefore it is said, 1 John iii. 8, 'There are

three that bear witness on earth, the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one. The *τὸ κρινόμενον*, or thing to be proved, is that Jesus is the Son of God. The Spirit beareth witness to this, applying the blood of Christ to the conscience, and purifying and sanctifying them as with clean water. These are not one, as the first; but these agree in one, as they do establish the same conclusion, as they do concurringly establish it: neither simply nor apart; not water apart, nor blood apart, nor Spirit apart, but they all concur; the Spirit, by water and blood, appeasing our guilty consciences, and washing away the guilt of sin. And it is said, 1 John v. 10, 'He that believeth on the Son of God hath his witness in himself;' the Spirit by the blood of Christ pacifying his conscience, and sanctifying his heart: Rom. v. 5, 'The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us.' The business is, what is meant here by the love of God? I take it for the great instance of his love, the reconciling the world to himself by Jesus Christ; for it immediately followeth, 'For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.' Surely it is not taken for our love to God, but his love to us, which was chiefly seen in that great instance. We have the effect and feeling, the sense and comfort of it, by the Spirit.

(2.) The means of sprinkling on our part; for until we believe, the blood of Christ produceth not its effect upon our souls: Rom. iii. 25, 'Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.' Faith believeth the great love of Christ in the shedding of his blood for the expiation of our sins, and doth excite us to live in a constant course of obedience to him who died for us: 2 Cor. v. 14, 15, 'For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them.' All that sincerely believe in Christ, and embrace the gospel, have their sins pardoned, are accepted with God in Christ, and live in amity with him: Rom. viii. 1, 'There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ.' They are now actually admitted into communion with God, and the privileges of Christ's death. But these who thus believe, how far obedience concurrereth I will not now debate; it is enough to say, that sincere believers are freed from sin, and the direful consequences of it.

2. Whence hath the blood of Christ such a cleansing virtue? Partly from the institution of God, and partly from its own intrinsic worth and value.

[1.] From the institution of God: Col. i. 19, 20, 'It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell. And having made peace through the blood of his cross by him to reconcile all things unto himself, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven.' It pleased the Father to make use of the blood of his cross to reconcile the world to himself. Divine institution puts a value upon things; for surely God accepts what he hath appointed, let it be otherwise never so considerable, anything is of force unto that whereunto God hath ordained it. God's will is the reason and cause of all things. If God will appoint bread and wine to be the mysterious instruments of his grace, who can contradict his will? Well, then, this is one ground of our

confidence, that Christ is not a mediator of our choosing. If we had offered God a satisfaction, or Christ had interposed of his own accord, we might have met with a like answer as Moses had : Exod. xxxii. 32, 33, 'If thou wilt, forgive their sin : and if not, blot me out of thy book. And the Lord said, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.' But God will not refuse what he hath appointed himself.

[2.] From its own intrinsic worth and value. There is more in Christ than what an institution puts upon him.

(1.) The dignity of the person ; who is not only perfectly holy, and separate from sinners, but hath also a divine virtue and power. Both concur in Christ, who was that holy thing born of the virgin, and was also a person subsisting in the Godhead. Who had a fulness of all grace, Col. i. 19. 'And the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily,' Col. ii. 9. Not mystically, as in believers ; not symbolically, as in the sacraments ; nor typically, and by way of shadow, as in the types of the law ; but really and personally. And therefore it is said in the text, 'The blood of Jesus Christ his Son ;' and elsewhere : 'Redeemed by the blood of God,' Acts xx. 28. If the person satisfying be an infinite person, so is his satisfaction. The scripture improveth this notion, both in opposition to the sin of Adam ; there is a *πολλῶ μᾶλλον*, a much more, put upon Christ : Rom. v. 15-17, 'But not as the offence, so also is the free gift ; for if through the offence of one man many were made sinners ; much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift ; for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences to justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one ; much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.' The value of the first Adam did merely arise from God's institution ; yet one act of the first Adam was enough to ruin millions of souls, because God instituted him to be a public head and common root to all his seed. God hath also instituted Christ, but his acts were much more of an unlimited influence, because without any institution he was really better worth than all the world. So in opposition to the ceremonies of the law, there is a *πολλῶ μᾶλλον*, a much more, put upon Christ : Heb. ix. 13, 14, 'For if the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ purge your consciences from dead works to serve the living God ?' The rites of old were able to work that for which they were ordained, cleanse from all uncleanness, and so stand before God in his worship ; but besides, there is an infinite worth in Christ to purge the conscience from sin. His person gave a value to his suffering, so that one serveth for all. He is worth millions of us. His temporary sufferings are enough to take off the penalty of eternal punishment due for the disobedience of the whole world.

(2.) The nature of the work. It was a glorious act of obedience. Do not think God is cruel, and standeth upon a little blood. No ; he standeth upon his honour. He hath made a law, and his law must have satisfaction ; the debt of obedience must be paid : Rom. v. 19,

'As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous;' Phil. ii. 8, 'He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.' The authority of the lawgiver was to be salved by obedience; and the dread of the penalty, by an obedience to the death. It standeth, the Mediator, in no less than his blood, before God will make friendship with us. The law said, 'In the day thou sinnest thou shalt die the death.' Therefore Christ must lay down his life, by a most shameful, painful, cursed death. He that is above all law taketh the yoke of obedience upon him. His suffering death for the sin of man at the command of his Father, was the highest degree of obedience that ever was performed to God. So much love showed to God and man, so much self-denial, so much humility and patience, such resignation of himself to God, as cannot be paralleled.

(3.) The grievousness of the sufferings which Christ endured. He suffered the punishment due to us, in his agonies and desertion; and so 'carried our griefs, and bear our sorrows,' Isa. liii. 4. His bloody sweat, his prayers and strong cries, his troubles of soul, show it; he was made sin, and made a curse, for us. What can be expected more? He not only bore our sins on his body on the tree, but we read also of his soul sufferings: John xii. 27, 'Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say?' His desertion: Mat. xxvii. 46, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' He was forsaken for a while, that we might be received for ever. All these things give hope to penitent believers that there is a sure ground laid whereby they may be cleansed from their sins.

IV. The persons that have this benefit are such as 'walk in the light, as he is in the light.' They propound no lower pattern to themselves than the perfection and excellences of God. Here it is disputed by divines what respect this qualification hath to the benefit? Whether merely as a sign, or as a condition. The form is conditional. The generality determine that this is propounded as a sign of our communion with God. But others urge against them, that then there may be communion with God while we are in our sins; for *omne signum est posterius signato*; the sign is after the thing signified. Be it a natural sign, as the smoke of fire; or an arbitrary sign, as a tavern by a bush, or a servant by his badge and cognisance. Therefore, for some time at least, a man hath communion with God before he is holy. But this argument may be answered thus, that sanctification is the first gift. We are first sanctified, and then justified; when a man sanctified walketh in the light, it is a sign of his sanctification and justification. But they further urge that the apostle discourseth not of the evidence, but means; therefore it is best to say, It is both a sign and a condition without which we cannot have benefit by Christ's death; but the first condition is faith; next, love and holiness to continue our interest in this privilege. Those that walk in the light do in some sort resemble God, and endeavour to be more like him every day in goodness or holiness.

Use 1. For information in sundry particulars.

1. It showeth us the heinous nature of sin. A deep stain it is that could not be washed off but by the blood of Christ. All in their natural

estate are become filthy and odious to God: Ps. xiv. 3, 'They are all gone aside; they are altogether become filthy;' objects displeasing in the eye of holiness, therefore we need to be cleansed. The leper cried out, 'Unclean;' so must we.

2. It showeth us the great love of Christ: Rev. i. 5, 'Who hath loved us, and washed us in his own blood.' That he would die an accursed, shameful death, to recover us to God, our hearts should be deeply possessed with a sense of his love. There are three things set it forth to us—(1.) The way he took to cleanse us; (2.) The fulness of the benefit; (3.) The daily application.

[1.] The way he took to cleanse us. It was by his blood: 1 John iv. 10, 'Herein was love; not that we loved God, but God loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins.'

[2.] The fulness of the benefit: 'His blood cleanseth from all sin.' There needeth no other sacrifice, no other covenant. It is done perfectly: Heb. x. 14, 'For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.'

[3.] The daily application. This fountain is always open. We sin daily, and every day we sue out our discharge in Christ's name. The best of God's children make but too much work for pardoning mercy. We contract new filth by walking up and down in a dirty, defiling world: John xiii. 10, 'He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet.' Now where much is forgiven, there should be the more love, Luke vii. 47.

Use 2. To persuade you to make use of Christ's death for this effect. If the price be paid by Christ, and accepted by God for the ransom of souls, and the liberty proclaimed to us, surely it is our own fault if we remain yet in bonds. Either you are senseless of your spiritual condition, and so despise the fruits of Christ's death, or else you have not that esteem of the blood of Christ as you ought to have, as if he had not made full satisfaction. Both are great crimes.

1. Consider your misery by reason of sin. The Redeemer hath no work to do in stupid and senseless souls. They that know not their misery regard not their remedy. The offers of the gospel are always made to the sensible, the broken-hearted, the weary, the thirsty, the heavy-laden. Many are welcome to Christ that know not themselves penitent believers; but never any welcome that knew not themselves condemned sinners: Luke xviii. 13, 14, 'And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.'

2. Be firmly persuaded of the sufficiency of what Christ hath done for man's redemption, that you may not have slight thoughts of the blood of Christ. It is that blood by which Christ entered into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us, Heb. ix. 12. It is the blood of the 'everlasting covenant, which maketh us perfect in every good work,' Heb. xiii. 20, 21; that precious blood by which we are redeemed from our vain conversations, 1 Peter i. 18; that blood which purges our conscience from dead works, Heb. ix. 14.

3. Make hearty application of it. Lay the plaster upon the sore. In the word, when you hear the offers of grace in the gospel, that God desireth not the death of a sinner, that he is willing to save those that believe in Jesus Christ, put in for a share: 1 Tim. i. 15, 'This is a true and faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief;' Rom. viii. 31, 'What shall we say then to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?' Job v. 27, 'Hear it, and know it for thy good.' Bring it home to thine heart. So in the Lord's supper, where we solemnly remember his death; there we hear of the blood of the new testament which was shed for the remission of sins. Now apply it: 1 Cor. x. 16, 'The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?'

4. Labour to make your claim more sure. Walk in the light. The ground of comfort is the blood of Christ; the matter of comfort is the covenant; but we must look to our claim and title, or else this grace is not brought home to us, nor we sanctified and enabled to live to God: John xvii. 19, 'And for their sakes I sanctify myself that they also might be sanctified through the truth;' 1 John iii. 7, 'He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.'

SERMON UPON JOB X. 2.

I will say unto God, Do not condemn me ; show me wherefore thou contendest with me.—JOB X. 2.

THESE words are spoken by Job in the bitterness of his soul, and as one weary of his many and heavy troubles. In them take notice—

1. Of a resolution of addressing himself to God, and bringing his complaint before him, 'I will say unto God,' &c.

2. The matter of his address ; it is double—

[1.] A deprecation of condemnation, 'Do not condemn me.'

[2.] An inquiry after the reasons of his afflictions, 'Show me wherefore thou contendest with me.'

Let me first explain the letter of the words, and then come to the sense.

1. The deprecation 'Do not condemn me.' Do not make me or count me wicked. So Heb. his conscience did testify of his uprightness, and therefore he desireth God would not deal with him as wicked. It is explained ver. 7, 'Thou knowest I am not wicked.' Condemnation is the sentence of a judge. Now in a judge three things are considerable—(1.) His opinion ; (2.) His sentence ; (3.) His execution. With respect to all three the word is used.

[1.] The opinion of a judge deeming or counting one wicked ; as to justify is to count one righteous : Rom. viii. 33, 34, 'It is God that justifies ; who is he that condemns ?' So to condemn is to count one wicked. This respects the inward mind, and what appeareth on evidence. So it is said, Prov. xvii. 15, 'He that justifieth the wicked, and condemneth the just, they are both an abomination unto the Lord.' It is not meant of judicial absolution and condemnation, but in private opinion.

[2.] The sentence passed or pronounced on the tribunal. So to condemn is to declare one unrighteous or punishable : Deut. xxv. 1, 'If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them, then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked ;' that is, pass sentence upon them, pronounce them wicked. Otherwise to declare our opinion is not always lawful. We may *pejus timere*, fear the worst, for our caution ; but not *simpliciter definire*, absolutely determine, till called to the judgment.

[3.] The execution. When they are dealt with as wicked : 1 Kings viii. 32, 'Then hear thou in heaven, and judge thy servants, condemning the wicked, to bring his way upon his own head ; and justifying

the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness.' Like expressions there are often : as Ps. cix. 7, 'When he shall be judged, let him be condemned;' Heb. 'go out wicked, or guilty.' So Ps. cxxv. 5, 'They shall be led forth with the workers of iniquity;' that is, as malefactors to execution. Now all these senses are intended, opinion, sentence, stroke; chiefly the last. Do not deal with me as a wicked person, or afflict me as an evil-doer. He desires God to deal more tenderly with him, not as a judge, but a father: Jer. x. 24, 'O Lord, correct me, but in judgment; not in anger, lest thou bring me to nothing.'

2. His inquiry after the cause of his afflictions, 'Show me wherefore thou contendest with me.' The word 'contendest' is emphatical. It notes God's contending with man as an adversary in a suit or cause. Before he considered God as a judge; now as an advocate pleading, not for, but against him. For providence is a kind of arguing and pleading, not by words, but deeds; and therefore called his controversy; as Hosea iv. 1, 'The Lord hath a controversy with the land;' and Micah vi. 2, 'The Lord hath a controversy with his people, and will plead with Israel.' This controversy is pleaded with sharp afflictions whereby God appeareth against them as their opposite party. Now Job desireth to know the reason and cause, he having feared God and eschewed evil. And yet God suffered all this misery to come upon him, as if he were condemned and executed without trial.

[1.] The sense. Before I tell you that, let me note to you that there is a mixed nature in a child of God, but a prevalency of the better part. Accordingly this scripture must be explained. There is some weakness bewrayed in these words, but more grace.

(1.) It was weakness that he mistook the present dispensation, thinking that God condemned him when he did but try him. He may sharply chastise those whom he loveth and justifieth, yet not condemn them as wicked; rather the contrary: 1 Cor. xi. 32, 'When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.'

(2.) It was weakness, in that he thought there was no sufficient cause that God should condemn him; whereas the common pollution wherein we are involved doth sufficiently justify the severest trials he can bring upon us. He hath cause enough to condemn his best servants, and those that are not wicked; yet because they are sinners, ought to look upon themselves, in strict justice, as deserving the greatest punishments: Ps. cxxx. 3, 'If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, O Lord, who should stand?' Ps. cxliii. 2, 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.'

(3.) Clearly he was under some perturbation and passion; for he considered God not only as a judge, but as a litigant party with whom he might expostulate about his quarrel and controversy: 'Show me wherefore thou contendest with me;' whereas an absolute submission is necessary. Partly because of his sovereignty: Job ix. 12, 'He giveth no account of his matters.' Partly because of his exact justice. God's judgments are sometimes secret, but always just: Ps. cxvii. 2, 'Clouds and darkness are round about him.' There are reasons which we see not.

(4.) Here is some taxing of his providence, as if his dealing were

unjust, and God did oppress him with his great power. For so it followeth, ver. 3, 'Is it good for thee that thou shouldst oppress, and despise the work of thine hands?'

(5.) In all such cases there is an over-valuing of our worldly comforts and conveniences, and we look more to the loss and want of these things than the use and benefit we should get by the affliction; whereas a christian should more regard the fruit of adversity than the trouble of it: Heb. xii. 11, 'No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby.' And if God awaken him to more seriousness in religion, by his smart, loss, and want, his pleasure is more than the pain, and the gain than the want and loss.

[2.] There is something good and gracious in it.

(1.) That he bringeth his complaint to God. He doth not complain of God, but to God. To murmur in our own bosoms, or to vent our discontent to others, is in effect to slander God behind his back. Therefore his resolution to go to God is commendable: 'I will say unto God,' saith Job. This is to bring our complaint before his face.

(2.) It is good that it was grievous to him to be in the state of a condemned man. Not only to be counted a sinner, but as wicked, or one that was not sincere and approved of God, because his judgments seemed to put him in that number. To be accepted with the Lord, and approved of the Lord, is a christian's all.

(3.) That he desireth to know the cause, end, and use of his afflictions. This is good and holy if it be done—

(1st.) Not to satisfy curiosity, but conscience; for sometimes we may be in the dark about the reasons of God's dealings with us; as 2 Sam. xxi. 1, 'David inquired of the Lord,' concerning the famine, that he might know his duty.

(2d.) By way of humble supplication, not by way of expostulation, as if we were innocent, and hardly dealt withal.

Doct. 1. That open and free dealing with God in our bitterness and troubles is better than to smother and stifle our griefs, or vent them in discontent to others.

So Job saith here, 'I will say unto God,' &c. Thus David telleth us that he practised this open and free dealing with success: Ps. cxix. 26, 'I declared my ways, and thou heardest me;' that is, he opened his whole case to God, conflicts, distresses, hopes, supports, sorrows, dangers, hide nothing from him; as a man will acquaint his bosom friend with all his condition, or as sick patients will tell the physician how it is with them. Now thus to do is—

1. Filial ingenuity; for the Spirit of adoption worketh most in our addresses to the throne of grace; and there it betrayeth itself in a *παρρησία*, a telling God our mind: Heb. iv. 16, 'Let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need;' Heb. x. 19, 'Having boldness and access with confidence.' Laying forth our whole estate and condition before him, sins to be pardoned, doubts to be resolved, miseries to be redressed, perplexities to be helped by his counsel, our weaknesses to be confirmed

by his strength, our griefs and fears, that he may pity us and help us. Tell God of all; your temptations, passions; these you should distinctly lay open before him. Natural pride and self-love will not let us take shame upon ourselves, and guilt is shy of God; but the Spirit of adoption bringeth us to him with openness of heart.

2. There is in it candid simplicity. David's *maschil*, or psalm of instruction, viz. Ps. xxxii., shows us thus much; for ver. 2, he mentioneth 'guile of spirit,' which made him hang off from God. But then you find by the 5th verse, he had come to his ease sooner if he had sooner confessed his sin. We are in distress of conscience till this be done; especially when trouble of conscience cometh upon us for some great sin, which God will cause to be manifested for his glory. Till we come to a clearness and openness of mind, we keep Satan's counsel. Moses had a privy sore, which he was loath to disclose, and pleadeth other things, insufficiency, want of elocution; but carnal fear was the main; therefore God gently toucheth his privy sore: Exod. iv. 19, 'The Lord said unto Moses in Midian, Go, return into Egypt, for all the men are dead which sought thy life.' He never pleaded that; but God knew what was the inward let. It is a mighty thing sincerely to open our hearts to God.

3. It argueth a man given to prayer when all our complaints run in that channel, and if we have any grievance and burden upon us, we bring it before the Lord.

But must we pray when we have a distemper upon us, and come to God with our raving passions? I answer—

[1.] If this be known, we must get it removed; for we must lift up pure hands, without wrath and doubting, 1 Tim. ii. 8; and a pet against providence is the worse kind of wrath, for then we are angry with God himself. Now passion putteth strange fire into our censers.

[2.] If we are blinded for the present, and there be failings in our addresses to God, he will pardon them, but loveth the plainness of his people's hearts.

[3.] By praying, the distemper may be cured; for when we own God as our supreme and most holy and just judge, the tempest ceaseth, and our thoughts are appeased, and we reduced to a better frame.

Use 1. To direct us what to do when we have many estuations of mind. Go, open the case to God. The apostle giveth this direction: Phil. iv. 6, 7, 'Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.' As in an earthquake, when the imprisoned wind once gets a vent, the heaving and shaking ceaseth; such a quieting force there is in prayer.

2. It persuadeth us not only to pray, but to deal sincerely with God, and open our hearts to him. Tell him your griefs, wants, fears, temptations, what reasonings are apt to arise in your minds against his providence; let God know all. He knoweth it already, but let him know it from you. Give an account of yourself to God, but with that humility which becometh a creature subject to him, and hath given up himself to be ordered and disposed by him according to his own pleasure. Tell him how you came to reconcile his attributes and his pro-

vidence; you dare not quit the sense of your integrity, but you know not the meaning of his dispensations. Such plain dealing God liketh better than arting and parting it in prayer.

Doct. 2. From his deprecation of condemnation observe, it is grievous to a child of God to be condemned as a wicked man.

1. They are apt to fear it in great pressures, when God pursueth with multiplied and redoubled strokes; for these reasons—

[1.] Providence seemeth to mark them out for his enemies when he spendeth the arrows of his indignation upon them. Affliction is an act of judication. The apostle saith, 'We are judged when we are chastened of the Lord,' 1 Cor. xi. 32; and again, 1 Peter iv. 17, 'That judgment beginneth at the house of God.' God will prove himself impartially just in correcting the sins of his own; therefore he covereth himself with frowns, and seemeth to condemn us as an angry judge, rather than to correct us as a loving father. They are indeed acts of his holy justice, correcting and humbling them for sin. So far the best must own it: Ps. cxix. 75, 'I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that in faithfulness thou hast afflicted me.' But then the vindictive wrath, according to strict justice, must be deprecated: Ps. cxliii. 2, 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant.' And the providence must be expounded aright. We are not condemned when we are judged, but judged that we may not be condemned. The dispensation is medicinal, not vindictive; to promote our humiliation and sanctification, not to procure our ruin and destruction.

[2.] The world is apt to make this interpretation of great afflictions: Acts xxviii. 4, 'This man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, vengeance suffereth not to live;' and Luke xiii. the first five verses, they thought those greater sinners than others whom these dismal accidents befell, and so turn matters of warning into matters of censure. Nay, of Christ himself: Isa. liii. 4, 'He hath borne our grief, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him smitten, and stricken of God, and afflicted.' As if these afflictions befell him for his own evil deserts, and out of a disaffection to him, as one pursued by God's justice. The like conceit had Job's friends of him: Job vi. 4, 'If thy children have sinned against him, and he hath cast them away for their transgression.' And in many other places. Therefore this arrow sticketh fast in their sides; by it they are pierced, and hit in their main confidence.

[3.] Conscience may have many misgivings because of afflictions: 1 Kings xvii. 18, 'O thou man of God! art thou come to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?' Affliction reviveth the guilt: Job xiii. 26, 'Thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the sins of my youth.' They sat so close to his conscience that he could not get rid of them. Such suspicions and fears are revived in their hearts. It were well if it were only to humble us for the demerit. So we ought to judge ourselves as deserving condemnation. But to question the truth of God's grant, as if he did retract it, and make our pardon void by these afflictions, this should not be; or to conclude that he has a purpose to ruin us and condemn us for ever, this is downright despair.

2. This is grievous to them. Guilt affects the saints most. A rod dipped in guilt smarteth sorest upon their backs.

[1.] This for the present depriveth them of the sense of God's love to them, which is their all and their happiness. Nothing cheereth them so much as the beams of his reconciled face: Ps. iv. 6, 7, 'Lord, lift up thou the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness in my heart more than in the time that their corn and wine increased;' Rom. v. 11, 'We joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the atonement.'

[2.] It questioneth their love of God, as if all were counterfeit; for God cannot condemn the soul that loveth him. And his providence seemeth to their consciences to speak out condemnation to humble them. Peter took it tenderly to have his love questioned: John xxi. 17, 'Master, thou knowest all things, and thou knowest that I love thee;' as Job afterwards, 'Lord, thou knowest that I am not wicked.'

Use 2. It showeth what we should do that the wounds of an healed conscience may not bleed afresh again.

1. Interpret the dispensations of providence aright. Whatever God's dealings be with his children, it is to prevent condemnation, not to revive it upon them. If we have nothing else to weaken our faith and confidence, it is a temptation from Satan to question our estate merely upon the account of afflictions. It is his suggestion, If God did love thee, he would not follow thee with his judgments; but that he hateth thee, and hath no delight in thee; this is from Satan. For so his instruments said to Christ: Mat. xxvii. 43, 'He trusted in God; let him deliver him now if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.' Now retort it for Satan: Nay, because God loveth me, he dealeth thus with me; he meaneth to save my soul. Because we are children of God, therefore we are the more afflicted, that sins may be prevented, grace increased.

2. Remember the absoluteness of God's pardon. Sin pardoned is remembered no more, Jer. xxxi. 34; nor would be found, Jer. l. 20: all sins cast into the depth of the sea. God will not recall his sentence of pardon.

3. Make your interest in Christ more certain and clear; for certainly 'there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ,' Rom. viii. 1.

Now these things evidence that we are in Christ—

[1.] A change of nature is necessary: 2 Cor. v. 17, 'Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.' If it be so, you may appeal to God that you are not a wicked man. A sinner indeed, but renewed and reconciled. You have obtained mercy not to be wicked.

[2.] You must walk holily, that you may have the testimony of a good conscience, which is a notable support in troubles: 2 Cor. i. 12, 'For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundant to you-ward.'

4. There must be serious endeavours against the remainder of sin that may prevent the reign of it, for then you are not under the law, but under grace: Rom. vi. 14, 'To break the power of sin is not the work of a day; these sad dispensations tend to it, not to infringe our justification, but promote our sanctification, that we may carry it more

cautiously, holily, and thankfully to God: Isa. xxvii. 9, 'By this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his sin;' Heb. xii. 10, 'They verily for a few days chastened us for their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.'

Doct. 3. That it is a good thing to inquire after the cause and reason of our afflictions.

1. They will not else be so honourable to God; for God loveth to be clear when he judgeth, Ps. li. 4, or to have the reason of his dispensation seen, that he may have the glory, we the shame: Jer. ii. 17, 'Hast thou not procured this unto thyself?' Micah vii. 9, 'I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness.'

2. Nor are our chastenings so profitable unto us till we know why he doth contend with us. We reap a double advantage when we know for what sin: 1 Cor. xi. 30, 'For this cause many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.'

[1.] That God never afflicteth but for a cause is necessary to be known for his honour; but for what cause, that is necessary to be known for our profit. We are apt to flatter ourselves with notions and generals. Sin in the general is the 'common pack-horse, upon which men lay all their burdens. But come to particulars, amend them, avoid sin; there we are at a loss: Mal. iii. 7, 'Return unto me, saith the Lord of hosts: but they said, Wherein shall we return?' There we show that our repentance was but a notion. *Dolus latet in universalibus*—Deceit lurks under generals. Therefore it is an advantage to know that not for sin in general, but for this sin, God afflicts us.

[2.] We can the better judge of the greatness of that sin; for we know causes by effects, and can the better see our folly by our smart: Jer. ii. 19, 'Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee. Know therefore, and see that it is an evil thing and a bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God.' God is fain to teach us as Gideon taught the men of Succoth, by briars and thorns. By the evil that we suffer he showeth us the evil which we commit, and so helpeth our faith by our sense.

3. Our sufferings else are more uncomfortable. No rod so uncomfortable as a dumb rod, when we do not know the cause and use of it, but barely feel the stroke, and see no more. But when we see the use, that maketh for comfort: Ps. xciv. 12, 'Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and instructest him out of thy law.' When the rod hath a voice, and speaketh out the mind of God to us: Micah vi. 9, 'Fear the rod, and who hath appointed it.'

Use 3. It is lawful humbly to desire God to show us the reason of his dispensations. And here I shall a little speak to the case.

1. For men who are wicked to make this request to God is to leave the matter of repentance upon an uncertain debate: and it is all one as if a man should break through a thorn hedge, and curiously desire to know which thorn had pricked him. For those that are overgrown with sin, it is enough to know that the author of all afflictions is God;

the cause is sin, and the end is repentance; that they must be new creatures, or they are undone for ever. To be more particular with them is to defeat the purpose of the dispensation, and to put them upon the leaving of one sin when God calleth for a change of state, or a passing from death to life; and this is but like mending a hole in an house that is ready to drop down.

2. To put this question to God when we do not search diligently ourselves is to betray a duty by our prayers: for when you complain, you must also search: Lam. iii. 39, 40, 'Wherefore doth a living man complain? a man for the punishment of his sins. Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord.' Let us search what sins have an hand in all that cometh upon us, and what special provocation we are guilty of.

3. When one that for the main hath walked faithfully with God puts the question, these two cautions must be observed—

[1.] That it be not out of the impatiency of the flesh, murmuring against and taxing God's providence, as if he dealt hardly with them, who for wise reasons will dispose of the temporal interests and condition of his people according to his own pleasure, for his honour and their profit. If there be an overvaluing of the prosperity of the flesh, we bewray the cause, and yet do not see it. This is that God aimeth at, but you would translate the matter to some other thing. He would teach you that your happiness lieth not here; that patience and humility under the sharpest trials is better than immunity from them.

[2.] That it be not from an over-conceit of our own holiness, so that you wonder why God should afflict you. Alas! the sins of the regenerate are very provoking, and may occasion sore afflictions in this life: Amos iii. 2, 'You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore will I punish you for all your iniquities.' They sin against a nearer relation than others do, even against God, who is their Father by the new birth, which is more heinous than if a stranger did it, 1 Peter i. 17. They sin against more excellent operations of the Spirit than others do, a principle of life within them: 1 John iii. 9, 'Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin.' There is more unkindness in their sins: Ezra ix. 14, 'Should we again break thy commandments?' They know more of the sting of sin, and have drunk of the bitter waters, Joshua xxii. 17; against more knowledge, for they know more what the will of God is, James iv. 17. They make profession of a strict obedience, and that by covenant, vow, and dedication. God's quarrel against you is the quarrel of his covenant, Lev. xxvi. 25. You dishonour God more than any others by your sins: Neh. v. 9, 'Is it not good that ye should walk in the fear of God, because of the heathen?' You harden the wicked more than such sins in other men would do: Ezek. xvi. 51, 'Neither hath Samaria committed half of thy sins; but thou hast multiplied thine abomination more than they, and hast justified thy sister in all thine abominations which thou hast done.' Think of these things, and then put the question.

4. If the inquiry be humbly and dutifully made, it may be known wherefore he contendeth with you.

[1.] Partly by the word of God: Heb. ii. 2, 'If the word spoken by

angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward,' &c.

[2.] Partly by checks of conscience. What is your greatest burden in sore troubles? Gen. xlii. 21, 'We are verily guilty concerning our brother.' It was many years before, yet their trouble brought it to their remembrance: Isa. lix. 12, 'For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us; for our transgressions are with us; and as for our iniquities, we know them.'

[3.] Partly by christian friends, what they tell us of and observe in us. As Nathan to David: Ps. cxli. 5, 'Let the righteous smite me, and it shall be a kindness.'

[4.] Partly by enemies. Reproaches of enemies; they are sharp and quick-sighted; they soon spy out the faults of others. We often hear our enemies teaching our duty to us, that will not hearken to God. The staff of Egypt is a broken reed, Isa. lvi. 6, with Ezek. xxix. 6, 7.

[5.] The nature of affliction. God knoweth how to strike in the right vein. Usually one contrary by another.

[6.] By his Spirit, with due application to him: Job xxxiv. 32, 'That which I see not, teach thou me; if I have done iniquity I will do no more.'

SERMON UPON ACTS VII. 55, 56.

But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.—ACTS vii. 55, 56.

THESE words show the carriage of Stephen when the Jewish fury was whetted against him. We read of some, Acts ii. 37, that were pricked in heart when they were charged with crucifying the Messiah; but these, when they are charged by Stephen with the same crime, are cut at heart, ver. 54. This is not so kindly a work as that; that pierced their spirits with sorrow, this embittered and inflamed them into wrath and rage; they were cut at heart, and gnashed on him with their teeth. Stephen, by that discerning they were resolved upon his death, what doth he do? Expect to be defended and rescued by the christians? There were none such in the council; and for other, their religion warranted not violence against the magistrate. What then? Being forsaken of all, he lifteth up his eyes to heaven to the Lord Jesus, whose cause he pleaded, and for whose sake he incurred this hazard and danger, 'But he,' &c.

In the words we have two things—(1.) His vision; (2.) The publication of it.

First, His vision; there three things are observable—

(1.) The inward impulsive cause, 'Being full of the Holy Ghost.' (2.) The action consequent thereupon, 'He looked up to heaven.' (3.) The event; where—(1st.) The act, 'He saw.' (2d.) The objects, or things seen by him, 'The glory of God, and Jesus standing at his right hand.'

1. The inward moving cause or power by which he was moved and assisted, 'Being full of the Holy Ghost.' It is said before, Acts vi. 5, that Stephen was a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost. That expresseth the habit, which was now excited and quickened into act; his faith and confidence in God was heightened into courage; as a good soldier hath always an habit of fortitude, but in the danger of battle his valour is quickened, and a great ardour cometh upon him. So holy men, that have always a spirit of faith, upon necessary occasions are elevated beyond the line of their ordinary strength; as Stephen was here by a new impulse of the Holy Ghost. This is notable, that

it is a special work of the Spirit of God to raise our minds to the sight of heavenly things: 2 Cor. i. 22, 'Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts;' Rom. viii. 23, 'Ourselves also which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, viz., the redemption of our body.' All the lively effectual knowledge of any truth cometh from him, especially a sight of heaven; it is his office to make all our knowledge of truth more quick, lively, and powerful, to affect the heart and rule the life. And especially is the Spirit given as the earnest and first-fruits of heaven.

2. The action on Stephen's part; he looketh up steadfastly into heaven. All earthly help failing, he looketh higher; turneth off his eyes from the world and men to God, the great arbiter and disposer of life and death. We read of Moses, ἀπέβλεπε εἰς μισθαποδοσίαν, Heb. xi. 26, a looking off and a looking on. The word signifieth a turning of the eye from one object to behold another. He turned away his mind and heart from the honours, pleasures, and treasures of Egypt, and fixed them on the rewards of godliness. The more we shut the eye of sense, the better we shall open that of faith. If we did oftener look from that which is present to that which is to come, from the creature to God, from earth to heaven, we should be much wiser and stronger than we are, and not so regard our worldly concerns as that upon every rumour of danger our hearts should be shaken like the leaves of the trees of the wood.

3. The event; he 'saw the glory of God, and Jesus Christ standing at his right hand.' And in his publication of his vision, 'Behold, I see the heavens opened.' Now here three difficulties are to be considered—

[1.] The opening of the heavens, how such a solid body should be divided, and yet close and come together again.

[2.] The seeing of God, who is invisible: John i. 18, 'No man hath seen God at any time;' and 1 Tim. vi. 16, 'He dwelleth in light, which no mortal eye can approach unto and live.'

[3.] The seeing Christ at so great a distance. How can a mortal eye reach so far through the house in which the council was met, the intervening clouds and firmament? These difficulties we must remove before we go further. To solve these doubts there are many opinions.

(1.) Some make it a mere intellectual vision, or the sight of faith. He was so firmly persuaded of the truth of these things, as if he had seen them with bodily eyes. So Abraham saw Christ's day, John viii. 56.

(2.) A prophetic vision, such as the prophets had by the immediate instinct and operation of God. So Isaiah saw God on the throne, Isa. vi. 1. Paul was rapt into the third heaven, whether in the body or out of the body he could not tell, 2 Cor. xii. Most of the visions the prophets had were of this nature: 1 Kings xxii. 19, 'I saw the Lord sitting on his throne,' said Micaiah. A vision, as distinguished from a dream, was an immediate representation of things, either to the imagination, or to the understanding of a man while he awoke. Certainly this was one means whereby God did manifest himself to the prophets. If to their imagination, then he did affect their minds and hearts with certain sensible objects and species. If to their understanding, by cer-

tain ideas and representations, as did wonderfully ravish and transport them.

(3.) Others, a symbolical vision, that he saw these things by certain external shapes and corporeal images: as John Baptist saw the Spirit descending like a dove on Christ, John i. 32. So Moses is said to see God, Exod. xxiv. 11, as he saw some visible signs of his glorious presence. The rays of his majesty have been seen by creatures.

(4.) Others think his natural eye was so strengthened as to be able to pierce the clouds and see God's throne, and Christ at his right hand. Such a sight the blessed have hereafter: John xvii. 24, 'I will that they may be with me, that they may behold my glory.' And they think, by extraordinary dispensation, this was vouchsafed to Stephen; that he had such a supernatural light as to see heaven opened, and the splendour and majesty of God, and Christ at his right hand; in short, a glimpse of the beatifical vision.

Now which of these shall we choose for the opening of these words? The sight of faith cannot be denied; but withal it must be granted that it was accompanied with a glorious apparition and spiritual ecstasy; which if any will call a glimpse of the beatifical vision, there is nothing absurd in it; for it is said, 'His face shone like an angel,' Acts vi. 15; that is, there was a great splendour about him. And God, that wrought such a change in his body, might exhibit such a manifestation of himself to his mind as might come near to the beatifical vision.

But let us come more particularly to the difficulties alleged.

(1st.) The opening of heaven implieth not a change in the nature of heaven, or rupture there; for it was only seen of Stephen, not by his enemies. The miracle was not in heaven, but in his eye. A miraculous vision it was, or some remarkable manner of appearance. We read, the heavens were opened at Christ's baptism, Mat. iii. 16. But interpreters are at a stand whether they were really parted asunder, or only after some remarkable manner of appearance. So again, that the heavens were opened in Peter's trance, Acts x. 11. And that is granted by all that it was done in a vision. And why may not the like be supposed here?

(2d.) The second difficulty is about the sight of God. Certainly no man can see God in his essence; for he is a spirit, and a spirit cannot be seen with bodily eyes. Nor can he be seen in the infinite excellency of his majesty; for what is finite cannot comprehend what is infinite. But he may be seen in such a visible manifestation of his glory as he is pleased to represent to the view of the creature, both here and hereafter. Thus here he may and hath often been seen. Therefore when it is said, 'He saw the glory of God,' you must understand so far as he can be seen by an human eye; namely, by certain strictures and rays of his splendour and majesty, or such a brightness by which his divine glory is represented unto us. So Luke ii. 9, 'The angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them;' that is, the splendour occasioned by the presence of an angel. So in the apparition of an angel to Peter in prison: Acts xii. 7, 'The angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison.' So by this manifestation which God made of himself to Stephen, thereby is represented a glorious majesty, such as is described Exod. xxiv. 17,

'The sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire in the eyes of the children of Israel;' meaning thereby some representation of his splendour and majesty; only that was more for terror, this for comfort and support.

(3*d.*) For the third difficulty, about the seeing of Christ, this being an extraordinary miraculous vision, it hath been answered before. But mark, 'He saw Christ standing at his right hand.' Elsewhere he is described in another posture, of 'sitting on the right hand of God:' as Mark xvi. 14, 'He was received into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.' That noteth his royal dignity; but standing as ready for the help of all that belong to him. God is said to arise when he will help his people; as Ps. lxxviii. 1, 'Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered.' So he saw Jesus, God-man, standing, as in a posture of readiness to assist and help his servant.

Nothing remaineth for further explaining this text but the publication of his vision: 'And he said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.' This publication is made—

[1.] To show his own faith. The apostle saith, 2 Cor. iv. 13, 'We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I have believed, therefore have I spoken: we also believe, and therefore speak;' that is, we having the same spirit of faith which is spoken of in David's psalms, where he saith, 'I believed, therefore I spake.' In sore afflictions he pleads the hopes of his preservation and deliverance. Therefore we profess Christ, and express our faith in him, notwithstanding all our afflictions, troubles, and dangers. A spirit of faith, when it cometh upon a man, it cannot be checked; but a bashful inconfidence is easily obstructed. Therefore Stephen would not conceal his vision to himself, but divulge it for the profit of others.

[2.] To show forth the dignity of his lord and master. Therefore he calleth him the Son of man, but acknowledgeth him to be at the right hand of God; to show that Christ reigneth as God incarnate in that flesh in which he was abased and contemptuously used by men: 'Crucified in the flesh, but liveth by the power of God,' 2 Cor. xiii. 4.

[3.] He testifieth and publisheth it to show them that they did in vain strive against the truth of Christ, whom they supposed to be utterly destroyed by their rulers; for he was in the highest glory, reigning with God in the heavens. Therefore nothing more vain and fruitless than the opposition which Satan and his agents make against Christ and his kingdom: 'For he is sat down at the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till all his enemies be made his footstool,' Heb. x. 12, 13.

Doct. Nothing doth fortify us against the discouragements we meet with in Christ's service so much as the sight of heaven, and Christ's sitting at the right hand of God there.

In the prosecution of this point I shall consider—(1.) The objects represented, God, Christ, and heaven; (2.) The sight of them, how we can see such things, visions and raptures being antiquated things, at least not commonly dispensed; then (3.) You will soon see how this is the ground of christian courage.

First, The objects represented to us, God, Christ, heaven.

1. There is mentioned in the text the glory of God. A due sight of

God lesseneth all other things in our opinion and estimation of them and affection to them ; and could we but see his glory, we might easily wink out the amiableness and terribleness of the creature ; for what are all the fears of man and the rage of the world to God ? the wrath of a poor creature, whose breath is in his nostrils, against the power of an eternal God ? Ps. xl. 4, ' Blessed is the man that maketh the Lord his trust, and respecteth not the proud, and such as turn aside to lies.' The proud are those that abuse their prosperity to the oppression of others, and, turning aside to lies, seek to uphold themselves by earthly props and dependences, or those base arts by which atheistical men, that have no conscience, would maintain their greatness. Surely he that is afraid of man doth not rightly know God : Isa. li. 12, 13, ' Who art thou that art afraid of a man that shall die, and forgettest the Lord thy Maker.' Is not God able to bear us out in his work ? Heb. xi. 27, Moses endured the wrath of the king, seeing him that is invisible. Could we get this sight of his invisible glory, lesser things would not startle us. Alas ! when we come to set God against man, the match is altogether unequal ; there is then the Creator against the creature, who is the mere product of his Maker's will, and can subsist and act no longer than he pleaseth ; an eternal God against a bubble, that is soon blown up, and bursts. You may set his wisdom against their policy and wiles : ' For there is no wisdom, nor counsel, nor understanding, against the Lord,' Prov. xxi. 30. His love and goodness against their malice and cruelty. What matter is it if they frown when he smileth ? His power against their weakness ; they can be nothing without him, and therefore we need not fear the sword if we have not reason to fear him that beareth the sword. And lastly, his promises against their threatenings ; he is not God if he be not above his creature. All the powers of the world are nothing to God.

2. The next object is Jesus Christ at his right hand. This is the second object in the text. Let us a little consider what this importeth. Properly speaking, God hath neither right hand nor left, for he is a spirit. It is a metaphor, therefore, which must be explained by the manner of earthly kings, who place those whom they highly esteem and honour on their right hand ; as Solomon did his mother in a chair of state on his right hand, 2 Kings ii. 19 ; and also such whom they put in chief authority and trust next themselves, as the mother of Zebedee's children made suit to Christ that her two sons might sit, one at the right hand, the other at the left of Christ in his kingdom, Mat. xx. 21. She falsely imagined it to be an earthly kingdom, accompanied with worldly honour ; and therefore the purport of her request was, that her two sons might have the highest places of authority and profit under Christ, and next to Christ in his kingdom. So Christ's sitting at the right hand of God noteth the esteem he hath with God, and his being exalted to the highest degree of glory, and majesty, and authority, and honour, next himself. First, let us see the things imported by it ; secondly, the ends of it.

[1.] The things imported by it.

(1.) His great esteem with God, which is a ground of confidence ; for we have a friend in heaven, as David had Jonathan in Saul's court, to give him notice of danger, and to prevent displeasure from breaking

out against him. Surely to have a friend in the court of heaven is a great privilege; one who taketh up all differences between God and us, and answereth all accusations of Satan and his instruments, and preventeth wrath from breaking out upon us: 1 John ii. 1, 'If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.' We should not abuse it to wantonness and wilful sinning: yet it is a comfort against failings, and also against the clamours and reproaches of the world, that we have an advocate and witness on high: 'My witness is in heaven,' saith Job.

(2.) The glory and majesty which is put upon him, next to God, more than any creature is capable of, by virtue of the unspeakable union between the two natures. Crowned with glory and honour. He hath the fulness of grace and glory given to him, to dispense to his redeemed ones, Acts v. 31, which is a great comfort, to consider his personal endowments as God incarnate.

(3.) The authority and power that is put upon him. It is said, 1 Peter iii. 22, that 'he is gone into the heavens, and is on the right hand of God; angels, authorities, and powers being made subject to him;' so that he hath the highest glory, the highest power. And Eph. i. 20, 21, 'God hath set him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in the world to come;' that is, not only above earthly potentates, who are his vicegerents, but heavenly powers, who are his messengers and instruments, whom he employeth for the defence and comfort of the godly: Heb. i. 14, 'Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?' and for the terror and punishment of his enemies; Ps. lxxviii. 17, 'The chariots of the Lord are seventy thousand, even thousands of angels. The Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place.' Mark there, thousands of angels are but as his chariot conveying him from heaven to earth. And mark, 'The Lord is among them;' that is, God incarnate; for he presently speaketh of his ascending up on high, and leading captivity captive, ver. 18. And among them in his holy place; that is, in heaven. As at the giving of the law in mount Sinai, there were then, so they still attend on the propagation of the gospel. Now this is a great comfort to the godly when they are oppressed; especially when the authorities and powers of the earth are employed against them, as they were in the apostles' time. So that we cannot utterly fail while Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

[2.] The ends for which Christ was exalted to sit at the right hand of God are, to perform the several functions of his mediatorial office; therefore in such high esteem, such majesty, such authority. His offices are three—his prophetic, sacerdotal, and regal office; which he doth by three solemn acts—

(1.) The effusion of his Spirit, to promote the ends of his prophetic office, convincing the world of the truth of his doctrine, and converting them by it. Therefore the first news we hear of Christ after his ascension, as soon as he was warm in the mediatorial throne, was his pouring out the Spirit, Acts ii. And presently the virtue of it appeared; three thousand souls were added to the church that day. And this is a pledge of what is continually dispensed. There is still a Spirit sent forth, to

convince the unbelieving world, and to conquer the opposing wisdom and power of the flesh, John xvi. 8; as also to beget and continue life in his people, that they may be actually put in possession of what he hath purchased for them; for he hath promised to accompany the dispensation of the gospel with this Spirit to the end of the world: Mat. xxviii. 20, 'I am with you.' Not only by his powerful providence, but his convincing, supporting, quickening Spirit.

(2.) The second work Christ doth at the right hand of God belongeth to his priestly office; and that is his intercession: Rom. viii. 34, 'He sitteth at the right hand of God, making intercession for us.' As the high priest went into the holy place with blood, so Christ is gone to represent the merit of his sacrifice: Heb. ix. 24, 'Christ is entered into heaven, now to appear in the presence of God for us.' To answer the accusations of Satan, 1 John ii. 1; to make reconciliation for the sins of the people, Heb. ii. 17. He doth interpose night and day to prevent breaches, to preserve a mutual correspondence between us and God, and sue out necessary grace for us in all our conflicts and temptations. And this not only for the church in general, but every believing soul, Heb. vii. 25, according to their particular wants, exigencies, and straits: 'He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.'

(3.) The third act respecteth his kingly office, or the actual administration of his kingdom, calling and gathering his people out of the profane world, and appointing laws to them for their direction to true happiness; and then protecting and defending them by his divine power and providence, giving success to his cause and servants, and restraining and subduing their enemies, treading down Satan and all his instruments under their feet, disappointing their attempts, and bringing to nought their counsels, Ps. ii.; but he doth most fully subdue them at his second coming: Phil. ii. 10, 'That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth.' Now this is a mighty encouragement. Poor creatures will be courageous in the eyes of their master, and he is ready to support and strengthen them, and able to do it. Therefore we should say, as the apostle, 2 Tim. i. 12, 'I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.'

3. The third object is heaven. Looking to heaven is a great ground of christian courage: 2 Cor. iv. 17, 'Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' There is glory opposite to affliction; a weight, a far more exceeding weight, to light affliction; eternal, to what is momentary. Afflictions are *leves et breves*, light and short; not in themselves (for some may be grievous, and some very long) but comparatively, with respect to our glorious reward, which, being infinite, maketh them light; and being eternal, maketh them short. Alas! no more than a point to the circumference, no more than a feather against a talent of lead. The good and evil of the present world is slight and inconsiderable, but that of the other world truly great. All the pleasures of sense are but as a may-game to our reward; all the troubles of our obedience but as a flea-biting or the scratching of a pin to eternal torments.

[1.] The sight of them. We have no visions and raptures, but first we have the prospect of faith. A believer, by the eye of faith, may by the perspective of the promises look within the veil, and see the reality of those eternal and glorious things which lie in the other world. An object, though never so glorious, cannot be seen without eyes. Now faith is the eye of the soul, Heb. xi. 1. It is defined to be 'the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.' It is good to see how the light and sight of faith differeth from all other lights.

(1.) Compare it with the light of sense, that can only discern things near, and present with us, and before our eyes, as that it is comfortable to eat and drink, and sleep well; to be at liberty, and free from trouble, and to live a life of pomp and sensual pleasure and delight. The sweetness of honour, wealth, and pleasure are known easily, and known by all; this every one can see; but he that hath enslaved his reason to sense 'is blind, and cannot see afar off;' 2 Peter i. 9. The light of faith will discover there is no such danger as perishing for ever; no such worth in anything as in salvation by Christ; no such business of importance as seeking after eternal life.

(2.) Compare it with the light of reason. Reason can only guess at future contingencies, or at best see things in their causes or natural order, and that it is probable, if nothing letteth, such and such things will fall out; but faith can look through all distance of time and place, and contrary appearances, with such certainty and firm persuasion as if the thing were at hand: Heb. xi. 13, 'These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them;' John viii. 56, 'Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad;' Rom. iv. 18, 'Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations.'

(3.) Compare it with the light of prophecy; that is a seeing: Rev. xx. 12, 'I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God,' &c. They agree in the common object, such things as are revealed by God. They agree in the same common nature, that it is a sight of things absent, or future and to come, with such certainty and clearness as if they were in being. They differ, because faith goeth upon the common revelation which God hath made of his mind to all the saints in scripture; the other upon some special vision and revelation made to certain chosen persons. The light of faith affects the heart with great joy and comfort; the other is usually with rapture and ecstasy.

(4.) Let us compare it with the light of glory, the beatifical vision, that worketh a change in body and soul: 1 John iii. 2, 'We know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him.' This in the soul: 2 Cor. iii. 18, 'We all, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord;' 1 Cor. xiii. 12, there see him face to face, as in a glass. Though not as highly affected with the light of faith, yet as truly and really. That nullifieth sin and misery; this mortifieth sin, and fortifieth us against misery. We have not such a full enjoyment of God as by the light of glory, yet by the light of faith we have some communion with him; it somewhat affecteth the heart, as if we saw

God on the throne, Christ in the midst of his holy ones, Paul with his crown of righteousness. It sets us above the clouds in affection; and as to foresight and foretaste, puts us in the midst of the glory of the world to come. Once more, this light of faith is like that sight which God hath of things, for it is the resemblance of it. There is a double knowledge in God, *scientia visionis, et scientia intelligentiæ*. God seeth all things that shall be in his own purpose and decree; knoweth all things that may be by his own all-sufficiency. Faith acts proportionably; it seeth all things that shall be in God's covenant and promises: 2 Cor. v. 1, 'We know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' It conceiveth what may be by the power of God: Dan. iii. 17, 18, 'Our God is able to deliver us;' though not sure of the event. It realiseth the blessing promised; when they have the promise, they have the pledge of the blessing.

[2.] The Spirit helpeth our sight. Naturally we are short-sighted, and there is a thick mist on eternity; these things are glorious in themselves, above our experience, remote from us, and we take up with toys and children's trifles. Our own natural wisdom bendeth us to present things: James iii. 15, 'This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly &c., Prov. xxiv. 4. Reason is debased by sense, and wholly catereth for the body. Therefore true wisdom is from eyes anointed with spiritual eye-salve, as the apostle prayeth, Eph. i. 17, 18, 'That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened,' &c.

[3.] The nearer approach to death, the clearer sight of heaven and Christ at the right hand of God, as ready to receive them. The most lively acts of faith are then usually put forth, the spirit being about to return to God. David's last words are noted, Num. xxiii. 1; so Joshua xxiii. 14. Usually there is then a clearer discerning of heaven, more elevated thoughts about it; it seemeth another thing than formerly. They that are nearer heaven, in the borders of it, do more vehemently long for and desire the actual possession of the glorious things.

Use. Let us oftener look within the veil. If you would have God look down upon you, you must look up to him. Faith is acted by serious thoughts. Carnal men mind earthly things; why not we heavenly?

1. Believe that there are invisible good things to be enjoyed in another world. Here is our first work, when we hear of these great promises: 'Believest thou this?' John xi. 26. The things are glorious and certain, but our persuasions of the reality of them are too weak and feeble. That there is a world to come, and a state of invisible happiness and glory, nature guesseth at; for such a conceit hath been noted in the minds of men of all religions, not only Greeks and Romans, but barbarians, and people least civilised. This tradition hath passed from hand to hand throughout all successions of ages; and the nearer we trace it to the first originals of mankind, the more strong and pressing hath been the persuasion hereof. But still it hath borne up itself against all encounters of time, and in the midst of so many revolutions of human affairs, through which many truths are lost; yet this hath maintained itself.

and been readily received by all nations. But if it be dark to nature, the light of christianity doth more clearly discover it. Life and immortality are brought to light in the gospel, 2 Tim. i. 10. Christ, that purchased heaven for us, is gone into it himself, to give us a demonstration of the reality of it, 1 Peter i. 21. Having first left a promise of eternal life to all that believe in him, 1 John ii. 25, which promise was outwardly confirmed by divers miracles. Inwardly in the hearts of his people, by forming them for this estate, and giving them a taste of it in their own souls, 2 Cor. v. 6. Now, is the scripture false, the gospel a fable, the oracles of the prophets, the doctrine of Christ, his miracles, resurrection, and ascension, but a dream? Were they all deceived that followed Christ upon these hopes, and took such pains in subduing the flesh, and hazarding their interests upon the hopes of another world? Are the wisest sort of men the world ever saw fools? Is sanctifying grace a fancy? or the joys of the Spirit delusions or fantastical impressions? The foretastes of the children of God a mere imposture? And is it any way likely that all this solemnity should be used to establish a vain conceit? Well, then, be persuaded of it, as if you saw it with your eyes.

2. Let us often raise our thoughts to the meditation of this heavenly bliss and glory. As a man is, so are his musings. Thoughts, being the genuine birth and immediate production of the soul, do discover the temper of it: Rom. viii. 5, 'They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh,' &c. Those that are of an heavenly temper and frame do often exercise their minds in heavenly things; their happiness lieth there, and their business tendeth thither. Our Lord telleth us, that where the treasure is, there the heart will be, Mat. vi. 21. If the mind were more taken up with these great things, they would breed in us a more excellent and choice spirit. But alas! in most men, thoughts of heavenly blessedness are few and cold, when in the meantime their minds are thronged with all manner of vanity; and therefore do they feel so little of the joys of the Spirit and the efficacy of grace, and do no more get up above the hopes and fears of the world. Certainly they do not hope for heaven that seldom cast a look that way. Where anything is strongly expected, the mind is wont to create to itself images and thoughts, whereby we preoccupy and foretaste the delight of what we expect; for thoughts are the spies of hope sent toward the thing hoped for. If a man were adopted unto the succession of a crown, would he not please himself with the supposition of the honour and pleasure of the royal estate that he shall one day enjoy? They that do not earnestly and warmly think of heaven and heavenly things have little expectation this way.

3. An earnest and desirous expectation. 'Looking for the blessed hope,' Titus ii. 13. Set your affections on it: Col. iii. 2, 'Set your affections on things above.' Groaning after it: 2 Cor. v. 2, 'In this we groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven;' Phil. i. 23, 'I am in a strait between two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better.' Without this, faith is a dead opinion or speculative assent; hope but some cold ineffectual thought. Well, then, long to be at home. Heaven is opened for us; Christ hath carried our nature, our flesh thither, and

advanced it on the Father's right hand ; let us long in person to get thither.

4. So look to these things, that you may get your hearts above all earthly things : 2 Cor. iv. 18, ' While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen : for the things which are seen are temporal ; but the things which are not seen are eternal.' The act is not simply denied as to things seen, but comparatively, that the world's honour or dishonour may have less influence upon us. In all our actions : 1 Cor. vii. 29, 31, ' The time is short : it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none ; and they that weep, as though they wept not ; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not ; and they that buy, as though they possessed not ; and they that use this world, as not abusing it : for the fashion of this world passeth away.' We mourn for sin as if we mourned not. We should grow more dead to all impressions of sense. Though carnal satisfactions be near at hand, yet they are but short and inconsiderable : ' Demas loved the present world,' 2 Tim. iv. 10.

SERMON UPON 2 SAMUEL XXIV. 24.

Neither will I offer burnt-offerings unto the Lord my God of that which costs me nothing.—2 SAM. XXIV. 24.

IN the context you will find a laudable contention between a good king and a good subject. Since it was to David, and since it was for the Lord, Araunah would not sell, but give. On the other side, David, since it was for the Lord, he would not take, but buy.

A double reason may be given of David's refusal.

1. According to the law no man might offer to God anything but what was his own.

2. Because he would not serve God cost free.

You have both in the parallel place, 1 Chron. xxi. 24, 'I will not take that which is thine for the Lord, nor offer burnt-offerings without cost.' In the text it is notable that he calleth God, 'the Lord,' to note his majesty; and 'my God,' to note his own love, choice, and interest. Such a God he could not find in his heart to serve in a cheap and unworthy fashion. 'Neither will I offer,' &c.

Doct. A gracious heart will not serve God with that which costs him nothing; or counts that religion worth nothing which costs nothing.

Reasons. 1. This is the fruit of their faith. Carnal nature begrudgeth everything; and in the eye of sense all is lost that is laid out upon God. They say, with Judas, 'What needs this waste?' The same judgment that Seneca gave upon the Jewish sabbath, the same thoughts have carnal men of all the service of God: he said the Jews were a foolish people, *quia septimam ætatis partem perdunt vacando*, because they lost a full seventh part of their lives in idleness and rest. Now those that are thus minded, that think all is lost that is laid out in his service, will never do anything for God that is great and worthy; the refuse of what they have is thought good enough for him. That this opinion, that all that is done in religion for God's sake is as good as lost, hath an influence upon men's careless and perfunctory dealing in religion, appeareth by the first chapter of Malachi. The main intent of that chapter is to expostulate with them about their contempt of God, and the sorry service which they brought to him. Among other arguments, this is pleaded, that the meanest employment about him was not without its reward: Mal. i. 10, 'Who is there among you that would shut the doors for nought? neither do ye

kindle a fire on my altar for nought,' &c. That is, the porters of the temple did not open and shut the doors for nought; nor the priest attend upon the burnt-offering for nought; they were all well rewarded with tithes and oblations; they were all well provided for, by God's own appointment and allowance. This is God's argument, which plainly showeth they were under the influence and dominion of this blasphemous thought: that they should be losers by God, and therefore did not care how they served him. But now a man that hath faith, that is persuaded of God's being and bounty, Heb. xi. 6, he thinketh he can never do enough for God; for he knoweth it will turn to a good account. Here, during the time of his patience, the superficial service he gets from us hath its reward: God giveth many temporal blessings to those that worship him in the slightest fashion. He suspended his judgments, you know, upon Ahab's counterfeit humiliation, 1 Kings xxi. 29. His providence plainly declareth that none shall be a loser by him, nor do anything for nought; and therefore, shall we not do it well? If anything be done sincerely, though never so mean and inconsiderable, it hath its reward: Mat. x. 42, 'He that giveth a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, shall in no wise lose his reward.' The smallness and meanness of the benefit, help, or refreshing, done to any in Christ's name, shall not lose his estimation and recompense, if it be done under that notion. This, though hardly credited by the unbelieving world, is very true: 'Verily I say unto you,' and 'shall in no wise,' they are emphatical particles. But now the more eminent services, which are carried on with hazard and difficulty, and some considerable self-denial, surely they shall not fail of their recompense: whatever we lose for Christ, we shall receive again with infinite advantage: Mark x. 29, 30, 'Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, and brethren, or sister, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions, and in the world to come eternal life.' He shall not only have heaven at last; but here in this life, in the midst of persecution an hundredfold. Even in this time, the time of trials and troubles; yea, by his troubles: in kind or value. Not an hundred wives, or mothers, or children, as Julian scoffed. Now who would not serve such a master, and serve him with his best, improve every received ability, stand upon no cost and charges, so we may be faithful to him? It would be no difficult thing to persuade men to it, if they were firmly persuaded of these things; as it would be no hard thing to persuade others to put out their money where they may have, not only ten in the hundred, but an hundred for ten; or to sow their seed there where the soil will certainly produce an hundredfold. But we want faith, and therefore draw back and struggle with our shoulders when we are to do anything for God that will occasion trouble or cost. That faith hath a great influence upon the costly and self-denying services of the saints, is evident by the instance of Abel: Heb. xi. 4, 'By faith Abel offered a better sacrifice than Cain,' *πλείονα θυσίαν*, the first, the fat, the best, the tenth. Cain, that doubted of the world to come, bringeth it hand over head. So also the instance of Abraham:

Heb. xi. 17, 'By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that received the promises offered up his only-begotten son.' Here is a son, an only son, a son on whom the promises were fixed, and this son to fall under the weight of his own father's hands: an act that occasioned not only a conflict between his obedience and his natural affection, but a kind of riddle between his obedience and his faith. How should he offer Isaac, and yet believe that in Isaac's seed all the nations should be blessed? But faith is a strange grace; it trusts God wonderfully, and can reconcile all contradictions; it can see Isaac offered, and yet kept still, and a father of many children; gain in loss, and life in death; something in nothing. Well, then, a sound believer will not grudge at trials; when he is put upon the most difficult cases, he saith, 'Shall I serve God with what costeth me nought?' No, God shall have the best: if he will have Isaac, let Isaac go.

2. Their love to God inclineth them to this disposition of heart. Love is liberal and open-hearted; it standeth upon no labour, cost, or difficulty. Fear serveth God with a kind of reserve; it is a force put upon us, and therefore doth no more than needs must. But love is sensible that our obligation is far beyond our ability to recompense, and hath such a delight in God's service, it can never do enough for him; it counts nothing too good or too much, but all is short and too little. Love would still do more. There is a compulsion in fear, and there is a compulsion in love; for love constraineth, 2 Cor. v. 14. But how do these differ? The compulsion that is in fear is slavish, and mighty unwelcome to the soul, easily works off. That is bad ground that bringeth forth nothing except it be forced; and usually such ground, at the best, brings forth but sparingly. But love is a willing compulsion. *Amor non cogitur, sed cogit*—love is not forced, but forceth. Natural conscience worketh by fear, faith by love, Gal. v. 6. Love consecrateth and devoteth all that a man hath to the will and pleasure of him whom he loveth. *Quis legem det amanti?* *Amor major lex sibi ipsi est.* There needs no urging of laws. Love is a greater law to itself. No presenting of terrors where there is a strong self-inclination and propendency. It hath in its bosom as deep an engagement and obligation to please God as you can lay upon it. So that let a man's love be gained to Christ, and then he will stick at nothing. What love will do we may see in other cases; as in Jacob's love to Rachel: Gen. xxix. 20, 'And Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days, for the love he had to her.' So in Shechem's love to Dinah: Gen. xxxiv. 19, 'The young man deferred not to do the thing, for the delight which he had in Jacob's daughter.' Circumcision was an hated thing to them, as well as painful in itself. Well, now, so it is in religion. Where love is wanting, all that is done seemeth too much; but where love prevaileth, let it be never so difficult, it seems light and easy: Acts xx. 24, 'None of these things move me.' Where there is love there will be self-denial; it submitteth to duties against the bent and hair. Where there is love there will be labour; it is not a slothful and idle affection: 2 Thes. i. 3, 'Your work of faith, and labour of love.' Well, then, if you had a greater love to God, he would have the best of your hearts, the best of your labours, the best of your estates, and the best

of your time and strength, and you would count nothing too dear to give to him or for him; for the voice of love is, 'Shall I serve God with what costs me nought?' It is very notable that a little is accepted if it hath the stamp of love upon it. The lover's mite cast into the treasury is more worth than ten times so much outward obedience from another man. But then this is the genius of love, to do its best. He that loveth much cannot satisfy himself with a little, but still seeketh how it may more glorify and please God, and that at an higher rate: Ps. lxxi. 14, 'I will glorify him yet more and more.'

3. They have a deep sense of God's majesty and excellency, and therefore dare not put him off with anything that is vile, cheap, and unworthy. No; he shall have the best, the choice, the flower of their time, strength, love, affection. If we had an higher sense of God's majesty and greatness, we would be more careful of his worship; for he is not a God to be slighted or dallied with, or put off with a little religiousness by the by. As his spiritual nature calleth for spiritual service, so his glorious majesty calleth for eminent service, and bindeth this thought upon us, that he should not be served without cost. It is a sign we have lessening thoughts of him, if we think that any slight sorry performance, that costs us little time, little care, little preparation, done with little life and affection, will serve the turn. God pleadeth his majesty against this abuse: Mal. i. 14, 'Cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth to the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great king, saith the Lord of hosts.' A king of so great majesty calleth for other manner of service than usually we bestow upon him. Common stuff will serve for an ordinary house. In a palace for a king, most costly furniture is requisite and becoming. Superficial dealing in his work is an affront of his greatness, and showeth that we have mean thoughts of him, and a want of reverence; when we put him off with the refuse, or bring common dispositions into his presence, and serve him carelessly and sorrily, thinking if the work be done it is no matter how, so we may once get it over. But he that knows God, what an high glorious God he is, dareth not be so sinfully bold and familiar with him: 'I will not serve God with what costs me nought.'

4. A cheap course of religion, such as costs little or nothing, will never be accepted with God; for it is contrary to his prescription. Our first lesson in Christ's school is self-denial, to prepare us for our after-service and obedience to him: Mat. xvi. 24, 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.' We promise ourselves too much when we promise ourselves nothing but pleasure and contentment, as if we could go to heaven without blows and conflicts. This self-denial is not to be exercised only in little things, or in few things. No; we must sell all for the pearl of great price, Mat. xiii. 46. And selling all for the pearl of great price is required in times of peace as well as in times of persecution. None must enter upon the profession of christianity, but they must sit down and count the charges, Luke xiv. 28. And shall we think, after all this, that we shall go to heaven without cost? Surely this is new christianity, which Christ never taught, and the scriptures

own not ; a christianity of our own making, and therefore will not be accepted of God.

5. A cheap course of religion will yield us no comfort, nor sensible evidence of our sincerity. There are two reasons couched in one, but yet such as have a near affinity the one with the other.

[1.] There will be a sensible evidence of our sincerity. You will easily grant that it is necessary to a sound and sincere heart that we prefer Christ in our choice and esteem before the world and the flesh, and that we believe a world to come, and take heavenly things for our portion, treasure, and happiness. Now, how shall we know that we believe a world to come, if we venture nothing upon it, do nothing but what other men do, or but what we would do if there were no such hope offered to us? How shall we know that we prefer Christ before the world, if we can deny no worldly thing for Christ's sake ; so that a man is still doubtful, and cannot tell what to say and judge of his spiritual estate and condition before God? Heretofore, when God used extraordinary dispensations, he put his people upon special trials, that their sincerity might be more sensibly evidenced to them : Heb. xi. 17, 'By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac,' &c., *πειραζόμενος*. God saw fit to put such an eminent believer as Abraham was upon such an extraordinary and eminent trial. So the young man, when he came full of self-confidence to Christ, he puts him upon a special trial : Mark x. 21, 'Go thy way, and sell what thou hast, and give to the poor.' Doth the Lord wholly discontinue, think you, this kind of dispensations? No : Heb. x. 33, 'Partly whilst ye were made a gazing-stock, both by reproaches and afflictions ; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used.' Are not believers now put upon divers trials? James i. 2. Should they not 'count it all joy while they fall into divers temptations,' as having an happy occasion to discover their sincerity towards God? You are ignorant of the scriptures, and what belongeth to the usual discipline of your heavenly Father, if you conceit otherwise. Now, why doth God try us, or put his people upon sundry trials? Doth not he know our thoughts afar off. And is he not acquainted with us, and the sincerity of our affections towards him, before we are put upon such a sensible proof? Yes, verily ; he trieth, *non ut ipse hominem inveniat, sed ut homo se inveniat*—Augustine. Not that he may know more of man than he knew before, but that man may know more of himself than he knew before. He knoweth us already ; but he trieth us, that we may know ourselves. Indeed it is said, Gen. xxii. 12, 'Now I know that thou fearest God, since thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me.' All interpreters grant that it is *humanitus dictum*, and they expound it thus : Now there is a document ; now there is an apparent and sensible proof ; now I know, what not till now, Lord. Was Abraham's mind unknown to thee before? Could not God tell long ago whether Abraham feared him, yea or no? Yes ; he that knew all things knew that he feared him : yet know it he would not, that is, not approve it, till he had thus experienced it. And that was for Abraham's comfort and satisfaction. All this is for our learning, brethren. We know not that we love God more than other things till we are tried ; and tried we are not to the purpose till we are tried

in our Isaac ; in things nearest and dearest to us, and can be at some cost for God. It is a nice case ; before a thing is liable to great uncertainty of debate ; therefore that is an happy occasion to a gracious heart, to be put upon some exercise of self-denial : ' I will not serve God with what costs me nought.'

[2.] God doth not so openly own men, nor pour out such a large measure of the comforts of his Spirit upon his people, when they serve him without cost, as he doth when they are called to deny themselves, and all that is dear and precious to them in the world, for his sake. In the Revelation there are many promises diversified under the notion of ' eating of the tree of life,' Rev. ii. 7. ' Having the white stone, with the name,' Rev. ii. 17 ; ' Of being fed with hidden manna ;' but still ' to him that overcometh,' chapters ii. iii. They are more feasted with comforts, and have a more liberal allowance of spiritual joys and delights than others have ; those that have passed the pikes, and have counted nothing dear to them, so they might keep their innocency, and approve their faithfulness to God. Sufferers have more of the comfortable and supporting operations of the Spirit than others have ; and in sharp trials, when put to live by faith, and having nothing to encourage them but their bare love to God, they enjoy usually more of the sensible comforts of his Spirit than others do. Whereas those who are not exposed to such difficulties, though they be sincere for the main, yet are kept more in the doubtful, humbling way, have less of the joys of the Spirit, and are more put to it to interpret their qualification, and make out any hope by Christ.

Cautions for the understanding of this truth.

1. When we speak of costs in religion, be sure you do not allow so much as a private whisper in your souls of merit ; for the costliest services deserve nothing at God's hands. If we do never so much, suffer never so much for him, ' we are but unprofitable servants,' Luke xvii. 10. Yet all our comfort and happiness is a free gift, or mere grace to us. When David had offered many cart-loads of gold and silver, he admireth grace, and acknowledgeth that he had but paid God out of his own exchequer : 1 Chron. xxix. 14, ' Who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort ? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee.' He putteth away the glory of what was done from himself and people, that both will and ability might entirely be ascribed to God. So Rev. iii. 10, ' Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation.' If we do never so much, and suffer never so much, the crown of life is a gift.

2. See that you do not draw needless trials and inconveniences upon yourselves ; for that is not zeal, but rashness and folly. Suffering for well-doing is a duty that doth not bind, as negative precepts do, at all times and in all cases ; nor are the children of God tied to it, as they are to some other positive duties. We are to ' watch unto prayer,' 1 Peter iv. 7 ; redeem all opportunities for it. But this is only binding when the will of the Lord is so, 1 Peter ii. 17 ; and that is when by his providence he puts us under the power of persecutors, and they put us to a necessity either of suffering or sinning. Then, when the flesh is ready to say, Favour thyself, you must say, ' I will not serve the Lord

with what costs me nothing.' With courage and cheerfulness we must choose suffering rather than sinning. The apostle saith, James i. 2, 'Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.' He saith, when we fall into them; not, when we draw them upon ourselves. It was Tertullian's error to say, Afflictions are to be sought and desired. No; they are only to be submitted unto when sent by God. We are not to desire troubles, but bear them and improve them when he layeth them upon us. Christ hath taught us to pray, 'Lead us not into temptation;' and it is but a fond presumption to cast ourselves upon it. Philastrius and Theodoret speak of some that would compel men to kill them, out of an affectation of martyrdom. This was a mad ambition, not a true zeal. And no less fond are they that seek out crosses and troubles, rather than wait for them, and by their own violence bring a just hatred upon themselves, and run headlong into dangers without necessity. If a man set fire on his own house, he is liable to the law; if it be fired by accident, he is pitied and relieved. We are not to seek the cross, or make it, but bear it, and take it up; not to fill the cup ourselves, but drink it off when our Father puts it into our hands.

3. Take heed that you only displease the flesh in a lawful way. Do not step out of the road of your duty for this, and think that the Lord is pleased with barbarous austerities; as Baal's priests gashed themselves, 1 Kings xviii. 29. And the pharisees and papists have their self-disciplinings. And Origen, who was too allegorical in plain texts, was too literal when he castrated himself, because Christ speaketh of making ourselves 'eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven,' Mat. xix. 12, intending only thereby the gift of continency, or a power over our natural affections. Exterior mortifications and dolorous impressions on the body are a piece of apocryphal bastard religion, highly prized by the world, who are given to please the flesh. If they must displease it, they affect to do it in an outward way. But as much as these things are esteemed by men, they are abhorred by God. Christ is a lover of human nature, and he hath put no such severe penance upon us. It is more acceptable to him to mortify a lust than to mangle a member of the body.

4. See that you place not too much of religion in outward things, in external pomp and gaudiness, and then put this zealous gloss upon it, 'I will not serve God with what costs me nothing.' It is easy to exceed in externals, and such things as make a fair show in the world; but the majesty and spirit of religion is lost in the pomp of self-pleasing appearances. Aquinas disputeth the question whether a *nimum*, anything superfluous in religion. He grants it in externals. A man cannot love God too much, or trust in him too much; but he may exceed in outward observances, *connaturale est nobis per sensibilia duci*. And though not too much in absolute quantity, yet too much in proportion, *non proportionatur ad debitum finem istius luctus*. 'The king's daughter is all glorious within,' Ps. xlv. 15, in faith, love, patience, sobriety. By gifts and graces is the true church known, rather than by a splendid appearance; and holiness becometh his house rather than gold and costly furniture, Ps. xliii. 5.

5. When some outward advantages do accompany religion, they

must not be foolishly thrown away upon the pretence of self-denial, but acknowledged as favours from God, as reputation, countenance, maintenance, favour of men, &c. Yet the heart must be watched narrowly when duty and interest meet together. They must not be foolishly thrown away upon the pretence of a more self-denying serving of God: this was the pretence of the false teachers, to gain credit and entrance, 2 Cor. xi. from the 7th to the 12th. And if it be real, it is foolish; for it is God's allowance both in his word and providence. Not but that a man may *cedere jure suo*, for the glory of God, the credit of the gospel, and give no offence: 1 Cor. ix. 18, 'What is my reward then? Verily, that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel.' Paul did what he could that the Corinthians might have *ἀδάπανον ἐναγγέλιον*; they would be prejudiced else; and Paul was fain to deny his own right to gratify them. But the heart must be watched when duty and interest meet together, that we do not make a market of religion, and a design of our profession, or a trade to live by; as we do when we look more to the secular encouragement than our duty. Their religion beareth their charges; they do not bear the charges of it. And these do rather say, I will not serve God for nothing, than, 'I will not serve God with what costs me nothing.'

6. Be not unreasonable in taxing yourselves with such a course of duty as is beyond ability and opportunity; for this is to make a snare for your own souls, and to entangle yourselves in some by-laws of your own making. And God accepts man according to what he hath, not according to what he hath not. A gracious heart may err on this hand, and think it never doeth enough. Conscience may be urging more; but even that little which we do is accepted. God is well pleased with it, because love is ill pleased with it, because it is no more nor better. Little is accepted for much when love offereth it. He taketh as much delight in the children's willingness as the more aged's strength. The main thing God looketh after is the willing mind: 2 Cor. viii. 12, 'If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to that he hath not;' and 1 Chron. xxix. 9, 'The people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the Lord.' Therefore, though we are to keep the heart liberal and open to God, and, when we have done our best, still to be willing to do more: Ps. lxxi. 14, 'I will praise him yet more and more;' yet this duty must be acted and exercised as strength and health will permit. In short, in performance of duties, the two measures are the strength and weakness of body and soul; as much as the health of the soul is more than the strength of body, our chief care must be for the soul, that the health of the soul be not lost, but still kept in good plight. That measure will show when we do too little; the other measure when the outward exercise is too much, when the health of the body is impaired or overwrought by it.

Use 1. It informeth us of the reasonableness and necessity of self-denial.

1. The reasonableness of it; for a man's heart, that is touched with any sense of religion, cannot be satisfied with a cheap course of duty. Natural light will tell us that no slight thing will become the God

whom we serve, and the glory and blessedness which we expect. Our religion were not a religion if it did not bind us to our duty, and not retrench the comforts and interests of the animal life, to preserve the spiritual in life and vigour; neither were christianity such a noble, glorious, and high institution if it did not draw us off from things earthly to things heavenly, and make them willing to quit the one for the other.

2. The necessity of it. They mistake religion that carry it on in such a way that it puts them to no cost. Wherever it is in vigour and power, it will put us to some expense. If it be otherwise, either men neglect many necessary duties, as self-examination, meditation, secret and earnest prayer, constant waiting upon God, mortifying their lusts and passions, which are all contrary to the ease of the flesh, or honouring God with their substance, Prov. iii. 4, seasonable reproof, owning his truth and stricter ways, notwithstanding troubles, persecutions, and disgraces, which are contrary to the interests and profits of the flesh; or else, secondly, they do what they do in a slight and overly fashion; and painted fire needeth no fuel. There is no trouble in a careless profession; there needs not much ado to keep it up. Where men leave the soul to the stream, and do, as Solomon saith of himself, Eccles. ii. 10, 'Whatsoever mine eyes desired, I kept not from them; I withheld not myself from any joy;' they leave their senses without guard, their affections without a bridle, and are carried on as they are impelled by their own lusts; and then varnish over all with a little profession, and talk of God, and Christ, or hearing. They may give religion a slight glance, and suffer it to have a turn among other things. Indeed such a religion puts them to no self-denial. But this is a false christianity of our own making. Here is no striving to enter in at the strait gate, no walking in the narrow way, no working out our salvation with fear and trembling. All this may be, and no denying ourselves and hazarding the displeasure of the world.

2. It informeth us that we have no reason to be displeased or overtroubled with oppositions, reproaches, and troubles for godliness' sake. God often in his providence sendeth troubles to heighten the price of profession, that it may not be taken up in a carnal design, and that every hypocrite may not take it up to hide or feed his lusts. Now when it is our lot to live in such times, they that are sincere should not be troubled at it; for then they have an happy advantage and opportunity to make their love to God more sensible and evident, when they do not serve him without cost. It is a finer and nicer debate at other times, to discern which is greatest in our hearts, our love to Christ or to the world, our esteem of things earthly or heavenly. A tried faith is sooner discerned, and God's suffering servants have a larger allowance of comfort. It is an happy occasion of discovering our sincerity; for you are now upon your trial, and more ample communion with God, and tasting the joys of the life to come. Surely these are truths which our Lord hath commended to our consideration: Mat. v. 11, 12, 'Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and say all manner of evil for my name's sake; rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven.' When we suffer for a

good conscience, we are to carry this cross, not only patiently, but joyfully.

Use 2. It reproveth those that put off God with anything. A sickly lamb for a sacrifice; yea, and grudge at their sorry services: Mal. i. 13, 'What a weariness is it!' Surely they are far from religion that can deny themselves nothing, that will perform a duty when they have nothing else to do, and deal reservedly, superficially, and unfaithfully in all their work, and still complain of tediousness and weariness in God's service; that think the time long, the pains too much, the cost too burthensome; can be content with a little labour perhaps, but it must not be tired too much: 'When will the sabbath be over?' Amos iii. When will the duty be done? Or it may be they will sacrifice some of their weaker lusts, or their smaller and petty sins, which yield them no pleasure or profit, but retain their great sins, wherein their souls delight; as Saul destroyed the rascal multitude and carrion cattle of Amalek, but spared Agag and the fattest of the oxen and sheep, 1 Sam. xv. 7-9; or as John destroyed the idolatry of Baal, which his interest led him to, but not the calves at Dan and Bethel, which reason of state was against, 1 Kings x. 29, 30; or as Herod did many things, but if John will touch his Herodias, he shall smart for it, Mark vi. 17, 20. Thus do they desire and hope to gain heaven at a more easy rate than an entire resignation of all to God. They may sustain some reproach, make some small losses, but to be undone by their religion, to venture reputation, estate, and life, and all, for Christ and his gospel, this they cannot endure to hear of. They can be contented to be distasted and despised by their open enemies, but so as to make themselves whole again by their own party, yield to many corruptions, and humour them, please them, as the young prophet, 1 Kings xiii. 14, 19. Oh, this is but carnal self-denial, yea, rather carnal self-seeking.

Use 3. Of caution. Let us not rest satisfied with the cheaper part of religion. No; you must be at some cost for God. They are self-seeking hypocrites that cull out the safe, the cheap, the easy part of their duty, and leave all the rest undone. A faithful discharge of your duty may bring trouble to the flesh, but it will bring comfort to the soul.

What is the cheaper part of religion I shall instance in a few things.

1. Outward profession; especially when our interests or education lead us thereunto. Alas! this is to serve God with what costs us nothing. Though it be the profession of God's stricter ways, when we have not that constitution of heart, and do not carry on that course of life which doth become such profession; for then you are but factionists; not of Christ's religion, but of his faction. God is no προσωπόλεπος, 1 Peter i. 17, 'No respecter of persons.' Herding with a strict party, while yet our hearts are not subdued to God, is nothing worth. Religion is not to be carried on in the world so: Gal. v. 6, 'In Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love;' Gal. vi. 15, 'In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature;' 1 Cor. vii. 19, 'Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing,

but the keeping of the commandments of God.' It is no great matter to be of this side or that, while carnal, if there be not an heavenly, holy, mortified heart, and a sober, grave conversation.

2. A dull speculative approbation of what is good will serve no man : Rom. ii. 18, 'And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law,' &c. The truths of God have great evidence, and reasonable men have some aptitude to discern it. Opinions are cheap things, and may be taken up and held without any great cost. Do they sway your love and practice? There is the chief trial.

3. Minding lesser while we neglect weighty things : Mat. xxiii. 23, 'Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithes of mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith.' Ceremony rather than substance. No; there must be a uniform conscience; not make a business about small matters and neglect weighty duties.

4. Doing that which is good when no temptation to the contrary; Exod. xxxiv. 21, 'Six days shalt thou labour, and the seventh day shalt thou rest. In harvest and earing-time shalt thou rest.' They should rest then when it was a self-denial to rest, when their profit invited them to labour. To be humble when under; but lifted up, they soon discover themselves. Some will follow a good way while it is peaceable, writhe themselves into all shapes and postures, and distinguish themselves out of a sense of their duty, that they may avoid the cross, or be at any charge for God: Gal. vi. 12, 'They constrain you to be circumcised, lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.' They cannot live without honour, ease, and plenty; and therefore turn and wind any way to shift off the cross.

5. It is an easy religion to be more in public duties than in private. We have the greatest advantage to discover more earnestness of affection in private, secret duties, where usually we are slight, and slubber over things in an unhandsome fashion. Our Lord Jesus went apart into a solitary place, early in the morning, to pray the more earnestly, Mark i. 53. There we may enjoy most sensible communion with God, can most feelingly lay forth our own case. The spouse of the church is bashful, saith Bernard, and will not communicate his loves to us in company.

6. The external part of religious duties is more easy than internal. They that have knowledge and utterance may flow in expressions. The ring of parts gratifieth natural pride, and procureth our esteem with others; therefore the exercise of gifts will not discover a christian so much as the exercise of grace, faith, hope, love, humility, sobriety, mercy, mortification. Therefore should a christian measure himself rather by these things than the pomp of gifts: 'If I speak with the tongue of angels, yet without charity, I am nothing,' 1 Cor. xiii. 1.

7. It is more easy to reprove others than to reform ourselves, and to be more earnest in opposing their sins than to subdue our own. Many please themselves in invectives against the times or censuring others. It is a false zeal that is much abroad: James i. 27, 'Pure religion, and undefiled, before God and the Father, is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the

world.' The crafty lapwing will go up and down fluttering and crying, to draw the fowler from her own nest. We have a nest of sin of our own; we are loath it should be rifled and exposed to public view, therefore we crack against others: James iii. 1, 'My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that ye shall receive the greater condemnation.'

8. Power and dominion of the truth over hearts is a far greater evidence of our sincerity than curious speculations or highflown notions: 1 Cor. iv. 20, 'The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power;' James ii. 17, 'Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.' Be warmed, be clothed; or, I have faith, relieving, comforting; this is best. A doing and giving is more than a bare attendance upon God in his worship: Isa. lviii. 5, 7, 'Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head, as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes upon him? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?' Acts of charity are much better than formalities of worship.

Use 4. To press us to this self-denying way of serving God. I shall do it by these considerations—

1. How much wicked men can deny themselves for their lusts. There is not a verier drudge in the world than a carnal man. What cost is he at to satisfy his lusts? nothing is too good for back and belly; he can ransack the storehouses of nature for their supply, and all seemeth little enough to gratify those pleasures and delights which he fancieth. The world and the flesh engross his whole time and strength, he beginneth betimes; the flower and freshness of his youth and strength is employed this way; so that if God should break in upon him, and bring him to any sense of his everlasting interest, there is nothing but the dregs of age left for God; the flesh and the world have his health and strength. If he promise anything to his Creator, whom he should remember in the days of his youth, Ecces. xii. 1, it is only his weakness and sickness. Carnal vanities have his first-fruits, and scarce his gleanings can be reserved for God and religion. In his age, how little is he reduced! what commands doth the devil lay upon men! and how laborious and grievous and difficult soever they be, this is no impediment. But in religion a little thing is grievous; all proveth too much. It is a costly thing to feed any lust; what large offers do they make! Micah vi. 6, 7, 'Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?' They had rather be at any pains than quit their bosom corruptions; are more willing to promise what is impossible or sinfully cruel than kill one lust. How can a christian but blush at this, that he began with God so late, and that the best of his days were past before he thought of God; and when he seeth the devil's martyrs, how they venture reputation, estate, life, soul, and all, for a base pleasure, and he can do so little for God?

2. What a change it would make in the christian world if christians

of all sorts would put this question seriously to their souls, Shall I serve God with that which cost me nothing?

[1.] In ministers. Oh, how justly may God put us out of service, who have so often served him with what cost us nought! Surely, did we oftener think of this, we would be other manner of ministers than ever we have been. When we are entering into this sacred function and office, we would think what skill and industry is required to be able to guide souls unto their eternal rest; we would be more careful to get ministerial graces; that is to say, such zeal for God, such sound belief of the things whereof we speak, that we might not seem to speak of them in jest, and for fashion's sake. Such compassion over souls, for which Christ died, that we would warn every man, instruct every man, teach every man, that we may present every man perfect in Jesus Christ, Col. i. 27, 28. We would be more careful to get ministerial abilities and sufficiencies, such a stock of knowledge, speculative and experimental, that our lips might preserve knowledge, Mal. ii. 7; that we might be able to resolve cases, to answer doubts and scruples, obviate errors, convince gainsayers; not only fodder the sheep, but hunt out the wolves. We would not come to this work raw and unfledged, as many ministers, who are for the main sincere, do; we would not think that a few natural parts, or a little slight eloquence, would serve the turn. No; saith the conscientious man, 'I will not serve God with what cost me nought.' Every time we are meditating upon a word of exhortation, or thinking of attending God's throne, we would seek to find out acceptable words, and think we hear poor souls crying to us, Good sir, study for us. Certainly we would not serve God with what costs us nought. As the psalmist saith, Ps. xlv. 1, 'My heart inditeth a good matter,' baketh a good matter. It is an allusion to the mindah, or meat-offering. We would not come with a little dough-baked stuff, some raw, crude, and indigested eructations. Yea, we would deal reproofs more freely, as John Baptist told Herod plainly, Mark vi. 18, 'It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife.' The flesh will be apt to say, This will be ill taken, this will procure displeasure or danger; but conscience will reply, Let him take it how he will, 'shall I serve God with what cost me nought?' The minister's conversation would be better, such as may be an example to others, such as may keep up the full value of his testimony in the consciences of men. He would aim at that singular holiness which becometh his station; for, saith he, 'Shall I serve God with what costs me nought?'

[2.] Let magistrates mind this, and they will be possessed with another spirit than most magistrates are. He will not be a careless Gallio, nor a partial Jehu, nor a lukewarm Laodicean. He will do justice, and be useful in his place; not only when his ease permitteth him, or his credit inviteth him, or may do it without any prejudice to his interests, but when his interests are in danger. He will not leave a duty undone, because trouble followeth it; when he is to contend with nobles, as Nehemiah; when hazards and displeasing attend the discharge of his office; for, saith he, 'Shall I serve God with what cost me nought?' He doth not consult with inconveniencies, but duty.

[3.] Let common christians think of this in their constant duties towards God or men. Towards God. In general, he is resolved not to

stand upon the ease of the flesh or the interests of the flesh. The pleasures and delights of the flesh will make us sluggish; and the interests of the flesh cowardly and faint-hearted. And then his repentance would be more full. When he cometh to enter in by the strait gate, there is required much sorrow and grief before he can settle his peace, or his soul sit easy. Now the flesh recalcitrates, and kicketh against this kind of discipline, as the bullock at yoking is most unruly; but he holdeth his heart to it by this, 'Shall I serve God with what costs me nought?' His walking in the narrow way, his mortification more full. If he findeth any bosom lusts or tender parts, they must be renounced; the right hand must be cut off, the right eye pulled out, Mat. v. 29, 30. Many do many things, but keep their Herodias. His profession is more constant, though he suffer loss of credit, estate, esteem. He is more diligent in the discharge of his duties. He dealeth righteously with men, though it be to his loss and hurt. He is more faithful in his relations, as husband, wife, master, parent, child, servant; when it is grievous. Soberly, when the flesh would crave an indulgence. What! shall I obey every vain fancy and appetite? The main care and diligence of his life is laid out, not upon the flesh, but the spirit, that God be first and chiefly served, and not self. They leave God nothing that will not give him their best.

SERMON UPON 1 JOHN II. 20.

But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.—
1 JOHN II. 20.

IN the context you have a caution against seducers, who are represented under the term of antichrists, because they took upon themselves to be sent of God, as Christ was, and yet opposed the dignity of his person and the interest of his kingdom. For their number, they are said to be many, because they swarmed everywhere; and for their prevalency they had proselyted many of the baser and looser sort of christians; but the more solid were preserved untainted. And what was their preservative we are told in the text, 'But ye have an unction,' &c.

This is mentioned—

1. Partly to show the reason of their standing; not by the sharpness of their own discerning, but the enlightening of the Holy Ghost. It is the Spirit that confirmeth us in the truth of Christ's doctrine. *Hoc non docet eruditio, sed unctio*—Bernard.

2. Partly to comfort them. So many had miscarried, and been led away by this stream of error, that the best christians might be discouraged. But they had a teacher near at hand, an oracle, as it were, in their own bosoms, sufficient means and helps within themselves to keep them from these snares.

3. Partly to quicken them to the more caution. If they should be seduced, they had no excuse, having sufficient evidence of the truth of the gospel, or that Jesus is the Messiah, and so were fortified against those that would deceive them. In all reason it might be expected they should not swallow these cheats and impostures, having such experience and assurance of the truth.

In the words we have three things—

1. The privilege, or gift imparted to them, 'Ye have an unction.'
2. The fountain, or author of it, 'From the Holy One.'
3. The effect and benefit thence resulting, 'And ye know all things.'

Doct. The saints have a special anointing from Jesus Christ, to enlighten and confirm them in the truth of the gospel.

First this must be explained—

1. What is this unction or anointing? Probably the word alludeth to the holy ointment, the composition of which is described, *Exod. xxx. 25*; the figure of pouring out the Holy Spirit on Christ, his church, and ministers. Or if you will more largely refer it, anointing was for

two uses—to inaugurate men into any eminent office, suppose of king, or priest, or prophet; so the holy oil was poured on Aaron and his sons; and thus Jesus Christ himself was anointed; as Acts iv. 27, 'Against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed;' which was done at the Spirit's coming down upon him. Then was his solemn inauguration manifested, and the authority and power of his mediatory office showed forth. 'God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power,' Acts x. 38. Now as Jesus was thus anointed, so were the apostles when the Spirit was poured on them, Acts ii.; and so are all ordinary ministers of the gospel, when furnished with the gifts and graces of the Spirit suitable to their calling. So are all christians: 2 Cor. i. 21, 'Now he that stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God.' So made kings and priests unto God.

2. For the entertainment of honourable guests invited to a feast: Mat. xxvi. 7, 'A woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, poured it on his head as he sat at meat;' Ps. xxiii. 5, 'Thou preparest a table for me in the sight of mine enemies; thou anointest mine head with oil, my cup runneth over.' So Ps. civ. 15, 'Oil that maketh his face to shine,' and 'the oil of gladness' spoken of in scripture related to the oil used in feasts: Ps. xlv. 8, 'Anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows.' Jesus Christ, as head, was advanced and dignified above angels and men: yet his fellows or companions have a liberal effusion or communication of grace from the Spirit at the gospel-feast; there is an abundance of grace poured on them, to the refreshing of their souls.

Well, then, what is this anointing but the testimony of the Spirit given to the truth of the gospel? Now the testimony of the Spirit is twofold—objective or subjective, internal or external.

[1.] The objective or external testimony was the coming down of the Holy Ghost upon Christ and his apostles in a wonderful and miraculous manner, together with the many signs and wonders which accompanied the preaching of the gospel, whereby assurance was given them of the truths which they were to believe, especially that Christ is the Messiah: Acts v. 31, 32, 'Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a prince and a saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost whom God hath given to them that obey him;' and Heb. ii. 3, 4, 'How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost?' If there were no more in it than so, yet from heavenly truths thus asserted and assured to them they should not lightly depart upon every suggestion and insinuation from a crafty seducer, till they could bring something with as good or better evidence than those things which they had received. Christians should continue as they were.

[2.] Internal and subjective. And here I shall take notice of a threefold work of the Holy Ghost—(1.) Illumination; (2.) Conversion; (3.) Consolation.

(1.) Illumination ; as they were enlightened by the Holy Ghost in the knowledge of the gospel, and the necessary things contained therein. Besides an object sufficiently revealed and externally confirmed, there is need of a prepared faculty, or visive power. Therefore an internal efficiency is necessary: Eph. i. 17, 18, 'That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him : the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling.' That is the work of the Spirit, to open the eyes of the mind: 2 Cor. iv. 6, 'God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ ;' there is *lumen internum*, inward light. Therefore when Peter had acknowledged Jesus to be the Christ, Mat. xvi. 17, 'Flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father which is in heaven.' Human credulity is wrought by tradition, but saving faith and knowledge by spiritual illumination. When man leadeth us into truth, man may easily lead us off again. Education may furnish us with opinions in religion, and we may sacrifice some of our weaker lusts for the opinions we have imbibed by education, for men will not easily forego their prejudices ; but it is the Spirit of God that setteth and confirmeth us against all contradiction ; such a difference there is between taking up religion out of inspiration and out of opinion. It is the Spirit only that giveth us a clear perception and discerning of the truth, and firm adherence to it ; because it removeth the incapacity or disproportion between the things revealed and the constitution and temper of our hearts: 1 Cor. ii. 14, 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him ; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.'

(2.) The mind is not only illuminated, but the heart sanctified and converted to God, and fitted for God, and so suited to spiritual and heavenly things: 'That ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness;' Titus iii. 5, 'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.' Surely the renovation of the soul and the restitution of God's image giveth us greater advantages, both for the perception of truth and the retention of it.

(1st.) For the perception or discerning of truth from falsehood ; for there are such impressions of the holiness, righteousness, and goodness of God left upon their hearts, that nothing can be offered unto them but whereof they may be competent judges by means of those dispositions stamped upon their hearts by the Holy Ghost: 2 Cor. iii. 3, 'Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God ; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.' They can better taste doctrines, being freed from the distempers and delusions of the flesh, and may more easily scent an error ; for there is something in holy, believing souls which is of kin to anything of truth represented without, or carrieth a repugnancy to it if it be error: Heb. viii. 10, 'I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts.'

besides the light of nature, doctrine of your deliverance and redemption by the Son of God, and your future glorification according to his promises. Therefore they have an advantage above other men: Ps. xi. 3, 'The Spirit of the Lord shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord.' He shall scent, or smell, or breathe of nothing but what is pious and religious; and therefore is more acute in discerning of matters of godliness, and what is agreeable or disagreeable thereunto.

(2d.) For retention, or holding fast the truth of christian doctrine. A man in his corrupt estate is more apt to believe Satan than he is to believe God; and the scale will more easily be turned against the truth when the flesh holdeth the balance; especially where men among professors of the truth are, as birds in a cage, still seeking to get out. Therefore if the understanding be not cleared, and the will inclined to Christ, and to God the Father by him, we shall easily fall off when the temptation cometh with any considerable strength. Certainly a man is held faster by the heart than by the head alone. Conviction may breed an awe upon the conscience, but conversion suiteth the heart to it. Love maketh us quick of discerning, and firm of retaining truth; and for retaining there is something in a renewed man that taketh part with Christ, and strongly biasseteth and inclineth him to him: 2 Thes. ii. 10, 'They received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.' Truth looketh to be entertained as truth, and preferred before any carnal interest. Divines, when they open the nature of faith, distinguish of *certitudo evidentiæ*, and *certitudo adhærentiæ*. There may be more evidence in matters of sense than in matters of faith, but not more adherence; the one ariseth from the clear sight of the thing, the other from the weight and worth of it. I have not such evidence of the world to come as I have of the things before my eyes; but I have such a persuasion of the certainty, which draweth me off from things I see with my eyes, and so leave all that I see and have for that glory which I never saw, but expect on God's promise.

(3.) Consolation. This oil is not only the 'oil of grace,' but the 'oil of gladness;' and the Spirit is a comforter as well as a sanctifier. Now when we have not only been enlightened and converted, but comforted, found benefit by it, surely this will be a means to establish and settle us in the truth; for then there is a spiritual sense, or taste and savouring the things of God: Phil. i. 9, 'That your love may abound more and more in all knowledge, and in all judgment,' *ἐν αἰσθήσει*, sense. And what use is there of it? 'That ye may approve the things that are excellent;' or *δοκιμάζεν τὰ διαφέροντα*, try the things that differ, 1 Peter ii. 3. *Optima demonstratio est à sensibus*—the best demonstration is by the senses; to know honey by description and by taste, or a country by a map and travel. Others have but the notion of things contained in the gospel; these feel the sweetness and power of them in their own souls, Col. i. 6. Now when a man must be persuaded, not only against his knowledge, and against his love and his sense, desires, hopes, against his very heart and his nature, and all his experience, his new nature, and all the inclinations and notions of it, surely he will not be so easily won as one that hath no experience; there is something within that checketh the temptation. Arguments have little

force against the inclination of nature and constant experience. There is *communis sensus fidelium*. Well, then, this anointing is the gracious operation of the Holy Ghost, whereby we are enlightened, regenerated, comforted.

Secondly, The author or fountain of the gift, 'The Holy One;' whereby is meant Christ, often so called: Luke i. 35, 'That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God;' Rev. ii. 7, 'These things saith he that is holy;' Acts iii. 14, 'But ye denied the Holy One.' He was the first anointed, and hath the fulness of all grace in himself, therefore called Messiah: Dan. ix. 24, 'To anoint the Most Holy.' And from him this anointing is derived to his people, Ps. cxxxiii. 2, like the oil on Aaron's head, that descended to the beard and the skirts of his clothing. So that this holy oil is from Christ, and from him freely and abundantly dispensed unto his people. First Christ purchased it for us; secondly conveyeth it to us; for he shed his blood for us, and then his Spirit on us: Titus iii. 6, 'Which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

1. He procured it for us: Gal. iii. 13, 14, 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, that the blessing of Abraham might come on the gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.' Compare 1 Cor. x. 4, with John iv. 14, and John vii. 38, 39; the rock struck with the rod of Moses.

2. He conveyeth it to us: John i. 16, 'Of his fulness have we received, and grace for grace.' Christ is an head of influence as well as an head of eminence. It is by virtue of his anointing that we are anointed: 'Of his fulness we receive.' We go to God for it in the name of Christ. We receive it for his sake and from him; upon the account of his merit, and from him as our head.

Thirdly, The benefit, 'And ye shall know all things.' How is this to be understood? For omniscency and infallibility is God's prerogative. And it is said of the saints that 'we know but in part,' 1 Cor. xiii. 9.

Ans. This universal particle must be restrained to the matter in hand. Two restrictions all will grant—

1. All divine things. Not secrets of nature, mysteries of trade and policy, or skill in worldly affairs. Heathens may excel God's children in these things. No; the holy Spirit, with his gifts and graces, is not given us for these ends: 1 Cor. ii. 12, 'We have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the things which are freely given us of God.' We have this Spirit to know our privileges by the gospel and the duties which belong thereunto, what is required and what granted in the charter of the new covenant.

2. There is another restriction which all will assent unto: all divine things which are revealed unto men: for Deut. xxix. 19, 'Secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which he hath revealed, to us, and our children for ever.' Hidden things, not revealed in the word are to be left unto Jehovah, to do with them as he pleaseth; but it is our care only to regard those things which concern our duty and happiness; and for events or the government of his providence, to leave it to God.

3. In things revealed we must distinguish between matters that

belong to the plentitude of knowledge, and matters necessary either to salvation or establishment in the points controverted in that age.

[1.] Matters that belong to the plentitude and fulness of knowledge, as the gift of interpretation of tongues, knowledge of words, and the art of reasoning many matters in scripture. These things depend upon wit, industry, secular learning, and the common gifts of the Spirit. There are *dona ministrantia*, and *dona sanctificantia*, ministering gifts and sanctifying gifts. The carnal may come behind in no gift; for these things are for the good of the body rather than the person that hath them: 1 Cor. i. 7, 'He came behind in no gift.' And yet they were not the best sort of christians which the gospel speaketh of. But the Spirit of holiness is given us to another purpose, to bring us safe to heaven by drawing off our hearts from the creature to God, and from sin to holiness, and from self to Christ. A carnal man may excel in one sort of gifts above the sanctified in opening the signification of words and phrases, methodically disposing truths, and in framing such rational deductions and pressing such arguments as are most apt to work on the heart of man. Indeed, where both meet together, ministering gifts and sanctifying gifts, there a christian is most accomplished; and when grace governeth his parts and quickeneth his parts, he bringeth most honour to Christ, and doth not expose religion to contempt, as others do; but everything must be regarded in its proper place.

[2.] Matters necessary. These are of two sorts; either—

(1.) Essential to christianity, and absolutely necessary to salvation. In these things the unction prevaileth: Ps. xxv. 14, 'The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant.' God will not conceal from them the knowledge of his will, so far as their salvation is concerned in it, the secret of the Lord, that way wherein we ought to walk, if ever we would be accepted by him. So that in the great fundamental truths the sincere christian hath the advantage: Mat. xxiv. 24, 'Insomuch that if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.' When learned, subtle men are deceived, the Spirit will keep the elect right.

(2.) Necessary to escape seduction, or the cheats of those antichrists that were then gone abroad, or might afterwards break into the church, to pervert the flock of Christ. In points not absolutely necessary, a godly man is more likely to be in the right rather than the ungodly; he is under the promise of God when, according to light received, he walketh in God's ways: John vii. 17, 'If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.' He is most faithful to his end, which shineth to him all along his way: Mat. vi. 22, 'If thine eye be single, thy whole body is full of light.' Having a single eye, he is most serious and industrious in the use of means; and God's blessing usually goeth along with diligence. And so in improvement of common helps: Prov. ii. 3, 4, 'If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding: if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord.' He hath a measure and touchstone within him, the work of grace upon his heart, by which he can try doctrines, which do most obstruct or further the work of godliness; not which please or

displease the flesh ; though yet good men, in some cases, may be misled with error.

2. Why this anointing doth confirm us in the truths of the gospel.

[1.] From the Spirit, who is the anointing which we have from the Holy One. And his effects suit with the nature of God. The conceptions which we have of God may be reduced to these heads—Wisdom, power, and goodness : these are the most obvious notions. Now the regenerating Spirit giveth us the effect of all these : 2 Tim. i. 7, ‘ God hath not given us the spirit of fear but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.’

(1.) Wisdom, in making wise the simple by the doctrine of the gospel, Ps. xix. 7, as teaching the way to true happiness and salvation, and enabling them to walk in it. The wise men of the world cannot but applaud this course ; and the dying are all of this mind, and acknowledge their own folly in doing otherwise.

(2.) Power : Phil. iv. 13, ‘ I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.’ In overcoming those appetites and desires by which the rest of the world are mastered and captivated. To be contented with their portion ; to animate them against all the terrors of the world, and subdue the delights of the flesh, that they may mind the things of another world, and so have comfort in life and death.

(3.) Goodness. It discovereth the greatest love to mankind that possibly can be conceived, both in the way and the end ; redemption by Christ, and the glory prepared for believers. Love becometh the very constitution of our souls : 1 John iv. 7, 8, ‘ Let us love one another : for love is of God ; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God,’ &c. And moral goodness in the way we are to walk in, which is the way of holiness, without any respect to fleshly pleasure or interest, and through obedience to God : 1 Peter iv. 2, ‘ That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh, to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.’ Now the soul thus formed by the Spirit, where shall he find such a discovery of God ? What profession is there that can possess us with a new spirit, and such a spirit as the christian religion doth ? This begets a spirit that beareth the lively image and impress of God, where it hath its natural effects on the souls of men. Half christians go beyond others in such gifts as God giveth not to the heathen world ; but especially through christians, therefore rejecteth other ways.

[2.] From the nature of this enlightening or knowledge of the truth which the Spirit worketh in us. It is not a bare conjecture, but a certain establishing knowledge : John vi. 69, ‘ We believe, and are sure, that thou art Christ, the Son of the living God ;’ John xvii. 8, ‘ They have known surely that I came out from thee.’ So that the soul is willing to adhere to it with the loss of all. A slight perfunctory apprehension is soon shaken, either by subtlety or violence ; but this is firm and strong.

[3.] Those who are anointed are sanctified and consecrated to God, and so under the care and protection of his special providence. Anointing hath the notion of consecrating, and setting apart for some holy use, for God’s special service. As Christ as mediator ; and so christians in their proportion, as his servants, and instruments of his

glory in the world; they are qualified for it by the gifts and graces of his Spirit: 2 Peter ii. 9, 'Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into light.' Now God is very chary and tender of such: Ps. cv. 15, 'Touch not mine anointed.' They are particularly owned by God, that none might dare to do them the least injury. Now as it is so in God's outward government by his providence, so in his internal government by his Spirit; God looketh after them more than others, that they may take no hurt nor annoyance.

[4.] This anointing giveth them familiar acquaintance with God, Christ, and the Spirit. - Christ's sheep will hear his voice, and will not hear the voice of strangers, John x. 5. They have a spirit of discerning: John xiv. 17, 'Ye know him; for he dwelleth in you, and shall be in you.' The poor infant knoweth his mother's milk, puketh if suckled by a strange nurse, 1 Peter ii. 2, *ἄδολον γάλα*. *Hominem olet homo*, the man in it: 'The world heareth them,' 1 John iv. 5. Besides literal instruction, they have the advantage of knowledge and experience.

Use 1. To persuade us to get this anointing. If we pretend to christianity, where is our unction, the virtue and efficacy of it, for the renewing and sanctifying of our hearts?

1. You are christians only in name if you want it; of the letter, and not of the spirit; that take up your religion upon trust, have only the form of it. Ignorant and profane persons, have they this choice anointing? May you not as well call a dunghill a perfume, or tainted grease a sweet oil, as to count them to have this spiritual anointing who roll themselves in the filth and vomit of sin, as the common rabble of nominal christians do? If you have this anointing indeed, your whole life will be a sweet savour or a precious odour. One dead fly, one base lust cherished, spoileth the whole box of ointment, Eccles. x. 1.

2. If you have this unction, you have a great advantage against error and infidelity. We live in a time wherein there are many antichrists; now he that hath an unction from the Holy One hath an evidence always at hand to refute what is contrary to sound doctrine; something in his bosom that will not permit him to hearken to popery and other errors. Disputes are long, and managed with great subtlety; and as they are backed with violence, we may be strangely perverted and blinded by interests; nothing will be our safety but a sound experience of the religion we do profess, of the virtue, power, comfort, and sweetness of it. God's Spirit is the seal of any doctrine, and our anointing is our establishment: 2 Cor. i. 21, 'He which establisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God.' I do not say you should not look after other things, a sound understanding of the truth in controversy; but there will be your best preservative, which will not easily suffer them to change their religion.

3. If you have this unction, your own interest in Christ and eternal life is secured to you: 2 Cor. i. 22, 'Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts;' Eph. i. 13, 14, 'In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the holy Spirit of promise which is the earnest of our inheritance.' That which is the seal of religion is the seal of those that profess it. The Spirit of sanctification

subduing our corruptions, sanctifying our natures, and enabling us to do the will of God, and causing us to live in the sweet and delightful forethoughts of the life to come. This is your seal and earnest, and this is nothing but the unction spoken of in the text. Ordinary men have a reasonable nature; common christians, those common gifts which he giveth not to the heathen world; but the true christians have a divine nature, or the sanctifying Spirit, as their great evidence. This is given unto none but God's children. The case is determined against you if you have not this anointing: Rom. viii. 9, 'If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.' But for you, if you have, 1 John iv. 13, 'Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.' Therefore without this you can have no sound comfort; but have it, and you carry about the matter of continual joy.

4. By having this unction we are more quickened to do what we know, and to be true to the religion which we do profess; because the truth then lieth near our hearts, and so likely to work more effectually than what is at a great distance: 1 Thes. i. 5, 6, 'Our gospel came to you not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance. And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost;' 1 Thes. ii. 13, 'We thank God without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God, ye received it not as the word of men, but as the word of God, which effectually worketh in you that believe.' This unction maketh a real change in the soul: 2 Cor. iii. 8, 'We are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' If there be but a form of knowledge, there will be but a form of godliness. But where this anointing is, there we are made partakers of the divine nature, and live an holy life.

What shall we do to get this unction? I answer—

1. Beg it of God for Christ's sake, who purchased it for you, and who is ready to give you this spiritual eye-salve: Rev. iii. 18, 'Anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see.' It is his office to dispense this oil, and he will dispense it freely and liberally; for he had this power to this end and purpose. Christ taught us to pray for the Spirit.

2. Be diligent in the use of the means of grace, whereby you get the Spirit, or further measures and degrees of it. The ministration of the Spirit: 2 Cor. iii. 8; the word: Acts x. 44, 'The Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word;' the Lord's supper: 1 Cor. xii. 13, 'By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body.' Manna came down in the dew, so the Spirit in the doctrine which distills as the dew; so communion with the saints in all the ordinances of Christ: Ps. cxxxiii. 2, 'It is like the precious ointment on the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's, which ran down on the skirts of his garment.' The Spirit of grace is a spirit of communion. Therefore we read of the unity of the Spirit, Eph. iv. 3. When they were of one heart and one mind, then had they most plentiful effusion of the Holy Ghost.

3. Do not grieve the Spirit: Eph. iv. 30, 'Grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.' How is the Spirit grieved? By some one heinous provoking transgression, or

by living in a course of known sin, pride, worldliness, or sensuality. If we wound conscience, and be secretly false to the religion which we do profess, or have pleasure in unrighteousness, we lie open to temptations, to error and falsehood, provoke God to withhold discerning light, and cannot know whether we have the Spirit of God or no. Loose and careless christians are always weak in the knowledge of the truth.

4. Let us improve our anointing, and discover it in all companies, temptations, exercises, businesses. Wherever you come, show forth the fragrantcy of your good ointments. In your converse with God, pray in the Holy Ghost, Jude 20; that is, pray as one that hath an unction, with a savoury spirit, and enlarged affections. In thy converse with men, all thy words and actions must savour of this ointment: Prov. xxvii. 9, 'Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart; so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel.' In your temptations to sluggish negligence in the spiritual life: Heb. ii. 3, 'How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?' If to downright unbelief, there is somewhat written upon his heart that is contrary, a sense of God and heaven there that cannot be blotted out. If by a seducer without, it is not the regenerate, well-grounded, and experienced christians, but the loose and superficial sort, that are in most danger, like light chaff. They that know the truth, and are made free by the truth, the word of God will abide in them. Disciples indeed will not start from Christ, though those in name and title often did: John viii. 31, 32, 'If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.'

5. Do not abuse or make an ill use of this teaching which you have by the anointing.

[1.] Not to rashness and self-confidence. We may be apt to do so. Though the anointing teacheth us all things, yet three things are still necessary—(1.) Scripture, or an outward word; for that is still God's instrument to beget and increase faith and obedience: John xvii. 20, 'Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.' There is but one gospel, and no other to be expected: Gal. i. 7, 8, 'Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ: but though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.' The Spirit is never given to detract anything from the authority of the word. (2.) Ministers and teachers: Eph. iv. 11, 'And he gave some apostles, and some pastors and teachers.' These are instituted by Christ, so appointed by the Spirit: Acts xx. 28, 'Take heed to yourselves, and to the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers.' The Spirit would never contradict himself. (3.) The Spirit himself: 1 Cor. iii. 7, 'So neither is he that planteth anything, nor he that watereth,' &c. The spirit must breathe on his own graces, and assist the soul in the exercise of them. It is our advantage that he is at hand to excite our faith, that there is a preparation already.

[2.] Do not abuse it to pride and boasting that we have the Spirit, and contemning those who excel us in useful knowledge: Jude 19, 'These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the

Spirit.' Those men have not most of the Spirit who boast most of it: 1 Cor. viii. 2, 'If a man think he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.' This anointing is given us to see our sinfulness, and need of Christ and his grace, and the excellency of the life to come. There are several ages: 1 John ii. 13, 14, 'I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one,' &c., Heb. xii. 13, 14. Some have senses exercised more than others; all have not a full measure of knowledge at first. Babes, young men, fathers; some truths harder, some easier.

[3.] Not to security, as if infallible. Though he that hath this anointing be not so easily carried into error, and do not so obstinately continue in it, for it is impossible for him to live in a gross error as well as in a gross sin, yet they may err in lesser things, which may occasion much trouble to the church. Yea, they may be led into some dangerous error for a while, especially when they have grieved the Spirit, and blotted that character of gospel-truth which was impressed upon their souls; therefore must live in a constant dependence, and holy jealousy of themselves: 1 Cor. x. 12, 'Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.'

[4.] Not to idleness and laziness; for still we must cry for knowledge, and dig for understanding as for choice silver, Prov. ii. 3, 4, 5. And it is the character of the good man, Ps. i. 2, 'His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night.' It is a vile abuse of this heavenly privilege to make the Spirit a patron of negligence, and indulging the ease of the flesh; as if a good wit in secular learning should never study. So as if meditation were needless because they have the Spirit. Avoid these things, handle the matter as the new nature directs, and it will be a great help to you.

SERMON UPON HEBREWS XII. 24.

And to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.—HEB. xii. 24.

In the context, the privileges of our being brought into a gospel state are reckoned up. Among other things, these two are of principal regard—That we are acquainted with the true Mediator, and the true ransom which he hath paid for our souls. (1.) The true Mediator; in the former part of the verse, ‘And to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant.’ (2.) The true ransom; that is in the text, ‘And to the blood of sprinkling,’ &c. In which words the blood of Christ is set forth by two things—

1. By the application of it, ‘The blood of sprinkling.’
2. By the virtue and efficacy of it, ‘Which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.’

The worth and value of it is set forth by a comparison, where take notice—(1.) Of the things compared, Christ’s blood and Abel’s blood. (2.) Wherein they agree; they both speak. (3.) The preference of Christ’s blood; *κρείττονα*, the blood of Christ speaketh better things.

The doctrines are two—

1. Those who have entered into the gospel state have the blood of Christ applied to their hearts and consciences.

2. The blood of Christ applied to the penitent believer’s heart and conscience is of great value and efficacy with God.

The first point is grounded upon that term, ‘The blood of sprinkling.’ The second upon the other branch, ‘That it speaketh better things.’

For the first, we read in scripture of blood shed and blood sprinkled. (1.) Of blood shed: Heb. ix. 22, ‘Without the shedding of blood there is no remission.’ Therefore Christ’s blood was shed for the remission of sins. There can be no propitiation for sin without the expiation of it. The expiation of sin is by suffering the punishment due to it. Now the punishment was suffered when Christ was made sin for us: 2 Cor. v. 21, ‘He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.’ A curse for us: Gal. iii. 13, ‘Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.’ (2.) We are to speak of blood sprinkled, that is, actually applied, for all believers are sprinkled with it. Blood shed hath a cleansing power and virtue, but blood sprinkled doth actually cleanse and purify from sin, when this is applied to us in particular. The

'blood of sprinkling' is not only spoken of in the text, but in many other places: 1 Peter i. 2, 'Through the sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus.' This sprinkling relateth unto the law customs, wherein, after the shedding of the blood of the sacrifice, it was sprinkled. A threefold sprinkling I shall take notice of—

1. The first was the sprinkling of the door-posts with the blood of the paschal lamb, to save the house from the stroke of the revenging angel: Heb. xi. 28, 'Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them;' with Exod. xii. 22, 'Ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason, and strike the lintel and the two side-posts with the blood that is in the bason,' which was a type of our deliverance by Christ. Blood sprinkled was a mark of preservation; and the scripture often sets out the heart by a door, which, being opened, giveth entrance to God. Christ hath borne all that wrath which was due to the elect for their breach of the law, that so deserved wrath might pass over all his redeemed ones, to whom his blood is applied; as the destroying angel passed by all those whose door-posts were sprinkled with the blood of the paschal lamb.

2. Another solemn sprinkling that I shall take notice of was when God entered into covenant with the people of the Jews; and the blood of the sacrifice, called there 'the blood of the covenant,' was to be sprinkled half upon the altar and half upon the people, Exod. xxiv. 8. You have the story of it there at large. There was an altar built to represent God, the first and chief party in the covenant. The *altera pars paciscens* were the people represented by twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes, Exod. xxxiv. 4. Now the words of the law were to be read, and the people were to promise obedience, and God would promise to be their God; for the covenant between God and his Israel was to be established by mutual and willing consent. Well, then, to ratify it, blood was to be sprinkled upon the altar and upon the people, that is, upon the twelve stones which were set to represent the people, or upon the people themselves, to show that God took an obligation to bless, they to obey. Now the new administration of the covenant is also ratified by the blood of sprinkling. God accepted the blood of Christ, and is satisfied with it, and ready to give out grace; and we, by the sprinkling of the same blood, are comforted and enabled to serve him. This many think is the chief sprinkling alluded unto by the apostle, for the former part of the verse speaketh of Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and then of the blood of sprinkling, by which God is reconciled to us and we to God. We must all be sprinkled with Christ's blood before we can be admitted into covenant with him; and being once sprinkled, it doth powerfully draw down mercy on the penitent believer. In short, Christ by his blood confirmeth the new covenant. One thing I cannot omit, that presently upon that sprinkling the nobles saw the God of Israel in his majestic appearance, and did eat and drink in his presence, Exod. xxiv. 10, 11. They saw the glory and presence of God in a clear and heavenly appearance, which is a sign of the favour of God towards them that keep his covenant; as, on the contrary, a dark or cloudy

heaven is a sign of God's displeasure. This did not hurt them nor affright them; and their eating and drinking is a token of our joyful communion with God, being reconciled to him by Christ. When the altar is sprinkled, and the people sprinkled, when the atonement is made, and the atonement is received and owned, that is matter of rejoicing: Rom. v. 11, 'We joy in God through Christ, by whom we have received the atonement.' Then it is a blessed time, a time of holy rejoicing; then we may eat before him, and he will not lay his hand upon us, neither affright nor hurt us.

3. There was another solemn sprinkling, that is spoken of by the apostle, Heb. ix. 13, 14, 'For if the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works to serve the living God?' To the type of the red heifer spoken of Num. xix. There was a solemn sprinkling there for the purifying of the unclean, to which answereth the purging of our consciences by the blood of Christ; the one sanctifieth the flesh, the other the conscience; the one freed from such penalties as were by the law imposed upon souls for legal and ceremonial offences, the other from dead works, which pollute us before God; and so from spiritual evils and eternal penalties, and consequently that fit us for communion with God.

But from all these sprinklings this we find, that it noteth approbation.

Now in this first point consider—(1.) The persons; those that are entered into the gospel estate. (2.) The manner of application; how it is applied. (3.) The subject to which it is applied; their hearts and consciences. (4.) The certainty of the effect.

[1.] The persons. The apostle speaketh of such as are come to the new Jerusalem, to God the judge of all, to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling; that is, such as are entered into the gospel estate. Now the way of entering into the gospel estate is by faith and repentance: Acts xx. 21, 'Repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.' That was the sum of his preaching to Jew and gentile, to bring them to enter into the gospel estate. Repentance towards God, because we had revolted from our duty to him. And then faith in our Lord Jesus Christ is necessary, that those that have benefit by Christ should own the author of their deliverance, and put their cause into his hands, that he may reconcile them unto God. Repentance that we may acknowledge our obligation to his law, bemoaning our former misery, and devoting ourselves anew to God, to do his will and walk in his ways. Well, then, repentance is our consent of returning to God, as faith is our thankful owning of our Redeemer. It is Christ's business to bring us back again to God, from whom we have fallen and strayed. Our great end in entering into the gospel estate is that we may put ourselves into a posture and capacity of pleasing and enjoying God; and this is God's end in our pardon and reconciliation, and in offering us the benefits of the gospel. And therefore there must be a relenting towards God and a serious owning of Christ, or an hearty

consent to his conduct, to be brought home to God by him, and so fully recover our lapsed condition. So Mark i. 14, 15, 'Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.' When the gospel estate, or the kingdom of the Messiah, was to be set up, this is the way of entering into it, 'Repent and believe.' Which repentance, properly and distinctly taken, looketh towards God the Father, and faith towards Christ as mediator. To God we return, from whom we were gone astray by sin; and to Christ, the means and way of our returning, without whom we cannot be reconciled to our heavenly Father, nor perform any acceptable service to him. Now surely wherever these two are, faith working by love, and repentance mortifying our sinful lusts, that in newness of life we may glorify God, there men unquestionably are entered into the gospel state, and are capable of the privileges thereof.

[2.] How is the blood of Christ sprinkled or applied to us? Many ways.

(1.) On God's part by the Spirit, as the fruit of Christ's intercession. Therefore it is said: 1 John v. 8, 'There are three that bear witness on earth, the Spirit, the water, and the blood, these three agree in one.' The *τὸ κρινόμενον*, or thing to be proved there, is, that Jesus is the Son of God. Now the Spirit beareth witness to this, applying the blood of Christ to the conscience, and purifying and sanctifying them as with clean water. These are not one, as the three first; but these agree in one; partly as they establish the same conclusion; partly as they do concurrently establish it; not singly and apart; not water apart, nor blood apart, nor the Spirit apart; but they all concur; the Spirit by water and blood appeasing our guilty consciences, and washing away the filth of sin, either comforting, or sanctifying, or regenerating us. So again: Rom. v. 5, 'The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us.' The business is what is meant there by the love of God? I take it for the great instance of his love in reconciling the world to himself by Christ; for it immediately follows, 'For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.' Surely it is not taken for our love to God, but his love to us, which was chiefly seen in that great instance; this is shed abroad in our hearts; we have the effect, the feeling, and sense of the comfort of it by the Spirit.

(2.) By faith on our part; for till we believe, the blood of Christ produceth not its effect in our souls: Rom. iii. 25, 'Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.' Faith, believing the great love of Jesus Christ in shedding his blood for us, for the expiation of our sins, doth comfort us, and excite us to live in a constant course of new obedience to him who died for us: Rom. v. 1, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.' All that sincerely embrace the gospel are freely accepted with God in Christ; have their sins pardoned, live in a sweet amity with God. In short, Christ, as the means of expiation of sin and reconciliation with God, is only applicable to a man by faith. We enjoy this reconciliation by faith. God doth not actually admit any to the privileges of Christ's death till they do believe.

(3.) As a middle between both, it is sprinkled or applied by the ordinances of the gospel ; as the preaching of the word, and the sacraments.

(1st.) In the preaching of the word. As it is the great duty of the ministers of the gospel to sprinkle the hearts of the people with the blood of Christ, so to discover God's love and the virtue of his death, as to excite the hearers more earnestly to apply Christ, and take him home to themselves for their comfort and salvation. As Philip preached Jesus to the eunuch, so that he ravished his heart with him, and he could no longer be held from him : Acts viii. 36, 'As they went on their way, they came unto a certain water : and the eunuch said, See, here is water ; what doth hinder me to be baptized ? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.' The apostle telleth the Galatians that in the gospel Christ is evidently set forth and crucified among them, Gal. iii. 1, when he is represented with such perspicuity and plainness, and with such power and liveliness, as if painted out before their eyes ; and Col. i. 27, 'Christ in you the hope of glory, warning every man, teaching every man ;' Gal. iv. 19, 'My little children, of whom I travail in birth, till Christ be formed in you.' To have Christ so applied as that his virtue may be felt.

(2d.) By the sacraments. They are a means on God's part, and an help on yours, for the applying of Christ, or sprinkling his blood on your consciences. Baptism is the laver of regeneration, or a means to make way for the renewing of the Holy Ghost, shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Lord, Titus iii. 5, 6. The blood of Christ is the fountain of all the grace communicated to us by the Spirit, though the water of baptism have an immediate respect to regeneration by the Spirit. In the Lord's supper, *οὐχὶ κοινωνία*, 1 Cor. x. 16, 'The cup of blessing, which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ ?' There we come to apply it. In short, all the ordinances are helps instituted by God to make way for the participation of Christ.

(3d.) The subject to which it is applied, the hearts and consciences of penitent believers. Under the law, the flesh was cleansed by the sprinklings there, but now the heart and conscience : Heb. x. 22, 'Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed as with pure water.' That is, from that inward impurity and corruption whereof every man's conscience is judge and witness. Conscience is the most quick, lively, and sensible power of a man's soul ; so that when the heart is said to be sprinkled from an evil conscience, it is meant of a conscience unquiet by reason of sin, when a poor sinner, being sensible of sin, maketh hearty application of the blood of Christ for remission and pardon, and in all the disquiets of his soul runneth to the blood of Christ, as the only fountain which God hath opened for uncleanness : 1 John i. 7, 'If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.' Once more : Heb. ix. 14, 'Purge your consciences from dead works, that you may serve the living God.' The poor soul that is conscious to its own disobedience, and sensible of having displeased God by sin, is grievously afraid of him, shy of coming into his presence, till the blood of Christ be sprinkled and applied to

it; that freeth the soul thus conscious of sin from the guilt, impurity, and other sad consequences of it, whereupon it begins to have peace with God, and fitness for communion with him.

(4.) The certainty of the effect to all that come under the gospel. It must needs be so, for they are partakers of Christ; Heb. iii. 14, with the 6th verse. How are men affected at the first receiving of christianity with great hope and confidence in Jesus Christ, that he will do their work for them: to be partakers of Christ is to have his benefits applied to us. More particularly, they are justified and sanctified in his name, and by his Spirit: 1 Cor. vi. 11, 'Such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' We are assured that, if we are capable, if we have a conscience sensible of sin, and appealing to the throne of grace, and plead this blood, God will make us feel the fruits of it: 1 John i. 9, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' When with brokenness of heart, as feeling the weight and power of sin, we bemoan ourselves to God, he hath left his faithfulness and justice at pledge with us that the stormy conscience shall be quieted, the filthy soul shall be washed and prepared for communion with God. But those who, being senseless of sin, are careless of the remedy, these feel no great effects of Christ's death in their own souls.

Use. Have you been sensibly acquainted with the power and virtue of Christ's death? Hath his blood been sprinkled upon your hearts and consciences?

1. Consider it is said: 1 John v. 10, 'He that believeth hath the testimony in himself.' What testimony was that? Look back to the 8th verse. The Spirit, by the blood of Christ pacifying his conscience, sanctifying his heart. Christianity is not only a matter to be believed, but felt. There is experience and spiritual sense, which serveth as a back and confirmation to faith, as a whet and incitement to love. Many hear of a mighty Christ, but feel nothing; these are without their testimony of religion, so in danger of atheism.

2. Consider how uncomfortable it will be for you if you only should be a stranger in Israel; if the price be paid by Christ, and accepted by God for the ransom of our souls, and the liberty be proclaimed to us, and we through our own default and non-performance of the conditions, should remain yet in bonds: John viii. 32, 'Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.' If he came to heal us, and we still remain, not only weak, but sick unto death, how uncomfortable will this be? Shall we receive this grace in vain, the offers and tenders of reconciliation and peace? 2 Cor. vi. 1, 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.' It is that he speaketh of there.

3. Learn that it is a disparagement to Jesus Christ that you should so long profess his name, and not feel his blood applied to your hearts and consciences; that you should rest in talk and notions, and find no more of his virtue and power, either in converting an hard heart, or in comforting a dejected spirit, or in sanctifying and cleansing a filthy soul: 'The kingdom of God standeth not in word, but in power,' 1 Cor. iv. 20. What! hath the gospel neither quieted thy conscience

nor changed thy heart? Hast thou neither effects nor sense; neither sanctification nor comfort?

4. You disparage the gospel, as if it were but a literal instruction, even as the law is to fallen man. No; there is a mighty spirit goeth along with it, to apply the truths of it to the soul: Gal. iii. 2, 'This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law or the hearing of faith?' That is, by the doctrine of justification, by the works of the law, or by faith. He appealeth to their conscience and experience, that God giveth his Spirit to all that are reconciled to him. By the doctrine of the gospel saving grace is conveyed. The hearing of the law worketh conviction of sin, terror of conscience; but it doth not give you that Spirit that breedeth comfort and enableth you to holiness. It is by the hearing of faith, and from Christ, that we receive grace for grace.

5. If Christ's blood be not sprinkled upon you, it argueth some great fault in you. Either a senselessness of your spiritual condition; for till men be convinced of sin and misery there is no need of the blood of sprinkling, or careless despising of the fruits of Christ's death, and filling our hearts with the tumults of worldly business, that we cannot listen to the peace Christ's blood speaketh to our souls; or indulgence of some secret lusts, which darken all in our souls; or contenting ourselves with a literal christianity, resting in a traditionary knowledge of gospel truths, or bare rational reflections upon them, and so sucking at our own bottle, and neglecting the Spirit, who is wont by the ordinances to apply Christ to our souls.

And how shall we know that Christ's blood is sprinkled on our souls?

I answer—The immediate fruit of his purging the conscience is serving the true and living God, Heb. ix. 14; that is the end of it. Under the law, a man, if he worshipped in his uncleanness, and before he was legally purged, defiled the tabernacle and sanctuary of God, and that soul was to be cut off. We cannot have free access with confidence and boldness to the throne of grace, nor serve the Lord with any expectation to receive mercies and blessings from him, till the blood of sprinkling hath been upon them. There are degrees of cleansing, so also of serving God. When we are fully cleansed from all sin, then we shall have full communion with God, and serve him more perfectly in the temple of heaven; but so far as Christ hath washed us in his blood, so far is he acting the part of a spiritual priest: Rev. i. 5, 6, 'And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first-begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth, and him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father,' &c. Peace maketh way for liberty of commerce; trading is revived again.

Doct. 2. That the blood of Christ applied to the penitent believer's heart is of great value and efficacy with God.

1. I shall explain it in the notions of the text.

2. Give the reasons why.

1. The value and efficacy of Christ's blood is set forth by a comparison with Abel's blood. It will be good a little to examine it—(1.) Wherein these two bloods agree; (2.) Wherein they differ.

[1.] They agree in these things—

(1.) That as Abel's blood was shed, so Christ's. Abel's blood, being shed, speaketh; so Christ's. Of Abel's blood it is said, Gen. iv. 10, 'What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.' Christ's blood hath a voice; it was not shed in vain; it pleadeth before the throne of grace on our behalf. Christ's intercession is not vocal, but real. The presenting of his blood before the throne of grace is enough; for that speaketh to God in our behalf. As the high priest under the law appeared before the mercy-seat with the blood of the sacrifices, we do not read of anything he spake: 'So Jesus with his own blood is not entered into the holy place made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear before God for us,' Heb. ix. 24.

(2.) Both bloods speak; in the conscience of the sinner, and unto God. Abel's blood did speak in Cain's conscience, so that he was filled with terror and unrest; so that he went about trembling, saying, 'Mine iniquity is greater than can be forgiven,' Gen. iv. 13. Words of despair. And it spake to God; for he saith, 'Thy brother's blood crieth unto me.' And it is 'bloods' in the Hebrew, as if every drop of it had a voice to call for vengeance on Cain. So Christ's blood speaketh in the consciences of them to whom it is applied; it speaketh pardon, peace, comfort. It quieteth the soul as much as the other terrified Cain's conscience: Rom. v. 1, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.' And it speaketh to God, for he is pacified, reconciled by it: Heb. xiii. 20, 'The God of peace brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant.' As having done his work, having pacified God for us. He was before an angry, an offended God with us, but now, by the blood of the everlasting covenant, he is propitiated and become the God of peace; by this blood our surety is enlarged, our bond cancelled, our peace is restored.

(3.) They both speak loud, and cry, so that God heareth. In Abel it is true, God is very tender of his Abels, of righteous persons; the injuries done to them he deeply resenteth: Ps. cxvi. 15, 'Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints;' Ps. lxxii. 14, 'He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence; and precious shall their blood be in his sight;' that is, he so considereth it, and it is rated at so high a price by God, that he will not put it up. The cry of their blood is soon heard in heaven. Now the blood of the Son of God is far more precious; surely the cry of it will be heard in heaven: 1 Peter i. 19, 'With the precious blood of the Son of God, as of a lamb without spot and blemish.' If this blood be offered for the sin of man, it will be heard; it crieth loud in God's ears; for it is very precious, and will be esteemed there, however it is slighted in the world, counted *κοινὸν*, a common thing, Heb. x. 29. His blood *tot habet linguas pro nobis loquentes, quot pro nobis vulnera accepit*; every drop is precious.

(4.) It is a continual cry. Abel's blood did not cry once, but continually; for it is said, Heb. xi. 4, 'By it, being dead, he yet speaketh.' As he was the protomartyr, and Cain on the other side the patriarch of unbelievers: Jude 11, 'These go in the way of Cain;' but for Abel,

see Mat. xxiii. 35, 'That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, to the blood of Zacharias,' &c. Abel was the first we read of that offered lamb's blood for sacrifice, professing thereby to seek his righteousness in the blood of the Messiah; and for this sacrifice he was made a martyr, the first of the order that suffered for the righteousness of faith. His blood crieth with the rest of the martyrs, to avenge his innocency. The carnal seed cannot endure such, but in all ages persecute them: Rev. vi. 9, 10, 'And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?' So Christ's blood as yet speaketh, as if it were shed afresh: Heb. xiii. 8, 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.' The virtue of it is everlasting. The cry of this blood God daily heareth; it still speaketh to him, to pacify his wrath and to pardon us; and it speaks in our conscience, to cleanse it, and make it quiet within us; the efficacy and virtue of it is everlasting, to all those who are made partakers of it.

[2.] The difference: 'It speaketh better things.' The one crieth for mercy, the other for judgment. There is a difference in the end of the cry. To understand this, we must look upon Christ under a twofold notion—as a martyr and as a mediator.

(1.) As a martyr. So his blood speaketh as Abel's did, the same things: 1 Thes. ii. 14, 15, 'They killed the Lord Jesus, therefore wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.' As Cain's murder did so much offend God that it moved him to avenge it; so Christ's blood did so far offend God, that he punished them and their children, who had said, Mat. xxvii. 25, 'His blood be upon us, and upon our children.' They defied God's justice, and therein by their own mouth pronounced their own doom, and wrath is come upon them ever since. But mark, even here Christ prayed for them: Luke xxiii. 34, 'Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.' That prayer fetched in many. Their nation was not destroyed till they rejected the gospel, of which they had the refusal and morning market, and had killed the Lord Jesus and persecuted the apostles, forbidding them to preach, and so filled up the measure of their sins.

(2.) As mediator. So it speaketh better things, is presented before God, not to desire vengeance on the murderous Jews, as Abel's blood against Cain, but to obtain pardon and favour for believers and penitent sinners. Abel's blood cried against Cain that shed it, but Christ's cried for men, whose sins did cause it to be shed. Though we by our sins did make the Lord to serve and die also, yet doth not his blood speak against us, but for us. Our sins call for vengeance and condemnation, but Christ's blood for pardon and reconciliation. This blood, as suffered for the sin of man, and offered unto God, is so pleasing, so precious, so highly accepted, that God for and in consideration of it is effectually moved to pardon for evermore all that humbly seek benefit by it. In short, this blood spake then when it was shed, and still speaketh effectually before the eternal judge, as it is pleaded by Christ in his intercession, by us in our prayers.

2. Why? Whence cometh the blood of Christ to have such a virtue and efficacy? I answer—

[1.] Partly from the institution of God.

[2.] From its own intrinsic worth and value, which lieth—(1.) Partly in the dignity of his person; (2.) The nature of the work. It was the highest degree of obedience that ever was performed to God. There was in it so much love to God, so much love to man, so much self-denial, humility, patience, such a resignation of himself to God, as could never be paralleled; and therefore was most powerful to move God to mercy, who is so inclined to show mercy of his own accord.

[3.] This blood was shed with the greatest pain, and willingly, out of love to man. The sufferings were most intense; he was made a curse for us, Gal. iii. 13. They were attended with desertion, penal disturbance, and all that the law put upon sinners, either of loss or sense: Isa. liii. 4, 5, 'He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.' His soul was heavy to death, Mat. xxvi. 38; he was deserted: Mat. xxvii. 46, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' So that as it sufficiently demonstrated God's displeasure against sin, so it was very pleasing and highly accepted of God. He omitted nothing that divine justice required.

Use 1. For information.

First, To show us the nature of Christ's intercession. On the one side it will not be enough to say that his merit and sufferings continue to deserve such things at the hand of God as we stand in need of, as if the pleading were only figurative and metaphorical; that as the blood of Abel pleaded against Cain, so the blood of Christ pleads for us to God. No; there is somewhat more in Christ's intercession and acting the part of an advocate for us. On the other side, it cannot be thought that he intercedeth with such gestures and verbal expressions as men use with men, or as he himself did in the days of his flesh, when 'he offered up prayers, with strong cries and tears,' Heb. v. 7, which did become the state of his humiliation, but not glorification. He intercedeth *non voce sed miseratione*. These are the two extremes; but what is the true notion of it?

There is in it—(1.) A presenting of himself before God; (2.) A declaration of his will; (3.) An entering of his plea; (4.) A recommending of our suits.

[1.] His intercession may be conceived to consist in his appearing in heaven in our name, where the Son of God in our nature presenteth himself as ready to answer for such and such sinners. His very being there in our nature speaketh his purpose; for there he is as one that hath made satisfaction for our offences, and performed his sacrifice without the camp, now gone within the veil, to bring blood to the mercy-seat: Heb. ix. 12, 'By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.'

[2.] It may be supposed also to include a declared willingness and desire in our behalf to have such requests granted, such sins pardoned. The declaring of his will is a part of his intercession: John xvii 24,

‘Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me may be with me where I am.’ The like may be conceived in heaven. So Aquinas—*Interpellat pro nobis primo humanitatem quam pro nobis assumpsit representando; item anime sue sanctissimæ desiderium, quod de salute nostra habuit, exprimendo.* He intercedes for us partly by presenting there his human nature, which he assumed for our sakes, and also by declaring the desire of his holy soul for our welfare. But is there not more? Certain it is that a proper and formal prayer is not contrary to the human nature of Christ in that glorious estate in which now it is, neither as hypostatically united to the Godhead, nor as glorified. Not to the first, for that he had *in via*; yet he offered prayers with tears and strong cries. Not to the second, for Christ’s human nature, though glorified, is still a creature inferior to God, and therefore capable of prayer. Indeed, when he was in the form of a servant, there was more subjection than now in heaven, but still he prayeth. Therefore—

[3.] There is an holy, reverend, though inconceivable, act of adoration of the sovereign majesty of God, whereby the Mediator, now at the Father’s right hand, doth in all his appearing for us, as being the head of the body, adore the power, sovereignty, goodness, and wisdom of God, with respect to the covenant of redemption, and his having merited the benefits due to him thereby, namely, the pardon of our sins, our comfort and peace, the enlargement, safety, and success of his own kingdom: Ps. ii. 8, ‘Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance.’ By virtue of his paid ransom he may call for those blessings which are necessary for those who come to God by him. His saying to the disciples oftener than once, ‘I will pray the Father for you,’ John xiv. 16, implieth some address to God, even in respect to particular persons and particular cases; an entering of his plea, or a suing out of his own right in their behalf.

[4.] His presenting our prayers and supplications, which we make in the behalf of ourselves to God, after he hath set us a-work by his own Spirit: Rev. viii. 3, ‘Another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which was before the throne;’ and Heb. viii. 2, *λειτουργος ἁγίων*, ‘A minister of holy things.’ By his Spirit he furnisheth us with sighs and groans, and then presenteth them to his Father perfumed by his own merit.

Secondly, To instruct us what use to make of this ‘blood of sprinkling.’

1. When we are confessing of sin, or reflecting upon sin, and arraigning ourselves, as it were, at the bar of our judge, remember, though these sins deserve ill, and speak much ill against us, yet the ‘blood of sprinkling’ speaks better things. There is hope, and comfort, and peace, and pardon there. Plead Christ’s satisfaction to God’s justice. Say, Our Lord Jesus Christ did take our sinful debts upon him, and undertake to satisfy for them; and I know he made full satisfaction. I renounce all other hope of pardon, and rest my soul upon his precious blood. If he be not able to save me, I am contented to perish; but he is able to save to the utmost all that come to God by him.

Let this be in your thoughts when God makes you feel the terrors of his justice by an involuntary impression, or you are in a broken-hearted manner moaning for sin.

2. Remember it when you hear the offers of grace in the gospel; that God desires not the death of sinners: John v. 24, 'He that hears my word, and believes on me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death to life.' Surely this is true; for 'the blood of Christ speaks better things than the blood of Abel.' It is exacted of you to sprinkle it on your consciences. Christ shed it that it might be sprinkled.

3. Remember it in the Lord's supper, as often as that is celebrated, and you hear it repeated, 'Behold the blood of the covenant which was shed for the remission of sins!' then say, Surely it is so; for 'the blood of Christ speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.'

4. Remember it in your prayers, when you come to God for pardon or any blessing, that you may come with the more confidence: you have the blood of Christ to speak for you. Christ pleads it in heaven, and you must plead it on earth: Heb. x. 19, 'Having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.' That bespeaks welcome and audience. Present unto God his Son's blood, and sue for the benefit of it.

5. Remember it in your last agonies. When you are summoned into God's presence, when every moment you look to come immediately before him: Let me with confidence go to him, and say, I have been a sinner; but the blood of Christ speaks better things, and I expect the full fruit of it; that it shall indeed cleanse me from all sin: 1 John i. 7, 'The blood of his Son Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin.'

Use 2. If the blood of Christ speaketh better things than the blood of Abel, it exhorteth us to many duties.

First, To enter ourselves into the gospel state, and to qualify ourselves to receive this benefit. The apostle saith, 'Ye are come to the blood of sprinkling.' Who are come? Penitent believers. The more you exercise faith and repentance—towards God, repentance; towards Christ, faith—or come to God by him, Heb. xi. 15, the more experience you will have of the virtue and efficacy of Christ's blood. Because these two are intermixed in the soul's return to God, and it would be too long to speak of the whole nature of them, I shall give you a few considerations.

1. Know yourselves to be sinners, condemned by the law. Till this be there is no work either for repentance or faith; for what need of turning to God till we know that we are turned from him? And the Redeemer hath nothing to do for stupid and senseless souls, that know not their misery, and regard not their remedy. There is a great deal of difference between our condition and our qualification. Our condition, when Christ cometh to bring us to God, is sinful and miserable; our qualification is lively faith. The being of faith is enough, though we have not the knowledge of it; but the being in misery is not enough; that must be known and lamented. It is enough for our safety that we have faith, though we know it not; but it is not enough that we are in misery, though we know it not. The covenant of God runneth thus: He that believeth shall be saved; not, He that knoweth

he believeth shall be saved; for many have faith though they doubt of their sincerity. Ay! but it is not enough that I am a sinner; but I must know myself a sinner, be deeply sensible that I am a sinner; for the offers of the gospel are made to the sensible, the broken-hearted, the weary and heavy-laden. A man never thinketh of returning to God, doth not lie humbly at the feet of grace, cannot be thankful for a redeemer, till he knoweth his misery and bewaileth it. Many have been welcome to Christ, that knew not themselves penitent believers, but never were any welcome that knew not themselves condemned sinners. Therefore there the work beginneth. The first awakening of the soul is by a sense of our misery and lostness; and this sense must be often renewed, for without Christ we are still in hazard to perish for ever, because of the continual failings in our duty.

2. A resolved will and purpose to devote ourselves to the Lord, to please him, and enjoy him: 1 Chron. xxii. 19, 'Now set your hearts to seek the Lord;' Acts xxvi. 20, 'He exhorted them that they should repent and turn to the Lord, and do works meet for repentance;' Heb. x. 22, 'Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith.' The heart is bent and set towards the Lord, put into a fitness and capacity of pleasing and enjoying him, which we have lost by our folly and sin. By the fall we lost the favour of God and the image of God, and so were unfit both for service and fruition. The penitent soul findeth both.

3. It is Christ only taketh away sin, reconcileth us unto his Father, puts us into a capacity to please and enjoy God. Through him we may turn to God, and perform service and obedience acceptable unto eternal life: John xiv. 6, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me;' 1 Peter iii. 18, 'For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God;' Heb. ix. 14, 'How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?' 1 Peter ii. 24, 'Who himself bear our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness.' He died to weaken the love of sin in our hearts, and to advance the life and power of grace and righteousness. We usually make use of Jesus Christ for reconciliation with God, but not so often for service and obedience. No; we do by Christ come to God, that we may walk before him in all newness of life. In short, when we turn from the creature to God, from self to Christ, from sin to holiness, we come under the gospel state; and true gospel faith is a faith that beginneth in brokenness of heart: Mat. ix. 13, 'I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.' And it is carried with an earnest appetite to the gospel: Heb. vi. 18, 'That we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.' Thus are the heirs of promise described. And then it endeth in newness of life: Rom. vii. 6, 'But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter;' for Christ died, not only to free us from that sin and misery whereunto we had brought ourselves, Gal. iii. 13, but 'we are married to him, that we may bring forth fruit unto God,' Rom. vii. 4.

Secondly, The next work is to sprinkle your hearts with this precious blood ; for it is the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel ; and Christ shed it that it might be sprinkled, that it may not run a-wasting. The sprinkling or applying of it to ourselves in particular is by the Spirit on God's part, and by faith on our part, and by the ordinances as a middle thing between both, as a means on God's part to convey the Spirit, and an help on our part to excite and increase faith. Therefore this sprinkling must be interpreted with respect to the Spirit, faith, and the ordinances, as the word and sacraments.

1. Our duty with respect to the Spirit in this sprinkling is when we content not ourselves with a literal and exterior christianity, with being christians in the letter rather than the spirit, Rom. ii. 29, but look after the virtue, power, and life of the truths which we do believe, when, together with the doctrine of Christ, we receive the sanctifying and comforting Spirit : christianity is a thing without us, and at a distance, till that be done. The great bane of the christian world is that they satisfy themselves with notions, and do not wait for the power ; and talk of Christ, rather than feel him, and taste that the Lord is gracious. Therefore our business is earnestly to wait for the stirring of the waters, and to seek after that life and peace which is the fruit of Christ's death ; for the gospel is ' the ministration of the Spirit unto life,' 2 Cor. iii. 8. Here we get a taste : 1 Peter ii. 3, ' If so be that ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.' We feel the power, know him and the power of his resurrection, Phil. iii. 10 ; when Christ is formed in us, when we are changed into his image, have a living principle in our own souls. Therefore our duty is to beg for this Spirit, to seek and wait for this Spirit, till the Lord Jesus pour it on us.

2. With respect to faith. Our duty is to be firmly persuaded of the sufficiency of all that Christ hath done and endured for man's redemption, and to apply it to ourselves. This blood is fully expiatory of sin, and a full ransom given to divine justice for all our wrongs. The blood of bulls and goats could not satisfy divine justice, nor expiate sin, nor purge the conscience, nor remove the curse ; but when the Son of God shall come, and die an accursed death, and shed his blood for us, there is enough done to repair God in point of honour, that he may be no loser by it, to signify God's purest holiness, to express his utter hatred and detestation of sin, to declare his love of justice, and to keep up the authority of his law ; enough to teach all the world that it is a dangerous thing to transgress it. Now this must be tried, and applied to the soul, that we may be able to say, ' He is the propitiation for our sins,' 1 John ii. 2 ; that we may build upon the foundation which God hath laid in Sion. By this faith he cometh to dwell and work in our hearts : Gal. iii. 29, ' If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise ;' Eph. iii. 17, ' That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.'

3. With respect to the ordinances, the word and sacraments.

[1.] The word. When you hear the offers of grace in the gospel, that God desireth not the death of a sinner, that he is willing to save all those that believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, or come to God by him, and to pardon and bless them ; let all this excite you to sprinkle it on

your own conscience. These blessings are held forth to me: 1 Tim. i. 15, 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.' Here God calleth upon me to put in for my share: Rom. viii. 31, 'What shall we then say to these things?' Job v. 27, 'Know thou it for thy good.' Bring it home to thine own heart.

[2.] Sacraments. By baptism we put on Christ, Gal. iii. 27. The Lord's supper: 1 Cor. x. 16, 'The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?' In the Lord's supper we solemnly remember the death of Christ, as the price given for the life of our souls; we come to behold him as the Lamb of God taking away sin. There we hear of the blood of the new testament, which was shed for the remission of sins. Say, Surely it is so, for 'the blood of Christ speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.' You take it and drink it for your own comfort; there it is brought nigher to you, and if you do not delude yourselves, in quieting your consciences with an outward form, you may go away with much comfort. Christ representeth it to God in his intercession, and we represent it to God in our prayers and desires, beseeching him to be reconciled to us for Christ's sake. By these means is the blood of Christ sprinkled and applied to us, and we receive more of the Spirit, and our faith is increased and strengthened.

Thirdly, Observe the fruits that accrue to you by this crying blood.

1. A comfortable sense of your pardon and discharge. When it is so, then is the redemption applied: 'In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins,' Eph. i. 7; Rom. v. 9, 'Being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him;' as the sprinkled door-posts were from the destroying angel.

2. The sanctification of his Spirit: 1 Peter i. 2, 'Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.' The power of the Spirit goeth along with the application of Christ; where the one is the other is, and where the one is not the other is not.

3. Nearness and communion with God: Eph. ii. 13, 'Ye were afar off, but now are made near by the blood of Christ.' Two things kept us off from God. The rigour of divine justice; when we go to a God offended, and appeased by no satisfaction; and the terror of our consciences, or our own guilty fear. But God is now propitiated; the grand scruple is satisfied: Micah vi. 6-8, 'Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?'

4. Ready access in prayer, with assurance of welcome and audience. In the name of the Lord Jesus, we may present our persons and sacrifices and prayers to God: Heb. x. 19, 'Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.' When you come for any blessing, you may come with the more confidence; you have

the blood of Christ to speak for you. Christ pleadeth it in heaven, and you must plead it on earth; present to him his Son's blood as the ground of your request.

Use 3. Of caution. Let us take heed of the slighting of the blood of Christ, and counting it a common thing, Heb. x. 29, *κοινὸν*. So we count it when we think it hath no expiating or purging power, no better than the blood of bulls and goats, or the blood of an ordinary man, yea, of a malefactor. But who are so vile to think so?

1. It is done most grossly by all wicked apostates, who, for the fear and love of the world, cast off the truth. These seem formally to renounce their interest in Christ, and prefer every base thing before him: Heb. xii. 15, 'Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.'

2. It is done by those who despise the benefits purchased thereby, the favour of God, the image of God. They that slight anything purchased by Christ's blood slight the blood of Christ itself. Our respect to the blood is judged by our respect to the benefits. He that despiseth the favour of God doth not make it his business to get it and keep it, but preferreth every paltry vanity and poor corruptible thing before it; hath no esteem of Christ's merit and God's design, who sent his Son to procure it for us. So whosoever doth not esteem the image of God, which standeth in righteousness and true holiness, doth not esteem the blood of Christ: 'Knowing that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot,' 1 Peter i. 18, 19. It argueth lessening thoughts of Christ's blood, as if it were shed for trifles.

3. Those who lessen the virtue, merit, and efficacy of this blood by their distrustful thoughts. We cannot think high enough of this sacred and precious blood. It is that blood by which Christ, 'entering into the holy place, obtained eternal redemption for us,' Heb. ix. 12; that 'blood which purgeth the conscience from dead works to serve the living God,' ver. 14; that blood that washeth away all stains, 1 John i. 7; that blood which is the blood of the new testament, the ground of the everlasting covenant, Heb. xii. 24, wherein God promiseth remission of sin, eternal life, and all needful grace, upon condition of repentance and faith in Christ. Upon this blood the covenant is grounded, and all the promises of it made firm, unalterable, and effectual. Let us, therefore, with strong confidence trust to the efficacy thereof, and be encouraged thereby to wait upon God for grace, mercy, reconciliation, pardon, and finally eternal salvation. It is surely a great fault to think diminishingly of Christ's love and mercy.

4. Those who converse with the seals of the new covenant without preparation: 1 Cor. xi. 29, 'He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body;' *μὴ διακρίνων*, not putting a difference. There is a discerning speculatively and a discerning practically. The discerning speculatively is when we are able to discourse of the meaning of these mystical rites; practically, when we are suitably affected; not discerning when we carry ourselves as if it were common meat and common food. The

impressions of reverence, delight, holy awe, discover our practical discerning. To stamp upon the king's picture or coin in contempt is a contumely to the king. The injuries done to man, or killing a man, is aggravated because man is the image of God, Gen. ix. 6, James iii. 9.

Use 4. Direction to us what to do when troubled with the terror of sin. There is a cry attributed to our sins; the cry of our sins is gone up over our heads unto heaven. Sometimes they clamour in our consciences. Oh! remember the cry of Christ's blood; that speaks aloud in heaven, let it also speak in our consciences. Inanimate things speak by our thoughts; Abel's blood by Cain's despairing fears, so Christ's blood by the joy of our faith. Remember the apostle's challenge and triumph: Rom. viii. 33, 34, 'Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? 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.' And Paul's boast: Gal. vi. 14, 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.' If you have felt the virtue of it, you will remember it.

FUNERAL SERMON

A

FUNERAL SERMON

PREACHED UPON THE DEATH OF THE REVEREND AND
EXCELLENT DIVINE

DR THOMAS MANTON,

WHO DECEASED OCTOBER 18, 1677.

BY

WILLIAM BATES, D.D.

FUNERAL SERMON.

And so shall we ever be with the Lord.—1 THESS. iv. 17, the last clause.

THE words are a consolation, brought by the apostle from the third heaven, where he was, by extraordinary privilege, raised, and saw and understood how great an happiness it is to be with Christ. And they are addressed to believers, to moderate and allay their sorrows for the death of those saints, who, by their conjunction in blood or friendship, were most dear to them. Thus he speaks in the thirteenth verse, 'I would not have you be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not as others which have no hope.' The heathens, that were strangers to a future state, and thought that, after a short course through the world, mankind would be lost for ever in the dead sea, might with some pretence abandon themselves to the extremity of their passions; but christians, to whom life and immortality are revealed by the gospel, who believed 'that as Jesus died and rose again, so all that sleep in Jesus,' that persevere in faith and holiness to the end, 'God will bring with him,' are forbid, upon the most weighty reasons, to indulge their grief in excess. The union between Christ and believers is inviolable; and from thence it follows, they shall be partakers with him in his glory. The soul immediately after death shall be with Christ. While the body reposes in the grave, it is in his presence who is life and light, and has a vital, joyful rest in communion with him. And in the appointed time the bodies of the saints, those happy spoils, shall be rescued from the dark prison of the grave, and be sharers with their souls in immortal glory.

This consummate happiness of the saints the apostle assures from highest the authority, 'The word of the Lord;' and describes his glorious appearance so as to make the strongest impression on our minds: 'For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.' Then death, the last enemy, so fearful and feared by men, shall be destroyed; and the captive prince of the world, with all the powers of darkness, and all other rebellious sinners that obstinately joined with him, shall be brought in chains before his dreadful tribunal; and after the great act of the universal judgment shall be completed, then all the saints shall make

their triumphant entry with the captain of their salvation into his kingdom, and 'shall ever be with the Lord.'

The general proposition from the words is this: The saints after the resurrection shall be completely and eternally happy in the presence of Christ.

To make this supernatural blessedness more easy and intelligible to us, the scripture describes it by sensible representations; for whilst the soul is clothed with flesh, fancy has such a dominion that we can conceive of nothing but by comparisons and images taken from material things. It is therefore set forth by a feast and a kingdom, to signify the joy and glory of that state. But to prevent all gross conceits, it tells us that the bodies of the saints shall be spiritual; not capable of hunger and thirst, nor consequently of any refreshment that is caused by the satisfaction of those appetites. The objects of the most noble senses, seeing and hearing, the pleasure of which is mixed with reason, and not common to the brutes, are more frequently made use of to reconcile that glorious state to the proportion of our minds. Thus sometimes the blessed are represented placed 'on thrones, with crowns on their heads;' sometimes 'clothed in white, with palms in their hands;' sometimes singing songs of triumph to 'him that sits on the throne,' and to their Saviour. But the reality of this blessedness infinitely exceeds all those faint metaphors. Heaven is lessened by comparisons from earthly things. The apostle who was dignified with the revelation of the successes that shall happen to the church till time shall be no more, tells us, 'it does not appear what we shall be in eternity.' 'The things that God has prepared for those that love him' are far more above the highest ascent of our thoughts than the marriage-feast of a great prince exceeds in splendour and magnificence the imagination of one that has always lived in an obscure village, and never saw any ornaments of state, nor tasted wine in his life. We can think of those things but according to the poverty of our understandings. But so much we know that is able to sweeten all the bitterness, and render insipid all the sweetness of this world.

This will appear by considering, that whatever is requisite to constitute the perfect blessedness of man is fully enjoyed in the divine presence.

First, An exemption from all evils is the first condition of perfect blessedness. The sentence of wise Solon is true in another sense than he intended.

— Dicique beatus

Ante obitum nemo, supremaque funera debet.

No man can be named happy whilst in this valley of tears. But upon the entrance into heaven, all those evils that by their number, variety, or weight disquiet and oppress us, are at an end.

Sin, of all evils the most hateful, shall be abolished, and all temptations that surround us and endanger our innocence will cease. Here the best men lament the weakness of the flesh, and sometimes the violent assaults of spiritual enemies. St Paul himself breaks forth into a mournful complaint, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?' And, when harassed with the buffetings

of Satan, renews his most earnest addresses to God to be freed from them. Here our purity is not absolute; we must be always cleansing ourselves from the relics of that deep defilement that cleaves to our nature. Here our peace is preserved with the sword in our hand, by a continual warfare against Satan and the world. But in heaven no ignorance darkens the mind, no passions rebel against the sanctified will, no inherent pollution remains. The church is 'without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.' And all temptations 'that war against the soul' shall then cease. The tempter was cast out of heaven, and none of his poisoned arrows can reach that purified company. Glorious liberty! here ardently desired, but fully enjoyed by the sons of God above.

And as sin, so all the penal consequences of it are quite taken away. The present life is an incurable disease, and sometimes attended with that sharp sense that death is desired as a remedy and accepted as a benefit. And though the saints have reviving cordials, yet their joys are mixed with sorrows, nay, caused by sorrows. The tears of repentance are their sweetest refreshment. Here the living stones are cut and wounded, and made fit by sufferings for a temple unto God in the new Jerusalem. But as in the building of Solomon's temple the noise of a hammer was not heard, for all the parts were framed before with that exact design and correspondence that they firmly combined together; they were hewn in another place, and nothing remained but the putting them one upon another in the temple, and then, as sacred, they were inviolable; so God, the architect, having prepared the saints here by many cutting afflictions, places them in the eternal building, where no voice of sorrow is heard. Of the innumerable company above, is there any eye that weeps, any breast that sighs, any tongue that complains, or appearance of grief? The heavenly state is called 'life,' as only worthy of that title. There is no infirmity of body, no poverty, no disgrace, treachery of friends, no persecution of enemies: 'There is no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor shall there be any more pain; for former things are passed away,' Rev. xxi. 4. 'God will wipe away all tears from the eyes of his people.' Their salvation is complete in all degrees. Pure joy is the privilege of heaven, unmixed sorrows the punishment of hell.

A concurrence of all positive excellences is requisite to blessedness, and these are to be considered with respect to the entire man.

I. The body shall be awaked out of its dead sleep, and quickened into a glorious immortal life. The soul and body are the essential parts of man; and though the inequality be great in their operations that respect holiness, yet their concurrence is necessary. Good actions are designed by the counsel and resolution of the Spirit, but performed by the ministry of the flesh. Every grace expresses itself in visible actions by the body. In the sorrows of repentance it supplies tears; in fastings its appetites are restrained; in thanksgivings the tongue breaks forth into the joyful praises of God. All the victories over sensible pleasure and pain are obtained by the soul in conjunction with the body. Now it is most becoming the divine goodness not to deal so differently that the soul should be everlastingly happy, and the body lost in forgetfulness; the one glorified in heaven, the other remain in the dust. From

their first setting out in the world to the grave, they ran the same race, and shall enjoy the same reward. Here the body is the comfort of the soul in obedience and sufferings, hereafter in fruition. When the crown of purity or palm of martyrdom shall be given by the great Judge in the view of all, they shall both partake in the honour. Of this we have an earnest in the resurrection of Christ in his true body, who 'is the first-fruits of them that sleep,' 1 Cor. xv. 21; 'He shall change our vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like to his glorious body, according to the working of his power, whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself,' Phil. iii. 21. A substantial, unfading glory will shine in them infinitely above the perishing pride of this world, that is but in appearance, like the false colours painted on the feathers of a dove by the reflection of the light, which presently vanish when it changeth its posture, or the light is withdrawn. Indeed, what can be more glorious than to be conformed to the humanity of Christ, the seat of all beauty and perfection? This conformity shall be the work of his own hands. And when omnipotence interposes, nothing is difficult. The raising the body to an unchangeable state of glory is as easy to the divine power as the forming it at first in the womb; as the sun labours no more in the mines in the forming gold and silver, the most precious and durable metals, than in the production of a poor short-lived flower.

II. The soul shall be made perfect in all its faculties.

1. The understanding shall clearly see the most excellent objects: 'Now we know but in part,' 1 Cor. xiii. The naked beauty of divine things is veiled, and of impossible discovery; and the weakness of the mind is not proportionable to their dazzling brightness. But when that which is perfect is come, 'then that which is in part shall be done away.' In that enlightened state the glorious manifestation of the objects shall as much exceed the clearest revealing of them here, as the sun in its full lustre one beam of light strained through a crevice in the wall. And the understanding shall be prepared to take a full view of them. Therefore the apostle compares the several periods of the church, in respect of the degrees of knowledge, to the several ages of this life: 'When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.' In children the organs, either from an excess of moisture or their smallness, are indisposed for the vigorous exercise of the mind; some strictures of reason appear, a presaging sign what will be, but mixed with much obscurity; but when the organs are come to their just proportion and temperament, the soul displays its strength and activity.

All things of a supernatural order shall then be clearly discovered. The contrivance of our salvation, the ways of conducting us to blessedness, which are objects of a sublime nature, will afford an exquisite pleasure to the understanding. All the secrets of our redemption shall be unsealed. The great mystery of godliness, the incarnation of the eternal Son, and his according justice with mercy, shall then be apparent. The divine counsels in governing the world are now only visible in their wonderful effects, either of mercy or justice, and those most dreadful; but the reasons of them are past finding out. But what our Saviour said to Peter, 'What I do thou knowest not now, but shalt

know hereafter,' is applicable to these impenetrable dispensations. All the original fountains of wisdom, as clear as deep, shall then be opened. We shall then see the beauty of providence in disposing temporal things in order to our eternal felicity. We now see, as it were, the rough part and knots of that curious embroidery, but then the whole work shall be unfolded, the sweetness of the colours and proportion of the figures appear. There we shall be able to expound the perplexing riddle, how 'out of the eater came meat, and out of the strong came sweetness;' for 'we shall know as we are known.'

We shall see God. Our Saviour tells us, 'This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.' The beginning and perfection of our happiness consists in this knowledge. The Deity is spiritual and invisible to the eye of the body, infinite and incomprehensible to the soul. But we shall then so clearly understand the divine perfections, that our present knowledge, compared to that, is but as the seeing a dark resemblance in a glass to the clear view of a person in the native beauty of his face. God is most gloriously present in heaven; for according to the degrees of excellence in the work, such are the impressions and discoveries of the virtues of the cause. Now all sensible things in the low order of nature are but weak resultances from his perfections in comparison of their illustrious effects in the divine world. The glories of the place and of the inhabitants, the angels and saints, clearly express his majesty, goodness, and power. But in a transcendent manner he exhibits himself in the glorified Mediator. He is styled 'the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person;' not only for his equal perfections in respect of the unity of their nature, but to signify that God in the person of the incarnate Mediator is so fully represented to us, that by the sight of him we see God himself in his unchangeable excellences. This appears by the following words, that 'having purged us from our sins, he sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high;' for they respect the Son of God as united to the human nature, in which he performed the office of the priesthood, and took possession of his glorious kingdom. During his humble state, the divine virtues, wisdom, goodness, holiness, power, were so visible in his person, life, revelations, and miraculous works, that when Philip so longed for the sight of the Father, as the only consummate blessedness, 'Show us the Father, and it suffices,' he told him, 'He that has seen me has seen the Father also.' But how brightly do they appear in his triumphant exaltation! It was his prayer on earth, 'Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.' Inestimable felicity! Whether we consider him in the respect of an object that incomparably transcends all the created glory of heaven, or in the relation of our head, on a double account; partly because he was debased into the form of a servant, and suffered all indignities and cruelties of sinners for us, has received the recompense of his meritorious sufferings, the triumph of his victory, 'being glorified with the Father with the glory he had before the world was;' and partly because every member shall be conformed to him in his glory: 'We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.' And all felicity and glory is comprised in that promise. The sight of the face of Moses when radiant had no

transforming efficacy, for the light of it was not in him as its source but by derivation. But God is light essentially, and the sight of his perfections will be productive of his likeness in us, so far as it may be in a restrained subject. When our Saviour was upon the holy mount, and one vanishing beam of glory appeared in his transfiguration, Peter was so transported at the sight that he forgot the world and himself. How ravishing, then, will the sight of him be in his triumphant majesty, when we shall be transfigured ourselves!

2. As we shall behold God's face, know his most amiable excellences, so they shall love him as perfectly as they know him. To the illustrations of the mind there are correspondent impressions on the heart. In the present state our love is imperfect, and as fire out of its sphere, dies away by our neglect to feed it with proper materials, enamouring considerations of God. But it is not so in heaven; there the divine sun attracts every eye with the light of its beauty, and inflames every heart with the heat of his love. The continual presence of God is in different respects the cause and effect of our love to him; for there is no more powerful attractive to love him than to see him; and love keeps the thoughts undivided from him. 'God is love,' and will kindle in us a pure affection that eternity shall never lessen.

Our affections, that are now scattered on many things, wherein some small reflections of his goodness appear, shall join in one full current in heaven, where God is all in all. We shall then understand the riches of his love, that God, who is infinitely happy in himself, should make man for such a glory, and such a glory for man; and that when for his rebellion he was justly expelled from paradise, and under a sentence of eternal death, God should please to restore him to his favour, and to give him a better state than was forfeited. We shall then understand our infinite obligations to the Son of God who descended from the heaven of heavens to our earth, and, which is more, from the majesty wherein he there reigned, from the glory wherein he was visible to the angelical minds, and became man for men, redemption for the lost, to purchase immortal life for those who were dead to that blessed life. In short, then God will express his love to us in the highest degrees that a finite creature is capable to receive from love itself, and we shall love him with all the strength of our glorified powers.

3. Complete satisfaction flows from union with God by knowledge and love: 'In his presence is fulness of joy, and at his right hand are pleasures for ever.' The causes and excellences of the heavenly life are in those words expressed. The causes are the influxive presence of God, the revelation of his attractive perfections, the beholding his face, the declaration of his peculiar favour. This our blessed Lord himself had a respect to, as the complete reward of his sufferings: 'Thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.' And his right hand his bounty, that dispenses, and his power that secures, that felicity. The excellences of this state are fulness of joy, and that without diminution or end.

When the soul opens its eyes to the clear discoveries of the first truth, and its breast to the dear and intimate embraces of the supreme good, beyond which nothing remains to be known, nothing to be enjoyed, what a deluge of the purest pleasures will overflow it! We

cannot ascend in our thoughts so high as to conceive the excess of joy that attends those operations of the glorified soul upon its proper object. But something we may conjecture.

[1.] Those who are possessed with a noble passion for knowledge, how do they despise all lower pleasures in comparison of it! how do they forget themselves, neglect the body, and retire into the mind, the highest part of man, and nearest to God! The bare apprehension of such things that by their internal nature have no attractive influence upon the affections is pleasant to the understanding. As the appearance of light, though not attended with any other visible beauties, refreshes the eye after long darkness; so the other discovery of truths, how abstract soever, that were before unknown, is grateful to the intellectual faculty. Thus some have been strangely transported with the pleasures of a mathematical demonstration, when the evidence, not the importance of the thing, was so ravishing; for what is more dry and barren of delight than the speculation of figures and numbers? Solon, when near his end, and some of his friends that visited him were speaking softly of a point of philosophy, by a sound of wisdom was awakened from the sleep of death that was just seizing on him, and opening his eyes, and raising his head to give attention, being asked the reason of it, answered, That when I understand what you are discoursing of, I may die.¹ Such was his delight in knowledge, that a little of it made his agony insensible. But here are many imperfections that lessen this intellectual pleasure, which shall cease in heaven. Here the acquisition of knowledge is often with the expense of health; the flower of the spirits, necessary for natural operations, is wasted by intense thoughts. How often are the learned sickly! As the flint when it is struck gives not a spark without consuming itself, so knowledge is obtained by studies that waste our faint, sensitive faculties. But then our knowledge shall be a free emanation from the spring of truth, without our labour and pains. Here we learn by circuit, and discern by comparing things; our ignorance is dispelled by a gradual succession of light; but then universal knowledge shall be infused in a moment. Here, after all our labour and toil, how little knowledge do we gain! Every question is a labyrinth, out of which the nimblest and most searching minds cannot extricate themselves. How many specious errors impose upon our understandings! We look on things by false lights, through deceiving spectacles. But then our knowledge shall be certain and complete. There is no forbidden tree in the celestial paradise, as no inordinate affection. But suppose that all things in the compass of the world were known, yet still there would be emptiness and anguish in the mind; for the most comprehensive knowledge of things that are insufficient to make us happy cannot afford true satisfaction. But then we shall see God in all his excellences, the supreme object and end, the only felicity of the soul. How will the sight of his glory, personally shining in our Redeemer, in the first moment quench our extreme thirst, and fill us with joy and admiration! It is not as the naked conception of treasures, that only makes rich in ideas; but that divine sight gives a real interest in him.

¹ Ut cum istud quicquid est de quo disputatis percepero, moriar.—VAL. MAX.

The angels are so ravished with the beauties and wonders of his face that they never divert a moment from the contemplation of it.

[2.] The pure love of the saints to God is then fully satisfied. Love, considered as an affection of friendship, is always attended with two desires—to be assured of reciprocal love, and to enjoy the conversation of the person beloved, the testimony of his esteem and good-will. This kind of affection¹ seems to be inconsistent with that infinite distance that is between God and the creature. But though it is disproportionable to the divine majesty, it is proportionable to his goodness. Accordingly our Saviour promises, 'He that loves me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him.' And to confirm our belief of this astonishing condescension, repeats it, 'If a man love me, my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our abode with him.' In the present state, the signs of God's special favour are exhibited to his friends. Now he bestows on them the honour of being his sons, the graces and comforts of his Spirit, the precious earnest of his love, and 'seal of their redemption.' But in eminency of degrees, the effects of his love are incomparably more glorious in heaven. Here the saints are adopted, there crowned. There he opens all the bright treasure of his wisdom, the riches of his goodness, the beauties of his holiness, the glories of his power, and by the intimate application of his presence, makes his love most sensible to them. Oh the mutual delights between God and glorified souls! God looks on them with an engaged eye, as his own by many dear titles, and is well-pleased in his own goodness to them, and ravished with the reflex of his own excellences shining in them: 'As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride' (it is the language of divine love), 'so their God rejoices over them.' And what a blessed rest do they find in the complete fruition of their beloved! All their desires quietly expire in his bosom. What triumphs of joy follow! Can we frame a fuller conception of happiness than to be perfectly loved by infinite goodness, and perfectly to love him?

The supreme joy of the saints is for the felicity and glory of God himself; for as the holy soul feels no more powerful motive to love God than because he is most worthy of it, as he is God, a being of infinite excellences, and therefore to be loved above the dearest persons and things, even itself, so the highest joy it partakes of is from this consideration, that God is infinitely blessed and glorious. For in this the supreme desire of love is accomplished, that the most beloved object is perfectly honoured and pleased. In heaven the love of the saints to God is in its highest perfection, and they see his glory in the most perfect manner, which causes a transcendent joy to them. And this is one reason why the saints, though shining with unequal degrees of glory, are equally content. For their most ardent love being set on God, that he is pleased to glorify himself by such various communications of his goodness, is full satisfaction to their desires. Besides, in those different degrees of glory every one is so content with his own² that there is no possible desire of being but what he is.

¹ Aristotle.

² Sic itaque habebit donum aliud alio minus, ut hic quoque donum habeat ne velit amplius.—Aug.

4. The full joy of heaven shall continue without diminution or end.

First, The number of possessors cannot lessen it. The divine presence is an unwasted spring of pleasure, equally full and open to all, and abundantly sufficient to satisfy the immensity of their desires. Envy reigns in this world, because earthly things are so imperfect in their nature, and so peculiar in their possession, that they cannot suffice, nor be enjoyed by all. But in heaven none is touched with that low, base passion; for God contains all that is precious and desirable in the highest degrees of perfection, and all partake of the influence of his universal goodness without intercepting one another. In the kingdom above there is no cause for the elder brother to repine at the Father's bounty to the younger, nor for the younger to supplant the elder to obtain the birthright. The heirs of God are all raised to sovereign glory. Every one enjoys him as entirely and fully as if solely his felicity. God is a good, as indivisible as infinite, and not diminished by the most liberal communications of himself. We may illustrate this by comparing the price of our redemption and the reward. The death of Christ is an universal benefit to all the saints, yet it is so applied to every believer for his perfect redemption, as if our Saviour in all his agonies and sufferings had no other in his eye and heart; as if all his prayers, his tears, his blood, were offered up to his Father only for that person. The common respect of it the apostle declares in those admirable words, that signify such an excess of God's love to us, 'He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?' But to imagine that¹ the propriety of every believer is thereby prejudiced, is not only false, but extremely injurious to the merit and dignity, and to the infinite love of Christ. Therefore the same apostle tells us, '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;' as if he were the sole object of Christ's love, the end and reward of his sufferings. And this appropriating of it to himself is no prejudice to the rights of all others. St John describes himself by that truly glorious title, 'The disciple whom Jesus loved.' Could he speak this of himself without the injury and indignation of the other disciples? Certainly he might; for if we consider that incomprehensible love of Christ, expressed to them all at his last supper, after Judas was gone forth, 'As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you,' we may easily understand that every one of them might justly believe that he was singularly beloved of Christ. They were all received in the heart, though (with John) they did not all lean on the breast of their divine master. Thus in heaven God is the universal treasure of all the saints, and the peculiar portion of every one. ²As by his essence he equally fills the whole world, and every part of it, and by his providence equally regards all and every particular creature; so in heaven he dispenses the riches of his love to all, that they cannot desire more, if every one of them were (if

¹ Et totum se dedit universis et totum singulis. Ac per hoc quicquid passione sua Salvator præstitit, sicut totum ei debent universi, sic singuli; nisi quod prope hoc plus singuli quam universi, quod totum acceperunt singuli quantum universi.—SALVIAN.

² Si audiat multitudo silens, non inter se particulatim comminunt sonos, tanquam cibos: sed omne quod sonat et omnibus totum est et singulis totum.—AUGUST. in Epist. ad Volusian.

I may so express it) the only-begotten of the Only-begotten himself, the sole heir of all the merits of his Son. Every saint may, with the inflamed spouse, break forth in that triumph of love, 'My beloved is mine, and I am his.' Nay, the great number of the glorified saints is so far from lessening their joy, that it unspeakably increases it: 'The innumerable company of angels, and the general assembly of the church of the First-born,' next to the happiness of enjoying God, are a chief part of heaven. An unfeigned ardent affection unites that pure society. Our love is now kindled, either from a relation in nature, or some visible excellences that render a person worthy of our choice and friendship; but in heaven the reasons are greater, and the degrees of love incomparably more fervent. All carnal alliances and respects cease in that supernatural state. The apostle tells us, 'If I have known Christ after the flesh, I know him so no more.' By the resurrection and ascension of Christ he was transported into another world, and had communion with him as an heavenly king, without low regards to the temporal privilege of conversing with him on earth. The spiritual relation is more near and permanent than the strictest band of nature. The saints have all relation to the same heavenly Father, and to Jesus Christ the Prince of peace, and head of that happy fraternity. The principal motive of love here is for the inherent excellences of a person. Wisdom, goodness, holiness, are mighty attractives, and produce a more worthy affection, a more intimate confederacy of souls, than propinquity in nature. David declares that 'all his delight was in the excellent.' But there are allays of this noble love here. For—

[1.] There are relics of frailty in the best men on earth, some blemishes that render them less amiable when discovered. Here their graces are mixed infirmities, and but ascending to glory. Accordingly our love to them must be regular and serene; not clouded with error, mistaking defects for amiable qualities. But in heaven the image of God is complete, by the union of all the glorious virtues requisite to its perfection. Every saint there exactly agrees with the first exemplar, is transformed according to the primitive beauty of holiness. No spot or wrinkle remains, or any such thing, that may cast the least aspect of deformity upon them.

[2.] In the present state, the least part of the saint's worth is visible; as the earth is fruitful in plants and flowers, but its riches are in the mines of precious metals, the veins of marble hidden in its bosom. True grace appears in sensible actions, but its glory is within. The sincerity of aims, the purity of affections, the impresses of the Spirit on the heart, the interior beauties of holiness, are only seen by God. Besides, such is the humility of eminent saints, that the more they abound in spiritual treasures, the less they show; as the heavenly bodies, when in nearest conjunction with the sun, and fullest of light, make the least appearance to our sight. But all their excellences shall then be in view: 'The glory of God shall be revealed in them.' And how attractive is the divine likeness to an holy eye! How will it ravish the saints to behold an immortal loveliness shining in one another! Their love is mutual and reflexive, proportionable to the cause of it. An equal, constant flame is preserved by pure materials.

Every one is perfectly amiable, and perfectly enamoured with all. Now can we frame a fuller conception of happiness than such a state of love, wherein whatever is pleasant in friendship is in perfection, and whatever is distasteful by men's folly and weakness is abolished. The psalmist breaks out in a rapture, 'Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!' Love is the beauty and strength of societies, the pleasure of life. How excellent is the joy of the blessed, when the prayer of Christ shall be accomplished, that they all may be one! 'As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.' God is absolutely one in his glorious nature and will, and therefore unalterably happy; and their inviolable union in love is a ray of the essential unity between the sacred persons. There are no divisions of heart and tongues, as in this Babel, but the most perfect and sweetest concord, an eternal agreement in tempers and inclinations. There are no envious comparisons; for love, that affectively transforms one into another, causes the glory of every saint to redound to the joy of all. Every one takes his share in the felicity of all, and adds to it. Such is the power of that celestial fire wherein they all burn, that it melts, and mixes souls in such an entire union, that, by complaisance and an intimate joy, the blessedness of all is, as it were, proper to every one; as if every one were placed in the hearts of all, and all in the heart of every one. If in the church of the first-born christians, in the earthly Jerusalem, the band of charity was so strict that it is said, 'the multitude of believers were of one heart and one soul;' how much more intimate and inseparable is the union of the saints in Jerusalem above, where every one loves another as himself!

It is recorded of Alexander, that entering with Hephæstion, his favourite, into the pavilion of Darius' mother, then his prisoner, she bowed to the favourite, as having a greater appearance of majesty, thinking him to be Alexander; but advised of her error, she humbly begged his pardon; to whom the generous king replied,¹ 'You did not err, mother, for this is also Alexander.' Such was their affection, that whoever was taken of them, the other was taken in him; the less ascending in the greater, without degrading the greater in the less. This is a copy of the holy love of the blessed; but with the same difference as between the description of a star with a coal and its beauty in its proper aspect. And where all is love, all is delight. Oh, how do they enjoy and triumph in the happiness of one another! With what an unimaginable tenderness do they embrace! What reciprocations of endearments are between them! Oh their ravishing conversation and sweet intercourse! for their presence together in heaven is not a silent show. In the transfiguration Moses and Elias talked with Christ. With what excellent discourses do they entertain one another! If David felt such inward pleasure from the sense of God's favours that he could not restrain the expression of it, but invites the saints, 'Come and hear, all ye that fear the Lord, and I will tell you what he has done for my soul;' certainly in heaven, the blessed with overflowing affections recount the divine benefits, the admirable methods

¹ Non errâsti, mater, nam hic Alexander est.—CURT. l. 3.

whereby the life of grace was begun, preserved, and carried on in the midst of temptations; the continual succession of mercies in the time of their hopes, and the consummation of all in the time of their enjoyment. How joyfully do they concur in their thanksgivings to God for the goodness of creation, in making them reasonable creatures, capable to know, love, and enjoy him when they might have been of the lowest order in the whole sphere of beings; for his compassionate care and providence over them in this world. But especially for his sovereign mercy in electing them to be vessels of honour; for his powerful grace in rescuing them from the cruel and ignominious bondage of sin; for his most free love, that justified them from all their guilt by the death of his only Son, and glorified them with himself. They are never weary in this delightful exercise, but continually bless him for his mercy that endures for ever. We may judge by the saints here, when they are in a fit disposition to praise God, what fervours they feel in their united praises of him in heaven. The psalmist in an ecstasy calls to all the parts of the world to join with him: 'The Lord reigns, let the heavens rejoice, and the earth be glad: let the sea roar, let the fields be joyful, and all that dwell therein.' He desires that nature should be elevated above itself, that the dead parts be inspired with life, the insensible feel motions of joy, and those that want a voice break forth in praises to adorn the divine triumph. With what life and alacrity will the saints in their blessed communion celebrate the object of their love and praises! The seraphims about the throne cried to one another, to express their zeal and joy in celebrating his eternal purity and power, and the glory of his goodness. Oh the unspeakable pleasure of this concert, when every soul is harmonious, and contributes his part to the full music of heaven! Oh, could we hear but some echo of those songs wherewith the heaven of heavens resounds, some remains of those voices wherewith the saints above triumph in the praises, in the solemn adoration of the King of spirits, how would it inflame our desires to be joined with them! 'Blessed are those that are in thy house, they always praise thee.'

[3.] The fulness of joy in heaven is undecaying, for the causes of it are always equal; and those are, the beatific object revealed, and the uninterrupted contemplation of it.

Whilst we are here below, the sun of righteousness, as to our perception and sense, has ascensions and declinations, accesses and recesses; and our earth is not so purified but some vapours arise that intercept his cheerful, refreshing light. From hence there are alternate successions of spiritual comforts and sorrows, of doubts and filial confidence in the saints. It is a rare favour of heaven when an humble believer in his whole course is so circumspect as not to provoke God to appear displeased against him; when a christian (as those tutelar angels spoken of in the gospel) always beholds the face of his heavenly Father, and converses with him with an holy liberty. And what a torment the hiding of God's face is to a deserted soul, only they know who feel it. External troubles are many times attended with more consolations to the spirit than afflictions to sense; but to love God with a transcendent affection, and to fear he is our enemy, no punishment exceeds or is equal to it. As his loving-kindness in their esteem

is better than life, so his displeasure is worse than death. How do they wrestle with God by prayers and tears, and offer, as it were, a holy violence to the king of heaven, to recover their first serenity of mind, the lost peace of heart! How passionately do they cry out, with Job in the book of his patience, Job xxix. 2-4 'Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me: when his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness: as I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle.' And sometimes God delays the revealing himself even to his dearest children; not that he does not see their necessities and hear their prayers, or is so hard that till their extremities he is not moved with compassion, but for wise and holy reasons; either that they may not return to folly, if by any presumptuous sin they forfeited their peace; or if they have been careful to please him, yet he may deprive them of spiritual comforts for a time, to keep them humble, and that with an obedient resignation to his sovereign pleasure they may wait for his reviving presence. And then joy returns greater than before. For thus God usually renders with interest what he suspended only for trial. But the saints above are for ever enlightened with the vital splendour and dear regards of his countenance, always enjoy his beamy smiles. A continual effusion of glory illustrates heaven and all its blessed inhabitants.

And their contemplation of God is fixed. If the object, though extraordinary glorious, were transient, or the eye so weak that it could only see it but by glances, the height of joy would not be perpetual; but the mind is prepared with supernatural vigour to see the brightness of God's face, and by the most attentive application always converses with that blessed object, so that the joy of heaven is never intermitted for a moment. They always see, and love, and rejoice, and praise him.

It is possible a carnal suspicion may arise in some, as if the uniform perpetual vision of the same glory might lose its perfect delightfulness; for those who seek for happiness in the vanity of the creatures are always desirous of change, and have their judgments so corrupted, that while they languish with a secret desire after an unchangeable good, yet they conceive no good as desirable that is not changed.

But to correct this gross error of fancy, let us a little inquire into the causes of dissatisfaction, that make the constant fruition of the same thing here to be tedious.

(1.) Sensible things are of such a limited goodness, that not any of them can supply all our present wants, so that it is necessary to leave one for another. And the most of them are remedies of our diseased appetites, and, if not temperately used, are destructive evils. Eating and drinking are to extinguish hunger and thirst, but continued beyond just measure become nauseous.

Besides the insufficiency of their objects, the senses themselves cannot be satisfied all at once. The ear cannot attend to delightful sounds, and the eye cannot be intent on beautiful colours at the same time: The satisfaction of one sense defeats another of enjoying its proper good; therefore the same object is not constantly pleasant, but the heart is distempered from as many causes as there are desires unaccomplished.

Add further, all things under the sun afford only a superficial delight, and miserably deceive the expectations raised of them; and many times there is a mixture of some evil in them that is more offensive than the good is delightful. The honey is attended with a sting, so that often those things we sigh after through vehement desire, when they are obtained, we sigh for grief. Now all these causes of dissatisfaction cease in heaven; for¹ God is an infinite good, and whatever is truly desirable and precious is in him in all degrees of perfection. And in his presence all the powers of the soul are drawn out in their most pleasant exercise, and always enjoy their entire happiness. The fruition of him exceeds our most raised hopes, as much as he is more glorious in himself than in any borrowed representations. God will be to us incomparably above what we can ask or think. The compass of our thoughts, the depth of our desires, are imperfect measures of his perfections. As he is a pure good in himself, so he is prevalent over all evil. It is evident, therefore, that nothing can allay the joys of saints when they are in God's presence.

(2.) Novelty is not requisite to ingratiate every good, and make it perfectly delightful. ²God is infinitely happy, to whom no good was ever new. It is indeed the sauce that gives a delicious taste to inferior things; for men relish only what is eminent, and the good things of this world are so truly mean, that they are fain to borrow a show of greatness by comparison with a worse estate preceding. But an infinite good produces always the same pure, equal, complete joy, because it arises from its intrinsic perfection, that wants no foil to commend it. The psalmist breaks forth, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee?' This is no vanishing rapture, but a constant joyful height of affection. God, the essential happiness of the saints, is always perfectly lovely and delightfully to them.

(3.) The glorified saints, in every period of their happy state, have as lively a perception of it as in the beginning. To make this evident, we must consider that the pleasure of novelty springs from a quick sense of the opposite terms between our condition in the want of some desired good and after our obtaining it. Now the mind is more intense on the advantage, and more strongly affected at first. One newly freed from the torments of a sharp disease feels a greater pleasure than from a constant tenor of health. Those who are raised from a low state to an eminent dignity are transported with their first change; but in tract of time the remembrance of their mean condition is so weakened and spent, that it is like the shadow of a dream, and proportionably their joy is lessened. Honours, like perfumes, by custom are less sensible to those that carry them. But the saints above always consider and feel the excellent difference between their suffering and triumphant state. They never lose that ravishing part of felicity, the vivid sense of past evils. Their reflections are always as strong on the misery from whence

¹ *Vitæ nos tædium tenet, timor mortis natat omne consilium, nec implere nos ulla felicitas potest. Causa autem est, quod non venimus ad illud bonum immensum et insuperabile, ubi necesse est consistat nobis voluntas nostra, quia ultra summum non est locus.*—SEN. Ep. 74.

² *Εἰ ἡ φύσις ἀπλή εἶη ἡ αὐτῆ πράξις ἡδίστη ἔσταλ. Διὸ ὁ Θεὸς αἰεὶ μίαν καὶ ἀπλήν χαίρει ἡδονήν.*—ARIST. ETH. lib. vii. c. ult.

they were raised to the pitch of happiness as in their first glorious translation. In what an ecstasy of wonder and pleasure will they be, from the fresh memory of what they were, and the joyful sense of what they are! I was (says the admiring soul) poor, blind, and naked; but, O miraculous and happy alteration! I am full of light, enriched with the treasures of heaven, adorned with divine glory. I was under the tyrannous power of Satan, but he is bruised under my feet. I was sentenced to an everlasting separation from the presence of God, my only life and joy; but now am possessed of my supreme good. Oh, how transporting is the comparison of these wide and contrary extremes! How beautiful and pleasant is the day of eternity after such a dark, tempestuous night! How does the remembrance of such evils produce a more lively and feeling fruition of such happiness! How strangely and mightily does salvation with eternal glory affect the soul! This gives a sprightly accent to their everlasting hallelujahs. This preserves an affectionate heat in their thanksgiving to their victorious deliverer. And thus their happiness is always the same, and always new. Their pleasure is continued in its perfection.

Lastly, The blessedness of the saints is without end; this makes heaven to be itself. There is no satiety of the present, no solicitude for the future. Were there a possibility or the least suspicion of losing that happy state, it would cast an aspersion of bitterness upon all their delights; they could not enjoy one moment's repose. But the more excellent their happiness is, the more stinging would their fear be of parting with it. But 'the inheritance reserved in heaven is immortal, undefiled, and fades not away;' and the tenure of their possession is infinitely firm by the divine power, the true support of their everlasting duration: 'With God is the fountain of life.' They enjoy a better immortality than the tree of life could have preserved in Adam. The revolutions of the heavens and ages are under their feet, and cannot in the least alter or determine their happiness. After the passing of millions of years, still an entire eternity remains of their enjoying God. O most desirable state! where blessedness and eternity are inseparably united. O joyful harmony! when the full chorus of heaven shall sing, 'This God is our God for ever and ever.' This adds an infinite weight to their glory. This redoubles their unspeakable joys with infinite sweetness and security. They repose themselves in the complete fruition of their happiness. God reigns in the saints, and they live in him for ever.

From what has been discoursed we should—

1. Consider the woful folly of men in refusing such an happiness, that, by the admirable favour of God, is offered to their choice. Can there be an expectation or desire or capacity in man of enjoying an happiness beyond what is infinite and eternal? O blind and wretched world! so careless of everlasting felicity! Who can behold without compassion and indignation men vainly seeking for happiness where it is not to be found, and after innumerable disappointments, fly to an impossibility, and neglect their sovereign and final blessedness? Astonishing madness, that God and heaven should be despised in comparison of painted trifles! This adds the greatest contumely to their impiety. What powerful charm obstructs their true judging of things?

What spirit of error possesses them? Alas! eternal 'things are unseen,' not of conspicuous moment, and therefore in the carnal balance are esteemed light against temporal things present to the sense: 'It does not appear what we shall be.' The veil of the visible heavens covers the sanctuary, where Jesus, our high priest, is entered, and stops the inquiring eye.

But have we not assurance by the most infallible principles of faith that the Son of God came down from heaven to live with us and die for us, and that he rose again to confirm our belief in his 'exceeding great and precious promises' concerning this happiness in the future state? And do not the most evident principles of reason and universal experience prove that this world cannot afford true happiness to us? How wretchedly do we forfeit the prerogative of the reasonable nature by neglecting our last and blessed end! If the mind be darkened that it does not see the amiable excellences of God, and the will so depraved that it does not feel their ravishing power, the man ceases to be a man, and becomes like the beasts that perish; as a blind eye is no longer an eye, being absolutely useless to that end for which it was made. And though in this present state men are stupid and unconcerned, yet hereafter their misery will awaken them, discover what is that supreme good wherein their perfection and felicity consists. When their folly shall be exposed before God, angels, and saints, in what extreme confusion will they appear before that glorious and immense theatre? Our Saviour told the unbelieving Jews, 'There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves turned out.' They shall be tortured with the desire of happiness without possible satisfaction. It is most just that those who err without excuse should repent without remedy.

2. Let us be excited seriously to apply ourselves in the use of effectual means for the obtaining this happiness. Indeed the original cause of it is the pure, rich mercy of God; the meritorious is the most precious obedience of our Saviour, by whom we obtain plenteous redemption. His abasement is the cause of our exaltation. The wounds he received in his body, the character of ignominy, and footsteps of death, are the fountains of our glory: 'Eternal life is the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.' But the gospel declares, 'that without holiness no man shall see God.' An holy change of our natures, and perseverance in the course of universal obedience, are indispensably requisite in order to our obtaining heaven: 'Those who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, honour, and immortality, shall partake of eternal life.' Now, were there no other reason of this constitution but the sovereign will of God, it were sufficient. But the foundation of it is laid in the nature of the things themselves. Therefore our Saviour does not simply declare that an unregenerate person shall not see the kingdom of God, but with the greatest emphasis, *cannot*, to signify an absolute impossibility of it. Beside the legal bar that excludes unsanctified persons from the beatific vision of God, there is a moral incapacity. Suppose that justice should allow omnipotence to translate such a sinner to heaven, would the place make him happy? Can two incongruous natures

delight in one another? The happiness of sense is by an impression of pleasure from a suitable object. The happiness of intellectual beings arises from an entire conformity of dispositions. So that unless God recede from his holiness, which is absolutely impossible, or man be purified and changed into his likeness, there can be no sweet communion between them. Our Saviour assigns this reason of the necessity of regeneration in order to our admission into heaven: 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.' According to the quality of the principle, such is what proceeds from it. The flesh is a corrupt principle, and accordingly the natural man is wholly carnal in his propensions, operations, and end. The disease is turned into his constitution. He is dead to the spiritual life, to the actions and enjoyments that are proper to it. Nay, there is in him a surviving principle of enmity to that life; not only a mortal coldness to God, but a stiff aversion from him, a perpetual resistance and impatience of the divine presence that would disturb his voluptuous enjoyments. The exercises of heaven would be as the torments of hell to him, while in the midst of those pure joys his inward inclinations vehemently run into the lowest lees of sensuality. And therefore till this contrariety, so deep and predominant in an unholy person, be removed, it is utterly impossible he should enjoy God with satisfaction. Holiness alone prepares men for the possession of celestial happiness that is against the corruption and above the perfection of mere nature.

'Let us then, having such a joy set before us, lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and run with patience the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.' Methinks the sight of worldly men, so active and vigilant to prosecute their low designs, should quicken us to seek with the greater diligence and alacrity 'the kingdom of heaven, and the righteousness thereof.' A carnal wretch, urged by the sting of a brutish desire, with what impatience does he pursue 'the pleasure of sin, which is but for a season!' An ambitious person, with what an intemperate height of passion does he chase a feather! A covetous man, how greedily does he prosecute the advantages of the present world that pass away, and the lusts thereof! Ah! how do they upbraid our indifferent desires, or dull delays, and cold endeavours, when such a high prize is set before us! Who is able to conceive the excess of pleasure the soul feels when it first enters through the beautiful gate of paradise, and sees before it that incomprehensible glory, and hears a voice from him that sits upon the throne, 'Enter into thy Master's joy,' for ever to be happy with him? The serious belief of this will draw forth all our active powers in the service of God. The feeding by lively thoughts on this supernatural food will add new vigour and lustre to our graces, and make our victory easy over the world. If we believe indeed that our bodies shall be spiritual, and our souls divine in their perfections, it will make us resolute to subdue the rebel flesh and rescue the captived spirit from all entanglements of iniquity: 'Having the promise of such an excellent reward, let us always abound in the work of the Lord.'

3. The lively hope of this blessedness is powerful to support us under the greatest troubles can befall us in this our mortal condition.

Here we are tossed upon the alternate waves of time, but hereafter we shall arrive at the port, the blessed bosom of our Saviour, and enjoy a peaceful calm: 'And so we shall ever be with the Lord.' Words of infinite sweetness! This is the song of our prosperity and charm of our adversity: 'We shall ever be with the Lord.' Well might the apostle add immediately after, 'Therefore comfort one another with these words.'

More particularly, they are a lenitive to moderate our sorrows upon the departure of our dearest friends who die in the Lord; for they ascend from this valley of tears to the happy land of the living. What father is so deserted of reason as to bear impatiently the parting with his son, that goes over a narrow part of the sea to a rich and pleasant country, and receives the investiture and peaceable possession of a kingdom? Nay, by how much the stronger his love is, so much the more transporting is his joy; especially if he expects shortly to be with him, to see him on the throne, in the state of a king, and to partake of his happiness. If, then, it be impossible to nature to be grieved at the felicity of one that is loved, according to what principle of nature or faith do believers so uncomfortably lament the death of friends, of whom they have assurance that, after their leaving our earth, they enter into an everlasting kingdom, to receive a crown of glory from Christ himself? Our Saviour tells the disciples, 'If ye loved me, ye would rejoice because I said I go to my Father,' to sit down at his right hand in majesty. A pure affection directly terminates in the happiness and exaltation of the person that is loved. I am not speaking against the exercise of tender affections on the loss of our dear friends, and the pensive feeling of God's hand in it, which is a natural and necessary duty. There is a great difference between stupidity and patience; but violent passion or unremitting sorrow is most unbecoming the blessed hope assured to us in the gospel.

Chrysostom, treating of this argument, and reflecting upon the custom of those times, wherein at funeral solemnities a train of mourning women attended the corpse, tearing their hair and face, and crying out with all the expressions of desperate sorrow, breaks forth, 'Ah, christian faith and religion! that was triumphant over thine enemies in so many battles and victories by the blood and death of the martyrs, how art thou contradicted by the practice of these who profess thee in words! Is this not to be sorrowful as those that have no hope? Are these the affections, the expressions of one that believes the blessedness of immortal life? What will the heathens say? How will they be induced to believe the promises of Christ to his servants of a glorious kingdom, when those who are so in title, behave themselves as if they had no steadfast faith in them?'

4. The hopes of this blessed state is able to free us from the fear of death. This last enemy gives a hot alarm to mankind, both as it deprives them of all that is pleasant here, and for the terrible consequences that attend it. To the eye of sense, a dead body is a spectacle of fearful appearance. He that a little before heard and discoursed, and with a cheerful air conversed and enjoyed the world, now is dead, and all his senses in him; the eyes are dead to light, and the ears to sounds, the tongue to words, the heart to feel any affections, and the

countenance to discover them ; nothing remains but silence, horror, and corruption. Besides, 'after death comes judgment,' and a state of unrelenting torments to the wicked. But a true believer, that has been obedient to his Saviour, sees things by another light than that of sense, and has living hopes in his dying agonies. He knows that death to the saints is but a sleep ; and while the body rests in the grave, the soul is, as it were, all act, continually exercising its most noble faculties on the best objects. Does the soul sleep in that all-enlightened world, that sees with open face the infinite beauty of God ? that hears and bears a part in the hymns of the angels and saints encircling his throne ? that drinks of the rivers of pleasure that flow from his presence ? that freely and joyfully converses with all the celestial courtiers, the princes of that kingdom, the favourites of God ? Then it truly lives. This reconciles death to a christian, who has nothing more in his wishes than to be with Christ, and knows that diseases and pains, the forerunners of it, are but as breaking down the walls of this earthly dark prison, that the soul may take its flight to the happy region, and for ever enjoy the liberty of the sons of God. And for his body, that shall be reunited to the soul in glory. Methinks God speaks to a dying believer as he did to Jacob when he was to descend to Egypt, 'Fear not to go down into the grave ; I will go down with thee, and I will bring thee up again.' The same almighty voice that gave being to the world shall awake those who sleep in the dust, and reform them according to the example of Christ's glorified body. Oh, how should we long for that triumphant day, and with most ardent aspirings pray, 'Thy kingdom come in its full power and glory ?'

I shall now come to speak of the mournful subject, the cause of my appearing here at this time, the deceased reverend and excellent divine, Dr Thomas Manton, a name worthy of precious and eternal memory. And I shall consider him both in the quality of his office, as he was an ambassador of Christ, declaring his mind and representing his authority, and in the holiness of his person, showing forth the graces and virtues of his divine Master.

God had furnished him with a rare union of those parts that are requisite to form an excellent minister of his word. A clear judgment, rich fancy, strong memory, and happy elocution met in him, and were excellently improved by his diligent study.

The preaching of the word is the principal part of the minister's duty, most essential to his calling, and most necessary to the church. For this end chiefly the several orders in the ministerial office were instituted (Eph. iv.) ; and upon our Saviour's triumphant ascent and reception into heaven, an abundant effusion of the Spirit in graces and abilities descended upon men. Now, in the performing this work he was of that conspicuous eminence that none could detract from him but from ignorance or envy.

He was endowed with extraordinary knowledge in the scriptures, those holy oracles from whence all spiritual light is derived ; and in his preaching gave such a perspicuous account of the order and dependence of divine truths, and with that felicity applied the scriptures to confirm them, that every subject by his management was cultivated

and improved. His discourses were so clear and convincing, that none, without offering voluntary violence to conscience, could resist their evidence. And from hence they were effectual, not only to inspire a sudden shame, and raise a short commotion in the affections, but to make a lasting change in the life. For in the human soul, such is the composition of its faculties, that till the understanding be rectified in its apprehensions and estimations, the will is never induced to make an entire, firm choice of what is necessary for the obtaining perfect happiness. A sincere, persevering conversion is effected by weighty reasons, that sink and settle in the heart.

His doctrine was uncorrupt and pure, 'The truth according to godliness.' He was far from a guilty, vile intention to prostitute that sacred ordinance for the acquiring any private secular advantage. Neither did he entertain his hearers with impertinent subtleties, empty notions, intricate disputes, dry and barren without productive virtue; but as one that always had before his eyes the great end of the ministry, the glory of God and the salvation of men, his sermons were directed to open their eyes, that they might see their wretched condition as sinners, to hasten their flight from the wrath to come, to make them humbly, thankfully, and entirely receive Christ as their prince and all-sufficient saviour, and to 'build up the converted in their most holy faith, and more excellent love,' that is 'the fulfilling of the law.' In short, to make true christians eminent in knowledge and universal obedience.

As the matter of his sermons was designed for the good of souls, so his way of expression was proper to that end. Words are the vehicle of the heavenly light. As the divine wisdom was incarnate to reveal the eternal counsels of God to the world, so spiritual wisdom in the mind must be clothed with words to make it sensible to others. And in this he had a singular talent. His style was not exquisitely studied, not consisting of harmonious periods, but far distant from vulgar meanness. His expression was natural and free, clear and eloquent, quick and powerful, without any spice of folly, and always suitable to the simplicity and majesty of divine truths. His sermons afforded substantial food with delight, so that a fastidious mind could not disrelish them. He abhorred a vain ostentation of wit in handling sacred things, so venerable and grave, and of eternal consequence. Indeed, what is more unbecoming a minister of Christ than to waste the spirits of his brain, as a spider does his bowels, to spin a web only to catch flies, to get vain applause by foolishly pleasing the ignorant? And what cruelty is it to the souls of men! It is recorded as an instance of Nero's savage temper (Suetonius), that in a general famine, when many perished by hunger, he ordered a ship should come from Egypt (the granary of Italy) laden with sand for the use of wrestlers. In such extremity to provide only for delight, that there might be spectacles on the theatre, when the city of Rome was a spectacle of such misery as to melt the heart of any but a Nero, was most barbarous cruelty. But it is cruelty of a heavier imputation for a minister to prepare his sermons to please the foolish curiosity of fancy with flashy conceits; nay, such light vanities that would scarce be endured in a scene, whiles hungry souls languish for want of solid nourishment.

His fervour and earnestness in preaching was such as might soften and make pliant the most stubborn, obdurate spirits. I am not speaking of one whose talent was only in voice, that labours in the pulpit as if the end of preaching were for the exercise of the body, and not for the profit of souls; ¹ but this man of God was inflamed with an holy zeal, and from thence such ardent expressions broke forth as were capable to procure attention and consent in his hearers. He spake as one that had a living faith within him of divine truths. From this union of zeal with his knowledge he was excellently qualified to convince and convert souls. The sound of words only strikes the ear, but the mind reasons with the mind, and the heart speaks to the heart.

His unparalleled assiduity in preaching declared him very sensible of those dear and strong obligations that lie upon ministers to be very diligent in that blessed work. What a powerful motive our Saviour urged upon St Peter! John xxi. 'As thou lovest me, feed my sheep, feed my lambs.' And can any feed too much when none can love enough? Can any pains be sufficient for the salvation of souls, for which the Son of God did not esteem his blood too costly a price? Is not incessant, unwearied industry requisite to advance the work of grace in them to perfection? In this the work of a minister has its peculiar disadvantage. That whereas an artificer, how curious and difficult soever his work be, yet has this encouragement, that what is begun with art and care he finds in the same state wherein it was left; a painter, that designs an exact piece, draws many lines, often touches it with his pencil to give it life and beauty, and though unfinished, it is not spoiled by his intermission; a sculptor, that carves a statue, though his labour be hard from the resistance of the matter, yet his work remains firm and durable; but the heart of man is of a strange temper, hard as marble, not easily receptive of heavenly impressions, yet fluid as water. Those impressions are easily defaced in it; it is exposed to so many temptations that induce an oblivion of eternal things, that without frequent excitations to quicken and confirm its holy purposes, it grows careless, and all the labour is lost that was spent on it. This faithful minister 'abounded in the work of the Lord;' and, which is truly admirable, though so frequent in preaching, yet was always superior to others, and equal to himself. In his last time, when declining to death, yet he would not leave his beloved work, the vigour of his mind supporting the weakness of his body. I remember when, oppressed with an obstinate hoarseness, a friend desiring him to spare himself, he rejected the advice with indignation.

He was no fomentor of faction, but studious of the public tranquillity. He knew what a blessing peace is, and wisely foresaw the pernicious consequences that attend divisions. By peace, the bond of mutual harmony, the weakest things are preserved and prosper; but where discord reigns, the strongest are near to ruin. The heavenly consent in the primitive church was a principal cause of its miraculous increase and flourishing; but after dissensions prevailed amongst christians, that was destroyed in a short time which was built by the divine union and heroic patience of the primitive christians, and the glorious begin-

¹ Si sudare aliter non potes, est aliud.

nings that promised the reformation of all Europe were more obstructed by the dissensions of some employed in that blessed work, than by all the power and subtlety, the arms and artifices of Rome itself. How afflictive is the consideration of our divided church! Sweet peace! whither art thou fled? Blessed Saviour! who didst by thy precious blood reconcile heaven and earth, sent down thy Spirit to inspire us with that wisdom that is pure and peaceable, that those who agree in the same principles of faith, in the same substantial parts of worship, in asserting the same indispensable necessity of holiness, may receive one another in love. I am affectionately engaged in a matter that so nearly touches all those that value the Protestant interest.

Briefly, Consider him as a christian; his life was answerable to his doctrine. It is applicable to some ministers, what is observed of the carbuncle, by its colour, lustre, and fiery sparklings, it seems to be actually a fire, but it has only the name and appearance of it. Thus some in the pulpit seem to be all on fire with zeal, yet their hearts are as cold as a stone, without holy affections, and their lives are unworthy their divine ministration. But this servant of God was like a fruitful tree, that produces in its branches what it contains in the root; his inward grace was made visible in a conversation becoming the gospel of Christ.

His resolute contempt of the world secured him from being wrought on by those motives that tempt low spirits from their duty. He would not rashly throw himself into troubles, nor, *spretæ conscientia*, avoid them. His generous constancy of mind in resisting the current of popular humour declared his loyalty to his divine Master. His charity was eminent in procuring supplies for others when in mean circumstances himself. But he had great experience of God's fatherly provision, to which his filial confidence was correspondent.

His conversation in his family was holy and exemplary, every day instructing them from the scriptures in their duty.

I shall finish my character of him with observing his humility. He was deeply affected with the sense of his frailties and unworthiness. He considered the infinite purity of God, the perfection of his law, the rule of our duty, and by that humbling light discovered his manifold defects. He expressed his thoughts to me a little before his death: If the holy prophets were under strong impressions of fear upon the extraordinary discovery of the divine presence, how shall we poor creatures appear before that holy and dread majesty? Isaiah, after his glorious vision of God, reflecting upon himself, as not retired from the commerce and corruption of the world, breaks forth, 'Woe is me, for I am undone! because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.' It is infinitely terrible to appear 'before God, the judge of all,' without the protection of 'the blood of the sprinkling, that speaks better things than the blood of Abel.' This alone relieved him, and supported his hopes. Though his labours were abundant, yet he knew that the work of God, passing through our hands, is so blemished, that, without an appeal to pardoning mercy and grace, we cannot stand in judgment. This was the subject of his last public sermon.

He languished many months, but presuming he should be too strong for his infirmity, neglected it, till at last it became insuperable and mortal. Many pathetic aggravations heighten our great and dear loss; that such a faithful minister of Christ should be taken away, whose preaching was so powerful to repair the woful ruins of godliness and virtue in a degenerate age; whose prudent, pacific spirit rendered him so useful in these divided times, when professors of the same religion are alienated from one another, as if they had been baptized with the waters of strife; that before our tears had dried up for the loss of other worthy ministers, the fountain of sorrow should be opened again by this afflicting stroke. But it becomes us to receive the dispensations of heaven with humble and quiet submission, to reflect upon our sins with an holy grief, that provoke God to remove such an excellent instrument of his glory from us. Let us pray to the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth faithful labourers into it. Oh that surviving ministers might be animated with a zeal more pure and fervent in their divine work, and that people would be wise, while a price is put it into their hands to improve it for their eternal advantage! The neglected gospel will at last be a terrible witness against the disobedient, to justify and aggravate their condemnation.

INDEX

INDEX.

INDEX.

INDEX.

INDEX.

- A TREATISE OF SELF-DENIAL, xv. 175.
- A TREATISE ON THE LIFE OF FAITH, xv. 45.
- Abasements*, great, often go before glory, iii. 459.
- Abasures* and sufferings for Christ, the greatest, are an honour to us, iv. 65.
- Abel*, the first pattern of faith, xiii. 435 ; a type of Christ, 436.
- Abilities*, men of great, unsanctified, are ordinarily the devil's greatest agents, and factors for his kingdom, ii. 320.
- Natural, soon depraved with evil habits, v. 267.
- Abraham*, the prime example and ideal of justification, iv. 244 ; on the offering of Isaac received a justification of his faith, though thirty years before he had received the justification of his person, 245.
- Received the promises with all humility, and improved them with much fidelity, iv. 246.
- The greatness of his temptation, iv. 252 ; the readiness of his obedience, *ib.*
- His life a continual practice of faith, xiv. 224 ; the ground of his faith, *ib.* ; the nature of his call, *ib.* ; the effect and influence of his faith upon this call, 226 ; the excellency of his obedience, *ib.*
- In his faith three things were notable—his patience, his contentment, and his constancy, xiv. 252 ; this the property of all faith, 253.
- Absent* from the Lord, how believers are, while yet he dwelleth in them, xiii. 8.
- Abundance* of the rich doth not excuse their living in luxury, iv. 412.
- The comfort of our lives lieth not in, xviii. 198 ; there is danger in, *ib.* ; brings greater cares and troubles, 199 ; involves greater accounts, *ib.* ; at death, not the possession, but the use, will comfort, *ib.*
- Worldly, man's happiness lieth not in, but in God's presence with him and providence over him, xviii. 449.
- Acceptance*, all the price of God's gifts, iv. 42.
- With God, terms of our, viii. 113 ; our persons are by Christ reconciled to God, 114 ; our infirmities are covered with his righteousness, *ib.* ; by his intercession our duties are commended to God, *ib.*
- Wicked men, although not accepted, must not refrain from religious duties, xiv. 24 ; since God rewards many wicked men, how their duties can be said to be accepted, 24.
- With God, the way of, clearly stated in the gospel, xviii. 240 ; to know the way of, is the mightiest matter in the world, *ib.* ; that is the best religion which doth most provide for this peace and rest of soul, 241 ; the Christian religion doth abundantly provide for true peace of conscience and ease of mind, *ib.*
- Accesses* to God in Christ, gracious hearts should be always renewing, iv. 370.

- Account* to be given at the day of judgment is certain, ix. 448 ; personal, 449 ; impartial, 450 ; exact, *ib.*
- Accounts*, necessity of hastening preparation for the day of, ix. 407 ; it makes a necessary work sure, and puts it out of doubt and hazard, *ib.* ; in point of obedience, God presseth to it now, *ib.* ; in point of ingenuity, we receive a plenteous recompense for a small service, *ib.* ; it is our advantage, both here and hereafter, to begin betimes, 408.
- Accursed*, is it lawful to wish to be ? i. 73.
- Accusations*, railing, come from an evil principle, v. 259 ; are most unsuitable to matters of religion, *ib.* ; are flatly against the word, *ib.* ; exasperate rather than convince, 260.
- Accusers*, the devil, the world, and our consciences, are, xii. 349.
- Acknowledgment*, thankful, of the good that God hath done for us, an important duty, vii. 198 ; in such acknowledgments we should take notice of his truth, as well as his goodness, 201.
- Acquaintance* with God in Christ the true riches, ii. 306.
- Actions*, corrupt, founded in some vain thought, and this vain thought strengthened by some vain word, iv. 53.
- Are seed ; they fall to the ground, not to be lost, but to grow up again, iv. 323.
- And recreations not to be taken in hand, but such as we can commend to God in prayer, iv. 238.
- Ordinary, are gracious when they flow from faith, and are done in obedience, iv. 268.
- Good, the internal principle of, is verity and purity of heart, vi. 15.
- A better discovery of our thoughts than words, vi. 19.
- Adam* in innocency could not merit aught at God's hand, i. 156.
- And Noah, our two common parents ; one miscarried by eating, the other by drinking, i. 163.
- Not only left us guilty, but conveyed to us an evil nature ; both these evils done away by Christ, ii. 205.
- How alone till Eve was made, ii. 391.
- The guilt of his sin imputed to us, iii. 297 ; as we sprang from him, and were in him as a common person, and sinned in him, 298.
- Addresses* to heaven begin at the sense of our need, iv. 89.
- Admiration*, having men's persons in, because of advantage, v. 318.
- Adoption*, spirit of, may be shown in a childlike inclination where there is not a childlike familiarity and boldness, i. 34 ; in a childlike reverence where there is not a childlike confidence, 35 ; in a childlike dependence on God's general offer, though we have not any evidence of the sincerity of our particular claim, *ib.* ; in a childlike love to God, whom we have not seen, and assurance of his patient love to us, *ib.*
- What it is, i. 43 ; privileges of, 44 ; consequents of, *ib.* ; a child of God may have the effects and fruits of, while he has not always the feeling of it, 50 ; evidences of, 51.
- Fruits of the spirit of, i. 53 ; a kind of naturalness or delight in prayer, *ib.* ; a carrying out to the heavenly inheritance, *ib.* ; a childlike reverence and dread of God, and a fear of offending him, *ib.*
- Into God's family, worth all the world, iv. 64.
- Comfort of, to be maintained in affliction, x. 116.
- State of, what it is, xii. 111 ; grounds of, 112.
- Spirit of, what it is, xii. 113 ; distinction between this spirit and the spirit of regeneration, *ib.* ; implieth a childlike love, obedience, and dependence, 114 ; do all that live under the gospel dispensation have

- this spirit? 116; do all that have it know they have it? *ib.*; why it is the fruit of the new covenant dispensation, 118; persuasives to look after this spirit, 119; privileges to be derived from it, *ib.*; how this spirit is to be obtained, 120; how we shall know that we have obtained it, *ib.*
- Adoption*, a great privilege, xii. 122; the person adopting, *ib.*; the persons who are adopted, *ib.*; the dignity itself compared with the honours of the world, and with God's relation to other creatures, *ib.*; the manner how it is brought about, 123; the benefits accruing to us thereby, 124; the gift of the Spirit, *ib.*; temporal mercies, *ib.*; eternal bliss, 125.
- And redemption of our bodies, those that have the first-fruits of the Spirit look for a better estate, called 'the adoption and redemption of our bodies,' xii. 188; why called adoption, *ib.*; why redemption of our bodies, *ib.*
- Adoration* of images, absurdity of, iii. 89.
- Adulterers* and adulteresses (James iv. 4) to be understood spiritually, iv. 342.
- Adulterous* uncleanness doth much displeaseth God, v. 223; defiles not only the soul but the body, *ib.*; brawne the soul, *ib.*; blotteth the name, 224; blasteth the estate, *ib.*; exceedingly perverteth the order of human societies, *ib.*; usually accompanied with impenitency, *ib.*
- Adversity* maketh men serious, xii. 271.
- Affectedness* of expression, a usual mark of seducers, v. 318.
- Affection*, any carnal unmortified, lays us open to the devil, i. 208.
- Of the disciples to Paul, ii. 328.
- Carnal, doleful condition of those that indulge, ii. 233; the more indulged, the more increased, ii. 476.
- When damped, grace falleth into a consumption, iii. 181.
- Of God's children towards his word, vi. 184; is earnest, 185; and constant, *ib.*; draws off the heart from other things, 186; maketh diligent and patient in the use of means, *ib.*; vehemence of, proceeds from natural instinct, 187; experience, *ib.*; necessity, 188; is constant because it is natural and kindly to the regenerate, 189; because they love the word for its own sake, as it is God's word; therefore they ever love it, *ib.*
- God looks after, rather than action; sometimes takes the will for the deed, but never the deed for the will, vii. 369.
- Affections*, ill, divide men as much as ill opinions, iv. 309, v. 396.
- Christianity doth not abrogate, but regulate, iv. 419.
- Follow apprehensions, viii. 61.
- And desires, God's children have strong and vehement after the comfort and benefit of the word of God, viii. 358; the soul never worketh better than in the strength of some eminent affection, *ib.*; of all affections, desires are most earnest and vehement, 359; of all desires, those which carry us out to holy things should bear sway, *ib.*; wherever these desires bear sway, it will be sensibly discovered by the effects both to ourselves and others, 360; God's children have these desires because they see more in the word of God than others do or can do, 361; the more godly any are, the more they feel these strong affections, 362; though this desire should always continue in some degree, yet there are some seasons when it is more vehement, and more notably stirred and raised, 363.
- When sanctified, are subservient and useful to faith, xiv. 419.
- AFFLICTED**, is the Church's name (Isa. lv. 11, 12), ix. 16.

Afflicted, a man after God's own heart may be, vii. 421 ; because God hath chosen another way of expressing his love to his people than by outward things, *ib.* ; afflictions are necessary to the best, that the worth and benefit of God's word may be known, 422.

They see more in the scriptures than others do (Luther), xii. 272.

Afflicting, the end of God in, is to reduce his straying people into the right way, vii. 223 ; man is of a straying nature, *ib.* ; the straying humour is much increased and encouraged by prosperity, 224 ; when it is thus with us, God seeth meet to send afflictions, 225 ; the affliction so sent hath a notable use to reduce us to a sense and care of our duty, 226 ; a means of the first conversion of many, 227 ; a great help to those that are converted already, 228 ; the affliction doth not work thus of itself, but as sanctified and accompanied with the Spirit of God, 229 ; this benefit should be owned, and thankfully acknowledged as a great testimony and expression of God's love to us, *ib.* ; at the first coming of the affliction we do not see the benefit so well as in the review of the whole dispensation, 231 ; the profit is not only when the affliction is upon us, but after it is over a fruit of it must remain, *ib.*

Affliction, great comfort to the saints in, to know that they have a redeemer living in heaven, ii. 294 ; this comfort applicable in all, 300.

A special allowance of comfort for God's children in, iii. 168.

Called temptation, in the proper sense of trial, iv. 27.

Comfort under, iv. 31 ; God's aim not destruction, but trial, *ib.* ; time of trial appointed, *ib.* ; God sitteth by the furnace looking after his metal, *ib.* ; trial not only to *approve* but to *improve*, *ib.* ; great wisdom needed for the right management of, 39.

In itself a punishment of sin, to the godly but a trial, iv. 75 ; cannot diminish a christian's happiness, 77 ; may sometimes increase it, *ib.* ; especially those he endures for Christ's sake, 78.

No disgrace, but sin is, vi. 494.

All things considered, is rather good than evil, vii. 251 ; good, as it is *minus malum*, keepeth us from greater evils, 255 ; because the evil in it is counterpoised by a greater amount of good, 256 ; time of, a serious thinking time, *ib.* ; a special hearing time, *ib.* ; an awakening, quickening time, 257 ; to acknowledge the good of, needs faith, 259 ; love, 260 ; spiritual wisdom, *ib.* ; diligence to observe and improve affliction, *ib.*

Not only determined by God in the general, but all the circumstances, time, measure, instruments, x. 118.

The greatest, better than the least sin, xiv. 450 ; reasons why, 451 ; why this is the choice of the people of God, 454.

The need of faith in, xv. 121 ; the grounds and principles of faith in, 124 ; sometimes for our temporal good, usually for our spiritual good, but certainly for our eternal good, 128 ; the work of faith under, 131.

Afflictions, why saints are subject to so many, i. 197 ; not to the completing of their justification, but to the furtherance of their sanctification, *ib.*

Humble us, but not so much as temptation, i. 214.

Sent to remove sin, i. 241 ; the effect of God's love, *ib.*

Not to be measured by the smart, but the end of them, i. 326.

To God's people, not only occasions of patience, but of all joy, iv. 23 ; how to be rejoiced in, *ib.* ; not barely in the evil of them, *ib.* ; but in the happy effects, or consequents, or comforts, occasioned by them, 24 ; in those we suffer for Christ's sake, the honour done to us, *ib.* ;

- the benefit the church receiveth, *ib.* ; the special comforts that God bestows, *ib.* ; in those that come from providence we are to rejoice, as they serve for the exercise and increase of grace, 25.
- Afflictions*, of God's children, not to be considered in their nature and beginning, but in their issue and end, iv. 432 ; the Lord will give a happy end to them all, a temporal end, a gracious end, a glorious end, *ib.*
- Light on all ranks of saints, but especially on the prophets, iv. 427 ; almost as necessary a character of a minister to be much in, as to be much in spirit and much in labours, *ib.* ; meek patience in, a taking thing even in the eyes of men, 428 ; different judgment of the saints and of the world about, 429 ; make saints eminent, 430.
- Comfort under, vi. 226 ; their author is our father, *ib.* ; they are necessary, 227 ; a medicine, not a poison, *ib.* ; they are in measure, *ib.* ; are an occasion for the comforts of the Spirit, *ib.* ; and for the supports and influences of grace, *ib.* ; the fruit and final issue of, 228.
- Great, may come upon God's children, vi. 235 ; in their inward condition, *ib.* ; or their outward, 236 ; to correct them for past sins, *ib.* ; to humble them, *ib.* ; to try their graces, *ib.* ; to awaken the spirit of prayer, *ib.* ; to show God's glory, and the riches of His goodness in their recovery, *ib.*
- Unless the children of God were subject to, a full third of the scriptures would be useless, vii. 35.
- Not to be slighted, vii. 232 ; their author is God, *ib.* ; their meritorious cause is sin, 233 ; their end is our repentance and amendment, *ib.* ; not to be faint under, *ib.* ; to be valued, 234 ; to be watched, *ib.*
- Faithfulness of God in, of his people, vii. 295 ; real and principal mercies promised absolutely in the covenant of grace, other things conditionally, *ib.* ; in order to make his people eternally happy, God is obliged in point of fidelity to use all the means necessary thereto, 296 ; one of these means is affliction, yea, sharp affliction, *ib.* ; God faithful in bringing on the affliction, and in guiding it, 297.
- Make us understand the word more fully and clearly than before, vii. 334 ; purge the taste, and give a spiritual relish, 335 ; quicken the heart to duty, *ib.*
- Of God's people may be long and grievous before any comfort or deliverance come, vii. 351 ; God does not give a gracious answer at the first call, to try our faith, *ib.* ; to awaken our importunity, *ib.* ; to make us sensible of our weakness, *ib.* ; for his own glory, and that his work may be the more remarkable and conspicuous, 352 ; it is the devil's design to tire and weary out the people of God, *ib.* ; men are unreasonable in their oppositions, and will not relent nor abate anything of their rigour, *ib.*
- Why God's people suffer in this world, viii. 94 ; because they are not in heaven, 95 ; not in their eternal rest, *ib.* ; to purge out sin, *ib.* ; to humble them, *ib.*
- Of God's people may not only be many, but very sore and heavy, viii. 96 ; many and strong lusts are to be subdued, 97 ; that God may have the more experience and trial of his people, *ib.* ; that they may have the more experience of God, *ib.*
- Will teach men to pray that never prayed before, ix. 62 ; good ones, that prayed before, will pray with greater earnestness and seriousness, *ib.*
- God's choicest servants in this world have, ix. 126 ; as men, *ib.* ; as christians, *ib.*

- Afflictions*, all have not Abel's cross, but usually have Isaac's, xii. 132; though all suffer not, yet all must be prepared to suffer, *ib.*; when God seeth fit, we must actually suffer the loss of all things, and obey God at the dearest rates, *ib.*
- It is not enough to be good in, we must get good by, xii. 267; they come as a blessing when they are improved, 268; it is our part to get benefit by, but God's to remove, 269; if our hearts were right, we would desire to profit by, rather than to get rid of them, *ib.*; murmuring against, bewrayeth a despising of God and a despising of holiness, 270; what profit may be got by afflictions, 271; that the time of afflictions is a serious, awakening, learning, repenting, weaning time, and a time of increasing our love to God, *ib.*; the necessity of, 275.
- Are so far from infringing our happiness that they promote it, xii. 263.
- A double argument why all, must turn to good, from the purpose of God, and as in Christ so in us, xii. 301.
- The usual portion of a christian in the discharge of his duty, xii. 375; the primitive christians notable instances of this, *ib.*; seven kinds of, enumerated, *ib.*; reasons why afflictions are permitted to fall on the people of God, 376; we have no reason to doubt of God's favour and presence when exercised by, 377; no excuse to exempt us from our duty, *ib.*; how thankful we should be if not called to severe trials, 378; what use we should make of this indulgence, *ib.*; can never dissolve the union between Christ and believers, 380.
- See *Sins* incident to, &c.
- Agabus*, only mentioned as a prophet of evil, ii. 327.
- Aggravations* of sorrow, iii. 275; to have our woe brought about by those of our own family and cherishing, *ib.*; to be forsaken of friends, *ib.*; to be an object of common hatred, *ib.*; to be denied the benefit of law, *ib.*; to be handled with a degree of contempt, 276.
- Aims* of men, not regenerate or sanctified, are either carnal, or natural, or legal, v. 30.
- Alienation* from God natural to all, but increased more and more by evil practices and evil affections, iv. 366.
- All*, in what sense the iniquities of, laid on Christ, iii. 328; all men in some sort have benefit by him, *ib.*; there is a sufficiency in his merits for all, 329; all conditions of men are included, *ib.*; that no man might accuse God, as if he had not made a sufficient provision for his soul, 330; to denote the multitude that should come to Christ, *ib.*; to denote the oneness of the reconciliation of all who are reconciled, 331.
- Allegorisers* of the statements of scripture, reproof of, viii. 343.
- Allelujahs* should sound as loud as supplications, i. 254.
- All-sufficiency*, God's, a sound belief of, the only way to defeat Satan's temptations, i. 275.
- God's, a thorough persuasion of, encourageth and feedeth both our dependence upon God and our subjection to him, vii. 417; implied in his making the world out of nothing, *ib.*; in maintaining all things in their order, 418; in using them for his purposes, *ib.*; a ground of trust, *ib.*; of submission to his disposing will, 419; to his commanding will, 420.
- Alternations* in the condition of God's children on earth, now vexed by the coming of the tempter, then cheered by the presence of angels, i. 326.
- Ambassadors* for Christ, the nature of their office, xiii. 290.

- Ambition*, the true, is spiritual ambition, xiv. 446.
- Amen* is either an affectionate desire or a great asseveration, i. 111.
Signifies either So let it be, or So it shall be, i. 253.
- Signaculum fidei, et votum desiderii nostri*, v. 375 ; should be to our praises as well as our prayers, *ib.*
- Amiss*, we pray, when our ends and aims are not right in prayer, iv. 338 ; when we ask blessings for the use and encouragement of our lusts, 339 ; when our prayers are framed out of a carnal intention they are seldom successful ; we miss when we ask amiss, 341.
- Amphilochius*, Bishop of Iconium, his argument with Theodosius the Great against toleration of the Arians, x. 259.
- Ancients* (Ps. cxix. 100), may either mean men of former times, or aged men of the same time, viii. 15 ; preferably the latter, *ib.*
- Angels* serve God readily, i. 148 ; cheerfully, *ib.* ; constantly, *ib.* ; faithfully, not picking and choosing, 149.
- Everywhere in scripture shown to be the first instruments of God's providence, i. 284 ; not ministers of conversion and sanctification, *ib.* ; question as to special guardian angels, *ib.*
- Their visible ministry extraordinary, but their invisible ordinary and perpetual, i. 285 ; this invisible ministry matter of faith, 286.
- Why they did not come to Christ till the devil had departed, i. 324 ; to show that Christ had no help but his own when he grappled with Satan, *ib.* ; to show that the going of the one is the coming of the other, *ib.* ; why they ministered to him after his temptation, *ib.* ; to put honour on him, who is their head and lord, *ib.* ; for his consolation, inward and outward, 325.
- God maketh use of their ministry in supporting and comforting his afflicted servants, i. 333 ; delight in the preaching of the gospel, 334 ; in the holy conversation of the godly, *ib.* ; fight against the devil, and defend the godly in their extreme dangers, *ib.* ; why God uses their ministry, *ib.* ; to manifest unto them the greatness and glory of his work in recovering mankind, *ib.* ; to maintain a society and communion between all the parts of the family of God, 335 ; to preserve his people from many dangers and casualties which fall not within the foresight of men, *ib.* ; many blessings and benefits conveyed through their ministry, 336 ; their office at death and judgment, *ib.*
- Whether good or bad, often called in scripture thrones, i. 435 ; owe their being to Christ, 436 ; when created, 437 ; subject to Christ 438 ; why their creation so particularly and expressly ascribed to Christ, 439 ; to show his glory and majesty, *ib.* ; to obviate the Gnostic errors, *ib.* ; to show his right to their ministry, 440.
- Christ did not die for, nor is their head as he is of the church, i. 462.
- Romish worship of, is idolatry, iii. 99.
- Acknowledged Christ, but men would not, iii. 249.
- And archangels, God hath, always ready to defend a good cause, v. 245.
- Originally created in holiness and happiness, v. 190 ; fallen through sin, 191 ; cannot tell how sin got access to them, 192 ; their number great, 193 ; time of their fall, *ib.* ; their punishment, 196.
- In the election of, is shown grace, but not mercy, v. 195.
- Ministry of, v. 246 ; certain that they had a great care about the people of God in ancient times, *ib.* ; not wholly ceased, though not so visible and sensible now, *ib.* ; children of God the proper object of, *ib.* ; all the children of God, without exception, 247 ; all angels so

employed, *ib.* ; not certain that each child of God has a special angel, *ib.* ; yet all have all, 248 ; continues from the first conception till the entrance into glory, *ib.* ; ever administered according to God's pleasure, 249 ; order amongst both good and bad, 251.

Angels, are they to be judged at the day of judgment? x. 29 ; the bad, but apparently not the good, *ib.*

The holy, contemplate and admire the mystery of redemption, xviii. 203 ; the person of the Redeemer, 204 ; the way of redemption, *ib.* ; the grace vouchsafed to sinful men, *ib.* ; the mission of the Spirit, 205 ; the gracious providences of God in leading on the church to their eternal happiness, *ib.* ; the final glorious estate of the saints, *ib.* ; desire to look into these things, not out of curiosity, 206 ; nor from total ignorance of the mystery before it was brought about, 207 ; because they have such a deep sense of the worth of these things that they desire to know more, *ib.* ; delight in the mystery of redemption because of the glory of God discovered therein, 208 ; and the good of men promoted thereby, *ib.*

Anger and sorrow, God's command reacheth, ii. 336.

Groweth not by degrees like other passions, therefore the best cure is deliberation, iv. 137 ; is the worst thing we can bring to a religious controversy, 138 ; is often justified when it is not justifiable, 139 ; sometimes lawful, 140 ; sometimes necessary, *ib.* ; when the principle is right, 141 ; when it has a right object, *ib.* ; when the manner is right, *ib.* ; sinful when hasty and undeliberate, *ib.* ; immoderate, 142 ; causeless, *ib.* ; without a good end, 143 ; nothing more makes room for Satan, *ib.* ; much woundeth our own peace, *ib.* ; disparageth christianity, *ib.*

Different from hatred, viii. 332.

Animal and spiritual life distinguished and described, xv. 47.

Anointing the sick with oil in the name of the Lord, not a standing ordinance in the church, iv. 448 ; even in the apostles' time it was not absolutely necessary, *ib.* ; was not promiscuously used, 449 ; ceased when the miraculous gift ceased, *ib.* ; Popish, or extreme unction, a mere hypocritical pageantry, 450.

Of Christ signifieth the nature of his offices as king, priest, and prophet, v. 160 ; and the authority on which it is founded, 161.

Of Christ, was not typical, but real, x. 167 ; implieth the giving of power and authority, 168 ; the bestowing on him of the Holy Ghost, who might make the human nature fit for the work, *ib.* ; was to the office of mediator in general, particularly to be king, priest, and prophet of the church, *ib.*

Answers to prayer, importance of observing, vi. 252.

To prayer, God's children are earnest for, ix. 46 ; because they dare not take God's name in vain, *ib.* ; not looking for, proceedeth from an ill course, 47 ; heedlessness, *ib.* ; a touch of atheism, *ib.* ; distrust, which is akin to atheism, *ib.* ; some disesteem of God's favour and acceptance, *ib.* ; if we do not look after, our loss is exceeding great, 48 ; we lose our labour in prayer, *ib.* ; lose excitements to love and obedience, *ib.* ; lose encouragements to pray again, *ib.* ; lose the benefit of sensible communion with God, *ib.* ; God loseth honour, and praise, and thanksgiving, *ib.* ; how God grants, 50 ; extraordinarily, as in ancient times, *ib.* ; ordinarily, either by granting the mercy prayed for, *ib.* ; or by giving spiritual manifestations to the soul, *ib.* ; or by commutation or exchange, giving another thing that is as good or better, 51.

Ant, the, a pattern of diligence, xxii. 3.

Anthony the Hermit, his study in the desert, xiii. 395.

ANTICHRIST, EIGHTEEN SERMONS ON, iii. 1.

Antichrist, the head patron of the great apostasy, iii. 28 ; revelation of, 31 ; names or titles of, *ib.* ; man of sin, *ib.* ; son of perdition, 32 ; not a single person, but a society or succession of men, *ib.*

Opposite to Christ, chiefly in respect of pride, iii. 37 ; exalteth himself above all human persons, 39 ; and above all that is revered, *ib.* ; usurps divine honours, 40 ; shows himself that he is God, 42 ; every tittle of this description fulfilled in the Bishop of Rome, 44 ; his manifestation stayed by the Roman Empire, 49 ; this taken out of the way about A.D. 600, 50 ; grew to its monstrous excess and height in Boniface III., 56.

Doctrine of, profitable, and very necessary to be preached and known, iii. 46.

Sets up his kingdom by Satan's agency and influence, iii. 66 ; by pretence of miracles, *ib.* ; sophistical reasonings, 67 ; fawning or threatening, preferment or persecution, *ib.*

Antichristian state, subjects of, are drawn into it with all deceivableness of unrighteousness, iii. 76 ; their misery, those that perish, *ib.* ; the reason of this shown, they received not the love of the truth, 77, 79.

State, called Babylon for idolatry, Sodom for filthiness, and Egypt for ignorance and darkness, v. 254.

Antigonus' advice to the governor of a rebellious city, xii. 60.

Antinomianism, refutation of, xi. 158 ; it is an unjust illation from the doctrine of free justification, *ib.* ; it is absurd, and contrary to the doctrine of grace, *ib.* ; it is wicked and blasphemous, 160 ; caution against, 161.

Antinomians, doctrine of the, as to grace giving freedom from the moral law, xvi. 46.

Apostasies from God in heathenism, and from Christ in Romanism, are of the kingdom of the devil, which is to be destroyed, xviii. 32.

Apostasy, temptations to, errors, scandals, persecutions, ii. 88.

General, before Christ's coming to judgment, iii. 26 ; is any defection from him to whom we owe and have performed subjection, *ib.* ; that foretold, not civil, but of the visible church from the Lord of the church, *ib.* ; will consist in undermining his authority, 27 ; and corrupting and destroying the interests of his kingdom, *ib.* ; is notable and discernible, and its head is Antichrist, 28 ; Popery this apostasy, 29.

The covenant of grace a comfort against fears of, iii. 384.

Danger and mischievous effects of, vi. 315 ; more dishonourable to God than a simple refusal, *ib.* ; falling off after a taste of the sweetness and practice of godliness a worse condition than to have never begun, 316.

Apostate, Luther confesses that he is from the devil's service, iii. 178.

Apostles, even in their private and familiar letters, very spiritual, v. 99.

Their words the rule of faith, v. 322.

Their proficiency in Christ's school, x. 220 ; had sufficient means to convince the world of the certainty of Christ's doctrine, 221.

Appeal from God's justice to his mercy, a scarcely warrantable expression, iii. 271.

Appearance, outward, divine things not to be judged by, iii. 227 ; anything of Christ not to be cast away because it is despised or discounte-

nanced, *ib.*; because it is an afflicted way, *ib.*; because poor men are of that way, 228; because we may seem to hazard our burden by closing with it, *ib.*

Appearance, Christ's, in the world, and state of life among men, was not only very mean, but very miserable, iii. 249.

Application of grace to believers, wisdom and prudence of God in, ii. 262; in the way he taketh to convert souls to himself, *ib.*; in taking the likely course to gain the heart of man, *ib.*; in the effect itself, 263.

And appropriation of Christ, the comfort in, and love to, Christ, ii. 297.

Apprehending, Christ's, of us, implieth that any motion towards that which is spiritually good proceedeth first and wholly from Christ, xx. 85; implieth a subordinate operation on our part, 86; the infusion of a life which tends towards God and heaven, *ib.*; is followed up by his keeping us in his own hand, 87; should be answered by an exact, resolved, diligent pursuit of eternal life, *ib.*

Approbation evidenced by imitation, v. 169.

Of men, how far to be minded or made a motive by us, xviii. 120.

Appropriation of Christ and dedication to his service mutually dependent, i. 491.

Approving of ourselves to God in all our actions our great interest, vi. 229; for this we need good counsel and direction, *ib.*; this we can only get from God in his word, 230; this counsel sufficient and full to all our necessities, *ib.*

Arguments, those that cannot be moved by, God teacheth by blows, vii. 133.

Aristotle's opinions as to a first cause in creation, xiii. 411, 412.

On the worship of the ancients (Ethics, lib. viii. c. 8), xiii. 437.

Ark, the, a type of Christ, xiv. 203.

Arm of the Lord, revelation of, is the inward manifestation of the gospel by the Spirit, iii. 193, 204. See *Gospel*.

Arminian doctrine of merit, *de congruo* and *de condigno*, answered, ix. 486.

Armour, the christian's, pieces of, i. 228.

Christian, and the use of it, xi. 298.

Articles of faith, ministers not to prescribe, but explain, iv. 17.

Of the christian religion, the devils assent to, iv. 241.

Ascension of Christ, x. 270; the time, when he had finished his work and instructed his disciples, *ib.*; the place, Mount Olivet, whence he had gone to his cross and to his crown, *ib.*; to the third heaven, 271; the witnesses, the eleven apostles, *ib.*; while he was blessing them, *ib.*; on a cloud, *ib.*; as a conqueror, triumphing over his enemies, and giving gifts to his friends, *ib.*; his reception by the angels, 272; his welcome by God, *ib.*; end of, 273; that we may look upon him as in a greater capacity to do us good, *ib.*; to prepare a place for us, *ib.*; to represent his satisfaction, 274; fruits and benefits of, 275.

Ashamed, men are, when they should be bold, and bold and confident when they should be ashamed, vi. 495.

Asking, God giveth nothing without, iv. 41; yieldeth a remedy for the greatest wants, *ib.*

Assembly (*συναγωγή*), not for worship, but for deciding ecclesiastical matters, iv. 186.

Assent, speculative, may be without faith, ii. 303.

To the articles of religion doth not infer true faith, iv. 240.

A part of faith, but not all, iv. 349; must be firm, *ib.*; and cordial, 350.

Degrees of, conjecture, opinion, weak faith, stronger faith, and the full assurance of understanding, vi. 401.

Assurance, why so few of God's children have, v. 19 ; possible that God's power may work in us, and we not be sensible of it, *ib.* ; sometimes through carelessness, sometimes through peevishness, God's children not sensible of the power that worketh in them, *ib.* ; God doth not call all in a like violent and sensible manner, *ib.* ; this different dispensation God useth according to his own pleasure, *ib.* ; though a different dispensation used in the calling, yet there is enough to distinguish the uncalled from the called. *ib.*

It is a ground of sure confidence that a christian shall have heaven at last, that he hath it for the present, xii. 431 ; it is not only we think or hope, but we know, 432 ; our assurance of salvation is not equal to that we have of the promises of the gospel, 433 ; it is a common privilege, *ib.* ; it fortifies the soul against all the difficulties of the present life, yea, against death itself, 434 ; it is a twofold confidence, of the thing and of the person, *ib.* ; of the thing itself all true christians have, and should have, a certain knowledge, *ib.* ; why and wherefore, 435 ; reasons why we should attend upon the work of assurance, 439 ; the force and virtue of this work, 440.

Directions to those who want, xiv. 27.

A believer's, God's word and oath the immutable grounds of, xvi. 294 ; the power and certainty of God's word, *ib.* ; reasons why God gives his oath over and above his word, 295 ; the advantages we have by God's oath, 303 ; application, 305 ; objections answered, 310 ; the fruit of this assurance is strong consolation, 314 ; what is meant by 'strong consolation,' *ib.* ; how this ariseth from assurance, 316 ; how it is dispensed on God's part, and how far required on ours, 318 ; exhortation to look after this consolation, 325 ; how to get it, 328 ; how to keep it, 333.

Of good estate before God, his children may have, xx. 76 ; when grace is in some degree of eminency, *ib.* ; when their evidences are not blotted by frequent sins, *ib.* ; when they have the spirit of adoption in a more eminent degree, 77 ; when they have a more abundant sense of the love of God, *ib.* ; when the change wrought in them by grace is most sensible, *ib.* ; yet they cannot look upon themselves as out of all danger, and past all care and holy solicitude, 79 ; because there is no period put to our duty but life, *ib.* ; because all through their life they are imperfect, *ib.* ; nature of, is to exclude the fear which hath torment, but not the fear of caution and diligence, 80 ; gotten with diligence and kept with watchfulness, 81 ; in order to, we need diligence, *ib.* ; caution and watchfulness, 82 ; self-denial, 83.

Graces really and soundly exercised beget assurance of our condition before God, xxi. 155 ; graces thus really, constantly, and self-denyingly exercised leave a suitable impression on the conscience, 161.

Atheism not so bad as blasphemy, iv. 84.

Contemplation of creation an antidote to, xiii. 398.

Atheistical men deride reliance upon God in distress, vii. 39 ; and obedience to his precepts, 40.

Atheists are of all men most credulous, xii. 220.

Atonement required by the holiness of God's nature, i. ; 496 ; the honour of his governing justice, *ib.* ; to keep up the authority of his law, 497 ; to make sin odious, and obedience more acceptable to us, 498 ; to commend the love of God to us, *ib.* ; to give us hope, *ib.* ; proofs

- of its acceptance, 499 ; Christ's resurrection and ascension into glory, *ib.* ; the grant of the new covenant, *ib.* ; the pouring out of the Spirit, 500 ; peace enjoyed by believers, *ib.*
- Atonement*, satisfaction by the blood of Christ causes a glorious soul-appeasing light to break upon the hearts of men, vi. 85.
- Attention*, serious, to the doctrine of the gospel the means appointed for the attaining of saving grace and a plentiful increase therein, xviii. 421 ; the gospel deserveth, *ib.* ; our profiting requireth, 422 ; consisteth in sound belief, serious consideration, and close application, *ib.*
- Attributes*, a thorough belief of God's, as revealed in Christ, taketh off all disquiets and perplexities of spirit, iv. 51.
- God's, in themselves terrible and dreadful to a sinner, being derived to us through Christ, yield comfort and sweetness, iv. 242.
- Of God seen in creation, vii. 85 ; his goodness, *ib.* ; his power, *ib.* ; his wisdom, *ib.* ; these manifested in the whole structure of his word, 86 ; in his daily providence, 87 ; these three suit with his threefold relation to us—power as our creator, wisdom as our governor, goodness as our benefactor, 88 ; do most bind our duty on us, *ib.*
- Auricular* confession, the great artifice and engine by which Popish priests keep the people in devotion to their interests, knowledge of secrets rendering them the more feared, iv. 458 ; disproof of the absolute necessity of it, *ib.* ; the improbability of making such a confession as is required, 459 ; their making it part of a sacrament of divine institution, *ib.* ; the manner it is used, and the consequences of it, make it justly odious, *ib.*
- Authority*, supreme, two acts of, legislation and judgment, usurped by the Pope, iii. 41.
- Or dominion, God's, is his right over all things, to dispose of them at his pleasure, vii. 414 ; a right of making or forming anything as he willeth, *ib.* ; of having or possessing all things so made by him, *ib.* ; of using, disposing, and governing all things thus in his possession according to his pleasure, 415.
- Of Christ's mediation, the object of justifying faith, x. 239.
- It doth not become a private man to resist, xix. 3.
- Awe* of God's majesty called for in worship, i. 407 ; suitable to faith and love, *ib.* ; must not degenerate into servile fear and discouragement, 408.
- Babel*, purpose of the tower of, i. 85.
- Babes* and sucklings, who they are, xviii. 13 ; man in general, 14 ; David in particular, *ib.* ; more especially our Lord Jesus Christ, *ib.* ; the apostles, *ib.* ; the children who cried Hosanna to Christ, *ib.* ; all that fight under Christ's banner, *ib.*
- Backbiting*, different forms of, ii. 280 ; its heinousness, 282.
- Backslider* in heart contrasted with the good man, ii. 233.
- In heart, is he that turneth his heart from God and his ways, and daily groweth worse and worse, xviii. 465 ; meant chiefly of the ordinary wicked person, *ib.* ; may be understood to comprise the apostate, *ib.*
- Backsliding* cometh from losing complacency in, or desire of, God, iii. 177.
- Preventives of, ix. 216 ; be sure that your resolutions for good and the world to come be thoroughly fixed and settled, *ib.* ; sit down and count the cost of being holy christians, *ib.* ; consider the necessity of standing to God's law, whatever persecutions and sufferings you

meet with, 217 ; be established in the peace of God, and never break this peace to obtain outward peace, *ib.* ; when troubles surprise you, consider how unbecoming it is to take offence at God's providence, *ib.* ; consider that the hurt Satan intendeth you is not to hurt your bodies, but your souls, *ib.* ; consider how short is the prosperity of the wicked, *ib.*

Bad times, to be good in, requires much holiness and heavenly-mindedness, viii. 312 ; faith, or foresight of things to come, 313 ; zeal and love to God, *ib.* ; caution, *ib.* ; sincerity, 314 ; a fixed resolution, *ib.* ; a true sight of the worth of spiritual things above carnal, *ib.*

Balaam a notable instance of a natural conscience, i. 135.

Balaam's counsel did more hurt than his curse, xviii. 45.

BAPTISM, HOW OUGHT WE TO IMPROVE? v. 459.

Baptism, our initiation into the service of God, doth not only imply work, but fight, i. 260.

Implies a dedication and giving up ourselves to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, according to their personal relations, ii. 104 ; a badge and a bond, 107,

Implyeth a renunciation of sins, v. 313.

A perpetual bond upon us, obliging us to repentance and holy life, v. 469 ; improvement of, the best preparation for the Lord's supper, *ib.* ; if not improved, will be a witness to solicit vengeance against us, *ib.* ; how to improve, *ib.* ; personally and solemnly own the covenant made with God in infancy, 470 ; often renew the sense of obligation, *ib.* ; use frequent self-reflection, *ib.* ; use it as a great help in all temptation, 471.

Signifieth Christ's death for sin, and our death to sin, xi. 171 ; also Christ's resurrection and our newness of life, 172 ; strongly obligeth us to walk in newness of life, 173 ; is representing, 175 ; sealing, 177 ; obliging, *ib.*

An engagement upon christians to abhor carnal living, xii. 47.

A solemn vow and profession to look after the benefits of Christ's death and mortify the deeds of the body, xiii. 194.

The use and respect of, with reference to remission of sin, xxi. 280.

Baptismal vow, wilful sin a renouncing of, viii. 393.

Baptist, his message to Christ not for his own satisfaction, but his disciples', ii. 79.

Obstacles to the success of his preaching, iii. 195 ; the levity and rashness of the people, 196 ; evil influence of the scribes and pharisees, *ib.* ; offence at John's boldness, *ib.*

Basil the Great, reply to Modestus when threatened with banishment, xiii. 8.

Beasts, their tractableness to man contrasted with man's disobedience to God, iv. 291 ; art and skill to subdue, a relic and argument of our old superiority, 292.

Beauty not always a sign of excellency, xiv. 423 ; a gift of God, but not to be rested in or abused to feed pride, 424.

Beginning, a title of Christ (Col. i. 18), means that he is the root and the beginning of the renewed state, i. 454.

Belief of the truth, not a cold assent, but such a lively faith as brings us under the power of it, iii. 107 ; consists of fiducial assent and obedient confidence, 116.

Believer, sad condition of, under God's corrective discipline, though he do not vacate his justified state, ii. 234.

- Believers*, why so few, iii. 198 ; ignorance, *ib.* ; easy slightness, *ib.* ; careless security, 199 ; light esteem of Christ, 200 ; presumptuous conceit that we have entertained Christ already, *ib.* ; hardness of heart, 201 ; self-confidence, *ib.* ; carnal fears, 202 ; carnal reasonings from our sins, *ib.* ; carnal apprehensions of Christ, *ib.* ; fewness of, no disgrace to the gospel, 203.
- True, cannot wholly fall away, iii. 359.
- Are the seed of Christ, iii. 388 ; by reason of the gift of the Father, 389 ; by purchase, *ib.* ; because begotten by his power and efficacy, 390 ; by his image formed in them, *ib.*
- Are friends of God, iv. 258 ; as they are perfectly reconciled unto him in Christ, *ib.* ; all dispensations and duties that pass between them are passed in a friendly way, *ib.* ; communication of goods, *ib.* ; communication of secrets, 259 ; conformity and correspondency of will and affection, *ib.* ; mutual delight and complacency, *ib.* ; the special favour and respect God beareth them, 260.
- Given to Christ as subjects of his kingdom, x. 206, 318 ; as scholars in his school, 208, 319 ; as children of his family, *ib.* ; as the wife of his bosom, 209, 319 ; as members of his body, 209, 320 ; given to him in charge, 210 ; those thus given are the elect and none other, *ib.* ; he undertook for them to die for them, and that they should be converted, justified, sanctified, guided to glory, and that not one of them should miscarry, 212 ; the Father did not save by his own power, but committed to the Son, partly in majesty, *ib.* ; in justice, 213 ; in love and mercy, *ib.*
- Commensurableness of the distinct propriety of the three persons of the Godhead in, x. 256 ; all of them and none other are elected by the Father, all of them and none other are redeemed by the Son, all of them and none other are sanctified by the Spirit, *ib.* ; follows from the unity of essence, *ib.* ; from the unity and agreement in will and design, 257 ; denied by the Arminians in doctrine, and by common people in practice, *ib.*
- Private, the honour put upon them, xi. 16.
- Their condition better than if Adam had not fallen, xi. 58.
- Reckoned sufferers with Christ, xiii. 191 ; what their being crucified with Christ implieth, 192.
- The merits of Christ's obedience and death are applied and made beneficial to penitent, xviii. 218 ; and working, *ib.*
- Believing*, is that which gives most honour to God, i. 85.
- A holy obstinacy in, viii. 269 ; the less sensible evidence there is of the object of faith, the greater and stronger is the faith, if we believe it upon God's word, 270.
- In Christ, implies a lively sense of our own misery and the wrath of God due for sin, xi. 19 ; its explicit act is when a soul thus humbled casts itself upon Christ for grace, mercy, and salvation, 20 ; must be wrought by the word, 21.
- With the heart, implieth not a dead faith, but operative, xviii. 244.
- Benefactor*, God is a, to all men in the way of creation and providence, vii. 394 ; to his people in the way of grace and recovery by Christ, 395.
- Benefits*, memory of former, an encouragement to ask anew, x. 129.
- Bernard's* note on Martha's complaining of Mary, xiv. 71.
- Reply to the devil when tempted to vaingloriousness, xiii. 125.
- Bible*, nothing but a book of precedents, v. 168.
- Not only for novices and young christians, but for all, viii. 78.

Blackness of darkness, a Hebraism for exceeding great darkness, v. 287.

BLACKWELL, MRS JANE, SERMON AT HER FUNERAL, ii. 455.

Mrs Jane, her character, ii. 473.

Blasphemy, wicked rich men above all others prone to, iv. 204; they who love God must hate blasphemers, *ib.*

Against the Holy Ghost, what it is, xxi. 398; why against the Holy Ghost, 399; cautions against, 403.

BLESSED ESTATE OF THEM THAT DIE IN THE LORD, ii. 455.

Blessed, God may be said to be, either objectively, as he is the object of our blessedness, vi. 108; or subjectively, and so either in an active or a passive sense, *ib.*; in himself, as he hath the fulness of perfection and contentment, *ib.*; as he is the fountain of all blessedness to us, 110; passively as he is blessed by us, or as worthy of all praise from us, *ib.*

'*Blessed* of my Father,' x. 47; opposed to the world's judgment of them, *ib.*; opposed to the sentence of the law, *ib.*; opposed to their own fears, 48; the fountain-cause of all their happiness, *ib.*; shows how the divine persons do glorify one another, *ib.*

BLESSEDNESS, NOT TO BE OFFENDED IN CHRIST THE READY WAY TO, ii. 79.

Blessedness, perfect, consists in a complete vision of God and Christ, a complete possession and fruition of God, a complete similitude and transformation into the image of Christ, a complete delectation arising from all these, ii. 65.

A great degree and step towards, yea, a considerable part of, is to obtain the pardon of our sins by Christ Jesus, ii. 178.

Includes the removal of all evils, ii. 462; of sin, *ib.*; and of suffering, 463; and a confluence of all good, 464.

Future, fulness of, v. 355; certainty of, *ib.*

And blessed men, important to have a true notion of, vi. 5; all desire it, *ib.*; all without grace are much mistaken in, 6; mistakes about it will cost us dear, 7; sincere, constant, uniform obedience to God's law the only way to, 9; of a close walker not only future, but present, 14.

Blessing, God's of us is operative, ours of him declarative, i. 244.

In every, conferred on a sinner, there is not only bounty, but pardon, iv. 111; spiritual, the best, 112.

Blessings, to be milked out by prayer, i. 29; this necessary for God's honour, 30; and for our profit, *ib.*

Common, twofold right to, providential and covenant, i. 151.

Temporal, may be prayed for, i. 158; but not in the first place, nor in immoderate proportion, but with humility and submission, and for good ends, 159.

Outward, matter of thankfulness, i. 160; as good in themselves, *ib.*; as coming from God, *ib.*; as coming from his free grace and mercy, 161.

Most proper to Christ as mediator are spiritual, ii. 207.

When God meaneth to bestow, he stirreth up the hearts of his people to pray for them, iv. 471.

There is a blessing by way of prayer, and a blessing by way of prophecy, xiv. 380; blessings and curses of parents, if uttered in a right spirit, are not spoken in vain, 381; in the blessing of Jacob and Esau, the younger brother preferred, *ib.*; other instances of the like in scripture, 382; wherein lay the peculiarity of the blessing of Jacob over that of Esau, 383; this difference founded in an eternal

- decree and purpose of God, 387; accomplished notwithstanding Isaac's reluctance, *ib.*; Esau not actually rejected till he had himself rejected the blessing, 388; wherein lay the strength of Isaac's faith in blessing Jacob and Esau concerning things to come, 389; lessons from hence, 391.
- Blessings*, there is a difference not only between the blessings of the wicked and the godly, but between those of the godly themselves, xiv. 399.
Prayer gets, but thankfulness keeps, xviii. 38.
- Blindness*, spiritual, caution against, iii. 93; take heed of sinning against light, *ib.*; take heed of hypocrisy in the profession of the truth, *ib.*; take heed of pride and carnal self-sufficiency, 94.
Spiritual, natural to us, vi. 167; worse than bodily, 168; God alone can remove, *ib.*; though in part cured, we need that God should open our eyes to the last, 170.
- Blood* of Christ, the only sufficient ransom for lost sinners, ii. 295.
'*Blood* of sprinkling' (Heb. xii. 24), the persons to whom it is applied, xxii. 108; the manner of application, 109; the subject to which it is applied, 110; the certainty of the effect, 111; the value and efficacy of it, 112; reasons why, 115.
- Boasting*, what lawful and what unlawful for a christian, iv. 63.
A usual sin of the tongue, iv. 284.
- Bodies* of the saints, honour put upon, i. 475; they are members of Christ, and temples of the Holy Ghost, *ib.*
What care we should take how we employ, xi. 254; the senses, *ib.*; the tongue, 255.
- Bodily* presence of Christ, withdrawal of from the world, x. 278; that he might try the world, and yet in a way suitable to his glorious estate, *ib.*; that way might be made for his spiritual presence, *ib.*; confutation of the Lutherans, 279.
- Body*, God in covenant with, as well as with the soul, i. 157.
Resurrection of the saints is incorruptible, ii. 465; glorious, *ib.*; spiritual, *ib.*
Plainly seen to have some indirect operation upon the soul, iii. 304.
Of sin, means the whole stock and mass of corruption, xi. 193; must not only have its face scratched, but must be destroyed, 194; serious reflection on the death of Christ the true way of subduing, 197.
Why called vile, xx. 169; in respect of its original, *ib.*; sustentation and supports, 170; the many miseries to which it is obnoxious, *ib.*; often made the instrument of sin, *ib.*; vile in death, *ib.*; more so after death, *ib.*; its future condition, 171.
- '*Born* of God,' what it is to be, xxi. 63.
- Bottle* in the smoke, the suffering believer compared to, vii. 372; it is dry, and wrinkled, and shrunk, so his bodily strength decays, 373; it is blacked and smutched, so his beauty is wasted as well as his strength, 374; it is contemned and cast aside as useless, so he loses his esteem and regard among men, *ib.*
- Bounty*, God's common, easier to believe than his special love, i. 157.
Of God, general, dispensed liberally, but not specially, iv. 38.
And mercy of God an encouragement in asking spiritual gifts, vii. 186.
- Brazen* serpent, a type of salvation by Christ, xvii. 454; its history, 455; the typical use of it, 456; the resemblance between Christ and it, 458; the super-excellency of Christ above this and all other types and shadows of him, 460; the lesson in faith to be derived from, 461.
- Bread*, petition for daily, why put first of those that relate to ourselves, i. 149.

Bread, in the sacraments, Romish adoration of, is idolatry, iii. 100.

Brethren, a word implying love and equality, xii. 28.

Christ, having taken our nature, accepts and acknowledges us as his, xviii. 435; may we call him our brother? 436; brotherhood only reckoned to the sanctified, 438.

Brotherhood of Christ, a real privilege to us, x. 73; a comfort against a sense of our own unworthiness, *ib.*

Burden, believers in this mortal body are burdened with a heavy load of sin and affliction, xii. 469; why affliction is a burden, *ib.*; why sin, 470; it shows our folly that we are so loath to leave this world and prepare for a better, 471; the saints, being burthened, do in a holy manner groan and long for a better life, *ib.*; that this desire is not unnatural, *ib.*; nor the result of discontent or desperation, 472; the holiness of these groans and desires, *ib.*

Burial, in holy or consecrated places not necessary, xiv. 416; in places of worship, as it is very unhealthy and unseemly, so very modern, *ib.*; the decent burial of the saints agreeable to the word of God, 417.

Cæsar's virtues more amiable than Cato's, xii. 277.

Cain, the devil's patriarch, the first root of the seed of the serpent, v. 269.

The first-fruits of the reprobate, the patriarch of unbelievers (Tertullian), x. 90, xiii. 435.

Calamities, the greatest, to be undergone rather than the smallest sin committed, vi. 223; the greatest nothing in comparison with desertions of God and terrors of conscience, *ib.*; meek suffering of, conduceth much to God's glory, *ib.*

Of the faithful, not incompatible with the divine justice, viii. 447; God has an absolute dominion over us and our comforts, and may give and take them away according to his pleasure, *ib.*; intending to bestow eternal blessings upon them, he will take a liberty in disposing of outward things, *ib.*; it is fit, before they go to heaven, that they should be tried, 448; afflictions have their profit and use, and conduce to their good, 449; good men are but in part good, and it is fit their carnal part should be chastised, *ib.*

In all, we should look to God, xix. 5; because nothing falleth out without his particular providence, 6; cross issues and punishments, as well as benefits and prosperous successes, come from him, *ib.*; a great advantage to patience under, when we can consider God not as an angry judge, but a gracious father, 7; not inconsistent with adoption, 9.

CALL, CHRIST'S, NO EXCUSE AGAINST A SPEEDY OBEYING, ii. 121.

Calling, effectual, God the author of, iii. 112; none else hath authority, *ib.*; or power, 113; is by the gospel, 114; is to faith, holiness, and salvation, 115; its glory, 118; all who are elected thus called, 119.

Of a soul to God is a new begetting and regeneration, iv. 117.

All that the saints have and enjoy is from God, v. 15; gives us a warrant that we may possess our privileges in Christ without intrusion and usurpation, *ib.*; gives us encouragement, *ib.*; in calling, God worketh in a way suitable to his nature and ours, strongly and sweetly, *ib.*; is from self to Christ, from sin to holiness, from misery to happiness, 16; is but election put in act, 18.

Effectual, notes and marks of, v. 21; the preparations made for it, *ib.*; the instrument or means, the word, 22; the formal means or correspondent act of the creature to the call of God, 23; the concomitant

dispositions of the soul that go along with such a return, 24 ; godly sorrow, *ib.* ; holy wonder, *ib.* ; free resolution and confidence, *ib.* ; the fruits and effects, *ib.* ; a change in the whole heart, *ib.* ; a change in the life, 25.

Calling, several kinds of, distinguished, xii. 285 ; there is a proper and an improper calling, *ib.* ; the improper call general to all men by the works of creation and providence, *ib.* ; the use of this call to those who have no other, 287 ; the proper call is the voice of God in the word of his grace, *ib.* ; why it is not vouchsafed to all, *ib.* ; is either external or internal, 288 ; may be either ineffectual or effectual, *ib.* ; what these two kinds of calling consist in, *ib.*

Upon a divine call we must obey, though we know not what will come of it, xiv. 232 ; how we shall know that we are called of God, *ib.* ; every man must have a particular calling, *ib.* ; this calling must be agreeable to the word of God, 234 ; we must see God in it, *ib.* ; in the higher callings of ministry and magistracy, our call from God must be more solemn and clear, 235 ; the calling of magistrates must not be undertaken without invitation from those that have power to call, 235 ; ministers must look for both an internal and external call, 236 ; for ordinary callings, what is to be looked on as a call, 237 ; how we should behave ourselves in our callings, that we may manifest the obedience of faith, *ib.* ; some cases of difficulty determined, 239 ; how we shall know the place which God hath called us to concerning the fixing of our abode, 242 ; concerning flying in times of persecution, 245 ; more particularly concerning ministers, what is to be observed in fixing their station and place of service, 246 ; for gentlemen who travel to get knowledge and experience, 247 ; for merchants who remove for traffic, 248.

Of Christ is outward, by the ministry of the word, or inward, by the effectual working of the blessed Spirit, xviii. 6.

Calumnies of the Romanists against the Reformers, iii. 91.

Calvin, his forbearance regarding Luther, v. 260.

Canticles, a mystical scripture expressing the intercourse which passeth between God and the church in the world, i. 111.

Cares, ours are needless, fruitless, burdensome, but God's are assiduous, powerful, blessed, i. 37.

Carnal men cannot say the Lord's prayer without being afraid, i. 119.

Vain hopes of, ii. 210.

Confidence, dissuasion from, ii. 326.

Men do not look upon Christ as worthy of any esteem from them, iii. 255 ; because they look altogether upon the dark part of him, and do not consider the light and glorious part, *ib.* ; because they want the Spirit's discovery, *ib.* ; and the eye of faith, 256 ; because the perverse inclinations of their hearts carry their souls another way, *ib.* ; because they do not know what it is to want Christ, *ib.* ; they do not know what it is to have an interest in Christ, *ib.* ; they esteem him hypocritically in their words, indefinitely, partially, customarily, 257 ; but not all of Christ, *ib.* ; nor always, 258 ; prefer every base lust before him, *ib.* ; prefer the pleasing of men before him, 259 ; are ashamed of his cause, *ib.*

Confidence rooted in some vain principle and thought, iv. 53.

Men's hearts rise and fall with the news they hear, iv. 56.

Wisdom, either earthly, sensual, or devilish, iv. 307 ; that wisdom to be suspected for naught which is found to be earthly, 308 ; sensual

- wisdom but folly, *ib.* ; that devilish which serveth envy and strife, 309.
- Carnal* men send out their thoughts to forestall and fore-enjoy their contentments ere they obtain them, iv. 387 ; their confidence of future events, *ib.*
- Men make a scorn of a holy life, vii. 41 ; seriousness in religion they count mopishness and melancholy, *ib.* ; self-denial, humorous folly, *ib.* ; zeal in a good cause, distemper and excess, *ib.* ; holy singularity, factiousness, *ib.* ; fervour of devotion, imposture and enthusiasm, *ib.* ; serious speaking of God and heavenly things, canting, 42 ; faith in a future eternal state, fond credulity, *ib.* ; humility and forgiveness, simplicity or stupidity, *ib.* ; exact walking, scrupulosity and perverseness, *ib.* ; reasons, *ib.*
- And spiritual draw contrary conclusions from the same principles, vii. 404.
- Men do not, and cannot, please God, xi. 478 ; it is man's duty and happiness to please God, *ib.* ; should be our work and scope, 473 ; no easy matter to make it so, *ib.* ; good actions of, do not please God, 481 ; there is a defect in their state, *ib.* ; a defect in the root of the actions, *ib.* ; a defect in the manner, *ib.* ; a defect in the end, *ib.* ; why they think so meanly of the people of God, 490.
- Men are fools ; proved from scripture and their own course of life, xiii. 114.
- Men may for a time be raised to extraordinary quickness in duties of worship, xiii. 462.
- Men are incapable of anything well-pleasing to God, xiv. 90 ; the grounds we have to press men to the use of means although they themselves are distasteful to God, 99.
- Men, God useth to give many temporal good things to, xviii. 298 ; because all his creatures shall have some taste of his bounty, *ib.* ; that he may reward some good in them, *ib.* ; to show that these are not the chief good things by which his special love is manifested to us, 299 ; misery of, before death, 302 ; at death, 303 ; after death, 304.
- Men may be deeply affected with the christian doctrine, even to great agonies of conscience, and yet finally miscarry, xviii. 359.
- Things, man naturally addicted to, more than spiritual, and to worldly vanities rather than heavenly enjoyments, to the creature rather than to God, xviii. 468.
- Carnalists*, proud, who scorn the simplicity of the word, reproof of, viii. 342.
- Casual* and fortuitous things do certainly and infallibly fall out by God's providence and heavenly government, ii. 320.
- Catechising*, want of, a cause of decay of godliness, v. 435.
- Cause* of his people, God should be desired to plead when they have to do with unjust and wicked adversaries, ix. 135 ; he pleads as a judge. 137 ; his pleading not verbal or vocal, but real and active, 138 ; the effect is the clearing of his people, and convincing of their adversaries, 139 ; necessity of this pleading, 140 ; because the people of God are often in such a condition that none will plead their cause unless God plead it, *ib.* ; though we have a good cause and hopeful instruments, yet we cannot plead it with any effect till God show himself from heaven, 141.
- Causes*, second, God does not leave, to their power and force, as if he were only an idle spectator in the world, i. 151 ; not to be confided in, 159.
- Second, a mutual dependence and subordination between all, iv. 472.

- Celsus'* objection against Origen, that faith introduced error into the world and cast out science, answered, xiii. 371.
- Censurers* usually have their own measure returned into their bosoms, iv. 271.
- Censuring*, wrong when we do it out of pride and conceit, iv. 272 ; when we do it as vaunting over their infirmities and frailties, *ib.* ; when the censure is unmerciful, 273 ; when we infringe christian liberty, and condemn others for things merely indifferent, *ib.* ; when we do not consider what may stand with charity as well as what will agree with truth, *ib.* ; when we do it to set off ourselves, *ib.*
- Chance*, what is, to men, is providence to God, ii. 317.
- Change*, godly men wait for, on others it cometh unexpected, iv. 391.
- Charity* and doing good with our estates a fruit of faith, ii. 150.
To the poor must be performed as worship, out of respect to God, iv. 176 ; and unspotted life must go together, 177.
A sign and argument of the forgiveness of our sins, but not a cause, iv. 473.
Excess of, is a betrayal of the faith, vi. 291.
Works of, done out of faith and love to God, of great weight and consequence, x. 65 ; a command of God requireth, *ib.* ; the trial of our love to Christ, 66 ; the great question interrogated by Christ at the great day of accounts, *ib.*
Use of faith in the duties of, xiii. 357.
Is that love wherewith we love God for himself, and our neighbour for God's sake, xviii. 135.
Excellency and necessity of, above all other gifts, xviii. 306 ; nature and properties of, *ib.* ; with or without, we are something or nothing in religion, 312.
And purity true notes of a believer, xxi. 82.
- Chastisements* are not in anger when they make us better, vii. 259.
- Chief* end of man as a subject for meditation, xvii. 306.
- Child-bearing*, though bringing forth children be according to the course of nature, yet God hath a great hand in it, xiv. 275 ; faith the best mid-wife, 276.
- Child* of God hath all the divine perfections in some measure in his soul, i. 188.
- CHILDREN OF WISDOM, WISDOM JUSTIFIED BY, ii. 93.
- Children*, can never merit of their parents (Aristotle), xii. 33.
Of God, the privilege of being, assured to us by a double testimony, that of the Holy Ghost and of a renewed conscience, xii. 125 ; marks in scripture whereby we may determine our sonship, 127 ; the Spirit and our consciences concur to produce the same conclusion, 129 ; the necessity of this conjunction, *ib.* ; directions to ensure this twofold testimony, *ib.*
Of God, why they act in a manner different from others, xiii. 452 ; wherein lies the difference between the worship of, and that of nominal professors, 453.
Of believing parents partakers in the privileges of the covenant for their parents' sake, xiv. 205.
Of believers, though born in sin and under the curse, are endowed with special privileges, xiv. 406.
Of believers, how far a blessing may be looked for on, xv. 465 ; reasons, 468 ; how this can be reconciled with experience, 469 ; to whom the promise is most eminently fulfilled, *ib.* ; advice to parents, 470 ; advice to children, 471.

- Children*, a blessing from God, xviii. 86 ; much of God's providence exercised about, *ib.* ; in giving strength to conceive, *ib.* ; in framing the child in the womb, *ib.* ; in giving strength to bring forth, 87 ; are a great blessing in themselves, and the more of them the greater, *ib.* ; a gift and blessing dispensed as a reward and heritage, 89 ; of godly parents, in better case than the seed of infidels, 91 ; dying before they come to the use of reason, no cause to doubt of their salvation, *ib.* ; living to years of discretion, have greater advantages of being godly than others, *ib.* ; if they fear and love God, their blessings are increased, *ib.*
- We often forget the duty of, but God doth not forget the mercy of a father, xviii. 337 ; God spareth his, in withdrawing or modifying deserved judgments, 338 ; in pardoning the manifold imperfections of their services, *ib.* ; this a choice privilege, *ib.* ; grounds of sparing, 340 ; his merciful nature, *ib.* ; the satisfaction of Christ, 341 ; his gracious covenant, *ib.* ; his comfortable relation to us, 342.
- Of God, in what sense it is said that they do not and cannot sin (1 John iii. 9), xxi. 59.
- Of God, there is, and should be, a broad difference between, and the children of the devil, xxi. 76 ; this difference should be manifest to themselves and others, *ib.* ; reasons, 77.
- Choosing* Christ, a clear understanding, an unbiassed will, and serious consideration necessary to, xiv. 466.
- CHRIST, TRANSFIGURATION OF, i. 337.
- CHRIST, REDEMPTION BY, i. 417.
- CHRIST, HIS FAITHFUL FOLLOWERS MUST EXPECT TROUBLE, ii. 11.
- CHRIST, NOT TO BE OFFENDED IN, THE READY WAY TO BLESSEDNESS, ii. 79.
- Christ*, his example in secret prayer both engaging and encouraging, i. 11 ; our advocate to present our petitions in court, the Spirit the notary to draw them up, 12.
- Received *from* God in the word, presented *to* God in prayer, i. 30.
- A king different from other kings, i. 34 ; a king of kings, *ib.*
- Took a mother on earth that we might have a father in heaven, i. 45.
- His future coming little regarded by epicures and atheists, i. 110 ; his coming either virtual or personal, *ib.*
- His voice and the voice of the church are unisons, i. 112 ; his second coming really and heartily desired by the church and all the faithful members of it, *ib.* ; reasons of their longing, 113 ; yet they do not always long for it as they ought, 118 ; this longing produces heavenly conversation, 120.
- Sanctified every condition that he passed through, as poverty, temptation, death, &c., i. 217.
- Subjected himself to the moral law, i. 287 ; was the angel who led the Israelites in the wilderness, 289.
- As an instance of temptation, so a pattern of victory and conquest, i. 323.
- His death, as to men an act of violence, to his Father of obedience, to us of love, i. 363.
- The beloved Son of God, both as second person and as Mediator, i. 384.
- His tender care over his disciples in their faintings and discouragements, i. 409.
- In relation to God, is the Lamb slain ; in dealing with Satan, he doth as a lion recover the prey, i. 420 ; his divinity essential to his redemption, 421.

- Christ*, in what respects the image of God, i. 428 ; in respect of his eternal generation, *ib.* ; in respect of the perfections of God shining forth in him in his incarnation, *ib.* ; in his person, word, works, *ib.*
- In what sense the first-born of every creature, i. 430 ; doth not imply that he is to be accounted a creature, 431.
- The creator of all things, i. 434.
- His pre-existence before all creatures, i. 445 ; his true divinity, 446.
- Sustaineth all things, i. 448 ; not only meritoriously, but efficiently, *ib.* ; not only indirectly, but directly, 449 ; not only mediately, but immediately, *ib.* ; yet so that he doth not overturn their nature, *ib.* ; in sustaining the creatures, is not a bare instrument, but a coequal agent with God, 450 ; reasons why all things must subsist by him, *ib.*
- The head of the Church, i. 453.
- As creator, by power brought us out of nothing ; as redeemer, by mercy he recovereth us from sin, i. 453.
- The beginning of the new creation, not passively, but actively, i. 464 ; in a way of order and dignity, *ib.* ; in a way of causality, 465 ; giving life and likeness, *ib.* ; why Christ the beginning, 466 ; for his honour, *ib.* ; suited to our condition, *ib.*
- What it is to be offended in, ii. 81 ; dislike and displeasure with something in him, *ib.* ; either keeping men off from him, or drawing them off from him, *ib.* ; occasion of offence to the Jews in his day, 82 ; his person, his doctrines, his sufferings, *ib.* ; danger of offence still, 83 ; through the many calamities that attend the profession of the gospel, 84 ; the purity, the self-denial, the simplicity, the mysteriousness of the gospel, 85.
- Ate and drank like other men, but with great piety, and with great temperance and sobriety, ii. 95 ; conversed with the meanest, the poorest, and the worst, as was needful for their cure, 96 ; reasons why he chose this kind of life, *ib.* ; he would not place religion in outward austerities and observance, *ib.* ; he would not countenance an inclosing spirit, *ib.* ; he followed that course of life which is fit for all, 97 ; his form of life must be suitable with the nature of his kingdom, *ib.* ; he would not gratify human wisdom, 98 ; he would show the true nature of mortification, *ib.*
- His great poverty, ii. 120 ; increases the value and merit of his satisfaction, *ib.* ; shows that he came to draw minds and hearts to the other world, *ib.* ; to season and sanctify a mean estate, *ib.*
- Given for us, and given to us, ii. 344.
- Without, there is no recovery of what we lost, ii. 346 ; no removal of the misery we incurred, 347 ; no obtaining what we should desire and pursue as our proper happiness, *ib.*
- Invoked together with the Father as an author of grace ; thereby his godhead proved, iii. 138 ; lordship of, belongeth to him as creator, and is common to him with the Father and Spirit, 141 ; as redeemer, by donation of God, and by his own purchase, *ib.* ; requires submission, obedience, dependence, 142.
- Jewish prejudices against, iii. 196 ; from erroneous opinions of the Messiah, *ib.* ; fond reverence for Moses and the prophets, *ib.* ; offence at his outward meanness, 197 ; Gentile prejudices, *ib.* ; from pride in the understanding, *ib.* ; the meanness of the apostles, *ib.* ; the hard conditions on which they were to entertain Christ, *ib.*
- Having no form nor comeliness, and fairer than the sons of men, reconciled, iii. 222.

- Christ* was not esteemed among men, iii. 249 ; everything else acknowledged him, angels, fish, wild beasts, devils, but not man, *ib.* ; was despised, and became an object of scorn and contempt, 250 ; in their thoughts, *ib.* ; words, *ib.* ; general carriage towards him, 251 ; was a man of sorrows, *ib.* ; acquainted with grief, 252 ; why so miserable, *ib.* ; that God's promises might be fulfilled, *ib.* ; that he might declare his obedience to God's decrees and appointment, 253 ; that he might set off his love to man, *ib.* ; that he might be a perfect mediator for us, *ib.* ; that he might be able to comfort his people in like distresses, *ib.*
- An object to the carnal, a jewel to the people of God, iii. 258.
- Suffered for sin, iii. 263 ; not for his own, but ours, *ib.* ; bore the guilt of them, 265.
- The physician of the soul, iii. 292 ; cureth us not by doctrine and example only, but by merit and suffering, *ib.* ; his merits and sufferings do effect our cure, as they purchased the Spirit for us, who reneweth and healeth our sick souls, 293.
- Acted altogether by the Father's power, iii. 317 ; and by the Father's appointment, 318.
- His readiness to accomplish the office of the mediatorship, iii. 339 ; shown by express assertions of scripture, *ib.* ; by several passages in the history of his life, *ib.* ; his longing for it before it came, *ib.* ; his not preventing it when he knew it, *ib.* ; his cheerful casting himself upon it, *ib.* ; his submitting to his Father's will in his highest agonies and conflicts, 340 ; his silence, *ib.* ; his forbidding all violence for his rescue, *ib.* ; his prayers that the cup might pass from him not inconsistent with this, 341.
- His life a praxis of divinity and the rules of religion exemplified, iii. 343.
- Rose as a resurrection, and liveth as a life, iii. 357 ; being risen, liveth a numberless term of years, even for ever, with God in glory, *ib.* ; not as God, but as Mediator, as God-man, *ib.* ; at his resurrection cleared from sin, and so no more liable to death, *ib.* ; that he might become a principle and fountain of life to us, 358 ; that he might be doing something continually in heaven for the elect of God, *ib.* ; intercedes for them, *ib.* ; administers his kingdom to the destruction of his adversaries, 359 ; dispenses all necessary supplies to the needs of his servants, *ib.*
- Honoured as soon as he died, iii. 365.
- His love, care and mercy, and kingdom, are eternal, iii. 396 ; all the will and pleasure of God shall prosper and be effectual in his hands, 397 ; because he is the choice instrument of God, the special servant of his decrees, *ib.* ; because he is so qualified that he must succeed in what he undertakes, 398 ; willing and ready to comply with the will of the Father, *ib.* ; able and mighty, so that he must needs effectuate that will, *ib.*
- Will infallibly, and without miscarrying, obtain the end of his death, iii. 406.
- Taketh an infinite contentment and satisfaction in the salvation of sinners, iii. 408. See *Salvation*.
- Innocent, and accounted a transgressor ; men of the world transgressors, would fain be accounted innocent, iii. 478 ; cause of his sufferings was his bearing our sins, 479 ; merit of his death not extended to all, 482.

- Christ*, called *Lord* and *Jesus*; he came to rule, and he came to save, v. 157.
 More able to save than Adam to destroy, v. 475.
 In believers, notwithstanding death, a sure pledge and earnest of eternal life, xii. 11; a true christian doth not only profess Christ, but hath Christ in him, *ib.*; Christ is in us two ways, objectively and effectively, *ib.*; some notes of Christ's presence in us, 12.
- Death of, laid the foundation of a large superstructure of grace, freely dispensed to all having interest in him, xii. 337; how the death of Christ laid this foundation, *ib.*; considerations which might have moved God to withhold his Son, 338; the persons concerned in this act of grace, *ib.*; the act itself, what it consisted in, 339; the superstructure of grace built on this foundation, 340; the largeness of it, *ib.*; the strength and sufficiency of this foundation demonstrated, 341; the persons interested, 343.
- The dignity of his person, xii. 368; the unity of his office and sacrifice, *ib.*; the greatness of his sufferings, *ib.*; his resurrection an assurance of forgiveness of sin, 370; his exaltation a confirmation of the truth and dignity of his office, *ib.*; the peculiar benefits arising from his resurrection, 371; his intercession a notable prop to faith, 373; the abundant cause we have of glorying in Christ, 374.
- His delight in the creatures, xiii. 10.
- His interest concerned in the truth of the resurrection and a future state of punishment and reward, xiii. 49; his qualifications as a judge to judge the world, 51; the nature in which he exercises this judgment, 60.
- A notable instance of preferring God's honour above all other interests, xiii. 136.
- Represented as a common person (Rom. v. 14), xiii. 180; as made sin (2 Cor. v. 21), *ib.*; as made a curse for us (Gal. iii. 13), *ib.*
- Death of, Christ dying, one for all, the great instance and argument to be improved by us, xiii. 179; what dying one for all signifieth, 180; proveth two things, the verity of his satisfaction, and the sufficiency of it, *ib.*; how the great love of God appeareth in this, 183; how suitable this argument is to beget in us that love which God expects, even a thankful return of obedience, 185; from the end of Christ's death, *ib.*; the right which accrueeth to the Redeemer by virtue of the price paid for us, *ib.*; the pardon ensuing and depending on his death, *ib.*; the greatness of his sufferings, *ib.*; the terribleness of God's wrath, 186; but above all, from a grateful sense of our obligation to God and Christ, *ib.*; how all this must be improved, *ib.*; exhortation to affect our hearts and thoughts with the greatness of this instance of the love of God, 187.
- Was that to us in grace which Adam was in nature, xiii. 193.
- Death of, the sacrifice of atonement, xiii. 259, 261.
- The benefits we have by, distinguished, xiii. 272.
- His prophetic office as necessary for our comfort as his sacerdotal, xiii. 283.
- Spirit, ministry, this conjunction must not be separated, xiii. 289.
- How he must be esteemed, xiv. 463; reasons why this esteem must be such that Christ's worst may be better to us than the world's best, 465.
- What it is to sit down under the shadow of, xv. 359; the acts of faith in seeking shelter in Christ, 361; what the fruits of Christ are, 362; why called *his* fruits, 364; their sweetness, 365.

Christ, the true notion of his doctrine is that of a testimony, xv. 380 ; the nature of it, *ib.* ; the value of it, 381 ; the use of it, 384 ; the respect that is due to it, 385 ; its reception as a testimony is a ratification of the truth of God, 387 ; the manner of ratification, *ib.* ; the matter, 388.

Why he is called God, xvi. 230 ; that he is God proved from the nature of his offices and work, and from scripture, 234 ; why he is called a Saviour, 237 ; his willingness to suffer for fallen man demonstrated, 241 ; the grounds of his willingness, 243 ; the necessity of it, *ib.*

Why and how he loved the rich young man in the Gospel (Mark x.), xvi. 456.

In some respects loves those that are influenced by moral virtues merely, xvi. 462.

Holiness of, as to his person and office, xvii. 408 ; as to the particular functions of his office as prophet, priest, and king, 410 ; the unction which is the consequent and fruit of Christ's holiness, 412 ; its author, 413 ; the privilege itself, 414 ; the persons anointed, 415 ; exhortation to holiness, 416.

The seed of the woman, the necessity of his becoming, xvii. 243.

As a physician, prescribeth repentance as the means of cure, xviii. 4 ; his work is with sinners, 5 ; all are now in a state of lapse from primitive integrity, none are righteous till he calleth them, *ib.* ; out of this state man is unable to deliver and recover himself, *ib.* ; those who are sensible of this are nextly called, 6.

His growth in wisdom and stature, xviii. 116 ; not in grace, but in wisdom, *ib.* ; proof from scripture, 117 ; and from reason, *ib.*

Behoved to be of the same nature and stock with those whom he redeemed or sanctified to God, xviii. 432 ; that by the law of propinquity of blood he might have right to redeem us, *ib.* ; to give us a pledge of the tenderness of his love and compassion towards us, *ib.* ; that the same nature that sinned should suffer for sin, *ib.* ; that we might find a fountain of holiness in our nature, *ib.* ; to answer the types of the law, 433 ; to make a way for nearness between God and us, *ib.* ; to be a fit head of the mystical body, *ib.* See *Incarnation* of Christ.

His dying prayer for his persecutors a moral action, xix. 16 ; a taste and pledge of his mediation and intercession, 24.

His exact knowledge of all his sufferings, xix. 29.

Why so willing to die, xix. 44 ; out of obedience to his Father, *ib.* ; out of love to us, *ib.* ; this would finish his labours, 45 ; this furthered his triumph, *ib.* ; he was hastening to his own glory, *ib.*

To look upon as a lawgiver only, and not as a Saviour, is not to evangelise, but to legalise, xix. 447 ; his being head of the church importeth oneness of nature, 448 ; eminency, *ib.* ; fulness of perfection, 449 ; authority and power to govern, *ib.* ; a strict union between him and the church, *ib.* ; no other may usurp this honour and office, 451.

Interceding with God, xx. 158 ; powerfully administering the mediatorial kingdom, *ib.* ; at the end of time will come from heaven and judge the world, 159 ; to true christians he will come as a saviour, 161.

Having laid down his life for us, we ought to be ready to lay down our lives for the brethren, xxi. 139 ; in what cases a man is to die for another, 140.

What he will be to us if we choose his ways and walk in them, xxii. 17.

The occasion of piercing his side, xxii. 33 ; the circumstance considered under a threefold aspect, 35 ; a symbol and type of his office, 39.

CHRIST'S TEMPTATION AND TRANSFIGURATION, i. 255.

CHRIST'S ETERNAL EXISTENCE AND THE DIGNITY OF HIS PERSON, i. 413.

CHRIST'S PERSON, DIGNITY OF, i. 413.

CHRIST'S CALL, NO EXCUSE AGAINST A SPEEDY OBEYING, ii. 121.

Christ's death set forth as a ransom and as a mediatorial sacrifice, i. 366 ; necessity of, 367 ; the sins and guilty fears of men need such a remedy, *ib.* ; the glory of God requires it, *ib.*

Indwelling in his people, xi. 66 ; not essentially, for so he is everywhere, *ib.* ; nor personally, for that would involve a personal union, *ib.* ; but mystically, with respect to some peculiar operations which he worketh in them and not in others, *ib.* ; benefits of, *ib.* ; if Christ be not in us, the devil is, *ib.* ; where Christ is all the Trinity are, *ib.* ; where the Trinity are there is a blessing, 67 ; it is a pledge we shall have more, *ib.*

Death, exhortation to improve, xii. 79 ; a lively and effectual pattern of our dying to sin, 80 ; an act of self-denial, *ib.* ; an act of pain and sorrow, *ib.* ; a price paid, *ib.*

Death set forth by the notions of a ransom and a sacrifice, xiii. 180.

Death, the end of, xiii. 195 ; a pattern to christians of dying unto sin, 196.

Innocency and purity, xiii. 305.

Second coming, it is the duty of God's children to look and long for, xvi. 208 ; reasons why, 209 ; objections answered, 214 ; the glory of it, 218 ; the preparation, *ib.* ; the appearance itself, 220 ; the consequences, 224 ; why the appearance of Christ will be so glorious, 226 ; comfort and advice, 228.

Victory in our nature over Satan, matter of great praise and thankfulness to God, xviii. 16.

Coming into the world for our redemption sometimes represented as an act of obedience to God, sometimes of love to us, xix. 180.

Desertion by his father. See *Desertion*.

Christian, is a sacrifice to God, ii. 223 ; as separated from common use, *ib.* ; and dedicated to God, *ib.*

Has God's law for his rule, God's Spirit for his guide, the promises for his encouragement, God's glory for his end, vi. 13.

Life, all christians may have the approbation of God, the testimony of their own consciences, and the witness of the consciences of others, xiii. 104 ; the approbation of God should be chiefly sought after, but the others must not be disregarded, 106 ; how far the testimony of the consciences of others is to be regarded, 108.

CHRISTIANS, DISCOURSES TENDING TO PROMOTE PEACE AND HOLINESS AMONG, ii. 1.

Christians to be like a die in the hand of providence, content whether they be cast high or low, i. 77.

Kings in respect of power and privileges, i. 95.

Have to pray for the pardon of their sins, i. 176.

Must expect not only to be tempted, but to be often tempted, i. 307 ; the best may be tempted to the most execrable sins, *ib.*

Weak, are more swayed by fear, advanced by the love of God, ii. 66.

Should be a transcript of their religion, ii. 109.

The best, are those who have their corruptions most mortified, ii. 211 ; should now improve their christianity to get power and strength against sin, 212.

Real, comparatively few, but absolutely many, iii. 13

- Christians*, weak, have sometimes gone through great temptations when strong ones have failed, iii. 177.
- Eternal in Christ's eternity, iii. 370.
- The very name of, presses us to care and holiness, iv. 204.
- Private, should mutually confer for comfort and edification, iv. 475.
- The best, but scholars and students in the knowledge and obedience of God's word, vi. 65.
- Under the influence of the fear of God, are alike everywhere, because God is alike everywhere, vii. 174.
- Are much affected with one another's mercies, vii. 280.
- Think works never can have enough of their care, or too little of their trust, x. 64.
- Some exposed to necessity, others in a capacity to relieve them, x. 65.
- Are under a double law, of nature and grace, xiii. 76.
- Their end far more noble than the designs of the best of the world, xix. 146; aim at glory, honour, immortality, *ib.*; these they heartily desire, 148; and earnestly endeavour after, *ib.*; this by patient continuance in well-doing, 149; their reward is eternal life, 152.
- Christian's* life a constant hymn to God, or a continued act of worship, ii. 25.
- Indentures (Matt. xvi. 24), xvii. 5.
- Christianity*, the very knowledge of, breedeth joy, ii. 31; everything in it fitted to fill our hearts with joy, *ib.*; the wonderful mysteries of our redemption by Christ, *ib.*; the promises, 32; the enjoyments, 33; the precepts of Christ, *ib.*; the duties which concern our neighbour, 35.
- Its humanity, goodness, and kindness, with respect to ourselves and others, ii. 99.
- Its excellence above the heathen religions, ii. 187; above the Jewish, 188; exhortation to embrace, *ib.*
- Its good nature, ii. 283.
- Perfection of, to carry an equal mind in all conditions, iv. 440.
- Excellence of, lieth in the fulness of its reward, the purity of its precepts, and the sureness of its principles of trust, v. 167.
- Doctrine of, is a tradition, v. 490.
- Not to be judged of by the character of nominal christians, ix. 262.
- Life, its scope and work, xiii. 35; in what these consist, 36; we cannot be sincere unless our main design be the approval of God, *ib.*; this a mark of difference between the sincere and the hypocrite, *ib.*; must be carried on with great earnestness and industry, 39.
- Doth adopt moralities into its frame and constitution, xviii. 96; because grace doth not abolish so much of nature as is good, but refines and sublimates it, by causing us to act from higher principles and to higher ends, 101; because these conduce to the honour of religion, *ib.*; they make for our peace and safety, 102; they flow from the grace of regeneration, *ib.*; their contraries are condemned by the law of God, *ib.*; they are not small things, 103.
- Advanceth righteousness to a greater height, xix. 270; deduceth things from a higher principle, *ib.*; measurcth and directeth things by a perfect rule, 271; preferreth them to a more noble end, 274.
- Light of, shining forth in the word of God and the lives and actions of christians, a great means of reprovng and condemning the world, xix. 320; christians have a heavenly light communicated to them, *ib.*; true christians walk as children of the light, 321; this light shineth forth both in their words and deeds, *ib.*; this light is a re-

- proving light to the wicked and carnal world, 322 ; God is thereby glorified, 323 ; and men benefited, 324.
- Church* compared, not to the sun, but to the moon and stars, i. 80.
- Government of, is monarchical in regard of Christ the head, aristocratical in regard of officers, and in some respects democratical, with reference to the consent of the people in all church acts, i. 95.
- However afflicted, is beloved and pitied by God's servants, i. 107.
- What we should seek for, i. 109 ; her enlargement throughout the world, *ib.* ; the preservation and defence of those already planted, *ib.* ; comfort and deliverance in her afflictions, *ib.* ; a supply to her of all good furniture, internal and external, *ib.*
- Mystical, all such as are called out of the world to be a peculiar people to God, i. 454.
- What it is, i. 455 ; a society composed of all the elect, who have been, are, or shall be on earth, *ib.* ; divided into the church militant and the church triumphant, 456 ; the former called the universal church, *ib.* ; the universal visible church, *ib.* ; particular churches, *ib.* ; called a body in regard of the union of all the parts, 457 ; and of dependence on one head, *ib.*
- Why it must have a divine and human head, i. 461.
- Smallness of, not a ground of discouragement, iii. 395.
- The heir of the cross, v. 432.
- Of God hath suffered not only from the persecutions of enemies, but from the folly, rashness, and injudiciousness of friends, vii. 208.
- Visible, so mixed that the greater part of it is unsound, viii. 224 ; judgments upon, are to leaven the dross from the gold, 227.
- Visible, contains members that are wise, and others that are foolish, who will come short of the blessedness that they expect, ix. 323.
- Duty of, to the word, x. 450 ; to see that it be published to the present age, and transmitted pure to the next, *ib.* ; hath witnessed in all ages to the truth, by tradition and by martyrdom, 451.
- If we would aim at God's glory we must seek the good of the church, xiii. 122.
- Compared to an army, a house, and the human body, xiii. 425.
- Many vicissitudes and changes in the outward condition of, xviii. 26.
- Churches*, particular, are not many bodies, but members of one body, i. 454.
- CIRCUMCISION, DESCRIPTION OF THE TRUE, ii. 23.
- Civility*, or a fair demeanour in the world, usually accompanied with ignorance and little knowledge of God's institutions, v. 35 ; little of Christ in such souls, *ib.* ; usually some great prevailing sin, 36 ; greater care about actions than lusts, *ib.*
- Coldness* in duty and boldness in sinning come from unbelief, vi. 402.
- Combinations* of wicked men are a faction and conspiracy ; of christians, a brotherhood, iv. 58.
- Comfortable* doctrines of scripture, vii. 32 ; concerning particular providences, *ib.* ; God's fatherly care over his people, 33 ; his unchangeable love to his people, *ib.* ; the true doctrine about afflictions, the author, cause, and end of them all, *ib.*
- Comfort*, God hath given to all true believers solid grounds of perpetual and endless, iii. 151 ; the comforts propounded are of an everlasting tendency and benefit, *ib.* ; they depend on everlasting foundations, 152 ; they are sufficient to do their work, 154.
- All true and solid is of God, iii. 167 ; what it is, *ib.* ; our natural refreshment and support in troubles, *ib.* ; God can give his people, in the

greatest tribulations, 168 ; there is a special allowance of comfort for God's children in their afflictions, *ib.* ; our comforts carry proportion with our sorrows, *ib.* ; the heart the proper seat of spiritual comfort, *ib.* ; is of God when it is allowed by him and warranted by him, 169 ; when the matter is provided by him, 170 ; when it is wrought in us by him, *ib.* ; God challengeth as his own right to comfort the heart of men, 171 ; his Spirit alone can comfort the heart, *ib.* ; he is ready to comfort poor afflicted creatures that humbly submit to him, 172 ; his comforts come with authority, *ib.* ; are full and strong, *ib.* ; follows holiness as heat doth fire, 173 ; a singular way of, beside the word, not to be expected, *ib.* ; to be sought in the use of God's ordinances, 174 ; end why God giveth us, to fortify us against the enemies of our salvation, *ib.* ; hath a latitude in it, including support, peace, and joy, 176.

Comfort apt to divorce from duty, iv. 8.

Sometimes put for the object or thing comfortable, as deliverance and temporal blessings, pardon of sins, &c., vii. 304 ; sometimes subjectively, for the strengthening of the mind when it is apt to be weakened by doubts, fears, and sorrows, 305 ; by patience we are kept from murmuring, by comfort from fainting, *ib.* ; peace is a fuller degree of, *ib.* ; joy the fullest, 306 ; though not absolutely necessary to salvation, yet conduces much to the well-being of a christian, *ib.* ; follows holiness, as heat doth fire, *ib.* ; is a pledge of more to ensue, *ib.* ; is to be asked of God, for it is his proper gift, *ib.* ; conveyed through his word, 307 ; received on our part by prayer, 308 ; is all from mercy, and tender mercy, 310.

Comforts, under temptation, i. 217 ; Christ hath overcome all his enemies, and we are interested in his victory, *ib.* ; he hath a tender sense and knowledge of our estate, 218 ; he is engaged in the battle, and fights with us, *ib.* ; he will reward us when we have done, *ib.* ; even before the battle, the believer may be sure of victory, 219.

Worldly, a glut and fulness of, much more dangerous than hunger, i. 274.

We cannot have perpetual, i. 411.

When God has laid in a great store of, against sufferings, usually there is a time of expense to lay them out again, iii. 62.

Carnal, God hath many ways to blast, iv. 405.

In affliction, all others are nothing to those which we have from the word of God, vii. 28 ; they are divine, 29 ; strong, *ib.* ; full in measure, *ib.* ; full in matter, 30 ; reviving, 31 ; are applied by the Spirit and received by faith, 35.

When God's children ask, they also beg grace to receive them acceptably, viii. 416.

The word holds out, to us in affliction, ix. 23 ; the privileges of the afflicted, *ib.* ; the blessedness of another world, *ib.* ; what is acceptable to God, *ib.* ; notable precepts that ease the heart, *ib.* ; many promises of God's being with us, and strengthening us, and giving us a gracious issue out of all our troubles, *ib.* ; bindeth faith, which fixeth the heart, 24 ; afflictions do rather increase than diminish, *ib.*

Never prized but in their season, x. 309 ; in great troubles, *ib.* ; in the hour of temptation and hard conflict with doubt and corruption, *ib.* ; in times of great danger and defection, through terror and persecution, 310 ; in times of disheartening because of the difficulties of religion, *ib.* ; in the hour of death, *ib.*

Coming of Christ, patient waiting for, what it is, ii. 246 ; looking, 247 ; longing, *ib.* ; inseparable from love to God, 249 ; its influence on the spiritual

- life, 250 ; necessity of divine concurrence to, 253 ; should be continually expected, 255.
- Coming* of Christ to judgment, a truth well known, firmly believed, and earnestly desired by all the saints, iii. 6 ; why earnestly desired, 8 ; objection answered, 10 ; belief and desire of, tends to heavenly-mindedness, 11 ; at his coming all his saints shall be gathered to him, *ib.* ; time of, to be patiently expected, not rashly defined or determined, 15.
- Of the Lord, every manifestation of grace or judgment so called, iv. 419.
- Of Christ, thought of, a burden and torment to the wicked. v. 348 ; a ground of trial whether we love God and Christ or not, *ib.* ; privileges to be enjoyed, 349 ; a day of manifestation, *ib.* ; of perfection, *ib.* ; of congregation, *ib.*
- Of Christ, our whole life a preparation for, ix. 330.
- Of Christ, second, ix. 361 ; reason saith he may come, *ib.* ; from the nature of God, *ib.* ; from the providence of God, 362 ; from the feelings of conscience, *ib.* ; from the conveniency of such a day, to vindicate truth and honesty from the false judgments of the world, *ib.* ; that the counsels and courses of God's manifold wisdom and justice may be solemnly applauded, *ib.* ; that God may fit us with all kinds of arguments against sin, 363 ; faith says he must come, *ib.* ; from Christ's merit and purchase, *ib.* ; from his affection to us, *ib.* ; from the affection of the saints to him, 364 ; from the constitution of the church, *ib.* ; from his promise, *ib.* ; confirmed by an outward sign and memorial, 365 ; by a real pledge, his Spirit dwelling in us, *ib.* ; delayed, that there may be space to the world to repent, 366 ; that all the elect may be gathered, *ib.* ; to exercise our patience to the full, *ib.* ; not enough to believe the doctrine, but must improve it to the use of holy living, 371.
- Of Christ shall be as of a bridegroom, ix. 392 ; between Christ and believers there is a mutual tie, consent, and obligation to each other, notably represented by the marriage covenant, *ib.* ; this relation begun, but not publicly solemnised, 395 ; perfected at his second coming, 396 ; there is a personal meeting, *ib.* ; the bridegroom and bride do both deck and adorn themselves, *ib.* ; there is an open manifestation of his dearest love, *ib.* ; we are brought home to his house, 397 ; there is an everlasting cohabitation and living with him, *ib.* See *Preparation for, &c.*
- To God, what it is, xiv. 123 ; no coming to God but by Christ, 124.
- Delay of Christ's, is not from want of kindness, or backwardness to our good, xviii. 229 ; nor from ignorance, as not knowing the fittest time to put a period to the course of the world or of our lives, *ib.* ; nor from forgetfulness of his promise, *ib.* ; nor from change of counsel, *ib.* ; nor from impotency and weakness, *ib.*
- Of Christ, a day of manifestation, xx. 160 ; of perfection, *ib.* ; of gathering, 161 ; of glorification, *ib.* ; its end is to perfect our salvation, 162 ; is certainly and earnestly looked for by the godly, *ib.* ; looking for, implieth love, faith, hope, 163 ; preparation for, 166.
- Comings* of Christ, the two, frequently mixed in the prophetic writings, xviii. 74.
- Commandment*, a good man feareth (Prov. xiii. 13), another feareth a punishment, i. 103.
- Of God in the way, as terrible to a gracious heart as an angel with a flaming sword, vi. 43.

Commandment, exceeding broadness of, means the exceeding fulness of scripture, vii. 459 ; breadth for use, *ib.* ; for duration and continuance, 461.

Commandments, God gives us, which we cannot obey by our own strength, vi. 47 ; to keep up his right, *ib.* ; to convince us of our impotency, *ib.* ; to have us will, though we cannot do, *ib.* ; to bring us to lie at his feet for grace, 48.

Of God, all must be had respect to, vi. 54 ; small and great, *ib.* ; those that require public and those that require private duties, *ib.* ; those that concern the inward as well as those that concern the outward man, *ib.* ; to be equally had respect to in vow and purpose, 55 ; in affection, *ib.* ; in endeavour, 56 ; all ratified by the same authority, *ib.* ; grace given in conversion to observe all, *ib.* ; a christian cannot be perfect in degrees if he be not in parts, 57 ; they who do not obey all, will not long obey any, *ib.*

Path of the, at first conversion God maketh us go in, vi. 361 ; by giving an inclination and tendency towards what is good, 362 ; preparation of heart for holy actions, *ib.* ; power and ability to do good works, 363 ; these principles he improves by vouchsafing his quickening, actuating, assisting grace, *ib.*

Goodness of, appeareth from the admission of those who will not submit to them, vii. 8 ; from the sentiments which men have of a holy, sober, godly life, when they come to die, *ib.* ; by supposing the contrary of all that God hath commanded, *ib.*

Of God, not enough to approve or commend, but we must carefully set ourselves to the practice of them, vii. 13 ; hearing without doing disapproved, *ib.* ; knowledge without practice not right, *ib.* ; love not right unless it end in practice, *ib.* ; delight not right, *ib.* ; commendation not right, *ib.* ; obedience must be universal, 14 ; serious and diligent, *ib.* ; settled and ordinary, *ib.* ; persevering and patient, *ib.* ; must flow from faith and love, 15 ; such observance necessary in respect of God the Father, who will not only be known and worshipped, but served by a full and entire obedience, *ib.* ; in respect of the Son, who is the author of eternal life to them that obey him, 16 ; in respect of the Holy Ghost, who is given to make graces operative, *ib.* ; in respect of ordinances, which are all means to this end, *ib.* ; in respect of graces, which are all imperfect till they end in action, 17 ; in respect of the judgment, which is not only by what is believed, but by what is done, *ib.*

As much to be believed as the promises, vii. 213 ; that God is their author, *ib.* ; that they are to be received with reverence as his, 214 ; that they are holy, just, and good, *ib.* ; that obedience is indispensably required of us, 216 ; that God loveth those who obey, and hateth those who despise his law, without respect of persons, *ib.* ; that one day we shall be called to account, 217 ; necessity of believing, *ib.* ; they are parts of the divine revelation, *ib.* ; they have a necessary connection with the promises, *ib.* ; gratitude resulting from faith in the promises will put us upon it, 218 ; our trust in the promises is commensurable to our fidelity to the commandments, *ib.* ; faith in the promises is itself obedience to a command, 219 ; utility of believing, *ib.* ; that we may begin with God, to yield up our wills absolutely to his will, *ib.* ; that we may hold on with God in our awful, watchful, serious course of godliness, *ib.* ; results of believing, 221 ; we will not please ourselves with a naked trust in the promises while we neglect our duty to God, *ib.* ; our faith will be lively and

- operative, *ib.* ; we shall obey the commandments as God's commandments, *ib.*
- Commandments*, God's, it is the property of a gracious soul to delight in, ix. 20 ; because of the proportion and suitableness of the object to the grace in his heart, *ib.* ; because of possession of it and communion with it, *ib.* ; because of precedent love to it, *ib.* ; effects of this delight, 21 ; enlargement of heart, *ib.* ; a thirst for more of it, *ib.* ; makes the operation to the object more perfect than it would be, 22.
- To keep, is a laborious thing, and requireth great diligence, ix. 204 ; requireth spirit and courage, *ib.* ; much self-denial and submission, 205.
- Keeping of, is legal or evangelical, ix. 223.
- What it is to keep the, xxi. 201 ; how this is a gospel conscience, 205 ; reasons why this constitutes a good and quiet conscience, 206.
- Commands* of God, legal and evangelical, vi. 337.
- COMMENTARY, PRACTICAL, ON THE EPISTLE OF JAMES, iv. 1.
- COMMENTARY, PRACTICAL, ON THE EPISTLE OF JUDE, v. 1.
- Common* work of grace may go far as to faith, ix. 324 ; as to hope, 327 ; as to love, 328 ; is not likely to hold out, *ib.* ; even if it do not fall out, is not enough to qualify for heaven and everlasting happiness, 329.
- Communion* with God lieth in fruition and familiarity, i. 16.
- An hour's, with God, better than all the world, i. 117.
- With God breedeth some assimilation to him, i. 349.
- With God, conformity the ground of, iv. 371.
- Of saints, excellency of, vii. 285.
- With the death of Christ signifieth, by way of privilege, that we are partakers of the benefits of his death, xi. 163 ; by way of duty, that we are bound to renounce sin, *ib.* ; the sacraments are a solemn means of, 164 ; union with Christ the ground of, *ib.* ; this union and communion signified and sealed by the sacraments, 165 ; the sacraments chiefly relate to our communion with Christ's death, 166 ; shown by the interpretation of both in scripture. *ib.* ; and by the rites used in both, 167 ; by the nature of the case, 168.
- With the church no small privilege, xiv. 398 ; should be earnestly sought both for ourselves and our children, 399.
- With Christ, the nature and character of, xxi. 219 ; why a privilege peculiar to those who keep his commandments, 224.
- Companions* of them that fear the Lord, in what sense we are to be, vii. 176 ; we must join with them in the profession of the same faith and obedience to God, *ib.* ; must often meet together to join in the same worship, 177 ; must love them and prize them, and converse with them intimately for mutual edification, *ib.* ; must own them in all conditions, and take part and lot with them, *ib.* ; to this companionship our relation enforceth us, 178 ; the new nature welcometh us, 179 ; gratitude to Christ maketh us prize all that belong to him, *ib.* ; profit and utility redounding, *ib.*
- Company*, we are sooner made evil by evil, than good by good, i. 342.
- In heaven, part of the blessedness of those who die in the Lord, ii. 468.
- Ill, a man that keepeth, is like him that walketh in the sun, tanned insensibly, iv. 178.
- And fellowship of his people, Christ taketh great delight in, xi. 98.
- Complaint* to God the best resource when we fail in our efforts to do good to a people, iii. 193.

Complaints should not be of God, but to God, vii. 371.

Extorted under affliction, viii. 98; that none were ever afflicted as we are, *ib.*; that God is unfaithful, *ib.*; that we are cut off, *ib.*

Concurrence of God as a judge in sending strong delusions, iii. 87; consists in his withdrawing the light and direction of his Holy Spirit, *ib.*; delivering us up to the power of Satan, 88; raising such instruments and propounding such objects as, meeting with a haughty heart, do sorely blind it, *ib.*

Of God to sinful actions, but not to the sin of the actions, iii. 372; takes not away the sinner's blame, 373; nor casts it upon God, 374.

Concurrent grace, not only a habit, but actual help in the work of obedience, i. 145; this endeareth God to a gracious soul, *ib.*; engageth to constant dependence on God and communion with him, 146; keeps humble, *ib.*; is for the honour of the Lord's grace, 147.

Condemnation, in the general, is a sentence dooming us to punishment, xi. 385; exemption from, is upon account of Christ's satisfaction to God's justice, 387; upon account of the new covenant grant, 388; freedom from, is the portion of those that are in Christ, *ib.*; remaineth upon all that are out of Christ, 394.

Of sin in the flesh, equivalent to the destruction of sin in our nature, xi. 428.

Freedom from the fears of, a privilege of true believers, xii. 359; the greatness of this privilege appeareth from the dreadfulfulness of the sentence, the difficulty of getting rid of these fears, and the sure and solid grounds of a believer's peace, *ib.*; in order to this, three things must be done, God's honour secured, the law satisfied, and the conditions of the gospel fulfilled, 362; the course we should take to assure ourselves of escape from condemnation, 364; our triumph over the fears of condemnation mainly ariseth from the several acts of Christ's mediation, and especially his death, 366; this appeareth from the notions by which it is set forth, the effects ascribed to it, and the sufficiency of it to these ends and effects, *ib.*

Condescension of Christ, xviii. 431.

Condition, the vilest and most abject, does not justify murmuring, iv. 62.

Every, is as the heart is, vii. 259.

Conference, mutual, a means of perseverance, v. 336.

Holy, exhortation to, both occasional and set, vii. 127.

Confession the ready way to pardon, iv. 456; auricular, has no authority from scripture, 458; in what cases necessary to be made to man, 459. See *Auricular* confession.

Of sin, made to be one of the conditions of pardon, vi. 245; the only means to have our peace settled, *ib.*; prevents Satan's accusations and God's judgments, 246; argueth sincerity, *ib.*; somewhat of the spirit of adoption, 247; makes us serious and affected with our condition, 248; is of great advantage to the spiritual life, *ib.*

Of truth very necessary, and in a time of dangers and distresses very difficult, vi. 459; required by express law, 460; is of great use, conducing much to the glory of God and the good of others, 461.

Is both in word and deed, and the one must not contradict the other, xviii. 244.

With the mouth is a solemn outward declaration that we take Christ for our Lord and Saviour, xviii. 252; the matter to be confessed is the great truths which we do believe, *ib.*; is verbal or real, 253; its necessity to salvation, 257.

- Confidence*, false, which keeps men from God and Christ, ii. 50 ; imaginary happiness and counterfeit righteousness, *ib.*
- False, reasons of, ix. 378 ; self-love, *ib.* ; an overly sense of duty, *ib.* ; want of self-examination, *ib.* ; building upon false evidences, *ib.*
- And comfort arise from a good conscience, or from sanctification as well as justification, ix. 453 ; the review of a well-spent life a great comfort in death, *ib.*
- Towards God, what it is, xxi. 185 ; the nature of the privilege, 186 ; the influence of a good conscience upon communion with God, 188.
- Conflict*, the day of the church's, is mixed, and yieldeth great variety of providences, xv. 415 ; reasons of this mixture of providences, 416.
- Conflicts* and trials of christians, God will give a happy end to, that he may be known to be pitiful and merciful, i. 326 ; and faithful, *ib.*
- Eminent, those who come out of, are usually delivered by God in a glorious manner, i. 332.
- Conformity* to Christ, the grounds of the conformity of believers are God's foreknowledge and predestination, xii. 301 ; the reason of this conformity, that 'he might be the first-born among many brethren,' 302 ; exhortation to look after conformity to Christ, 308.
- Conquest* of Christ, benefits we have by, iii. 468 ; banishment of distracting fears, *ib.* ; encouragement to the spiritual conflict, 469 ; joy unspeakable and glorious, *ib.* ; hopes of glory, *ib.* ; great comfort in his exaltation, 470 ; is a token, earnest, and pledge of our victory, *ib.* ; what he did in, he did for our sakes, *ib.* ; usefulness and serviceableness of all that befalls us, *ib.*
- Conscience*, natural, usually smites more for sins of commission than of omission, i. 14 ; yet omissions argue as great contempt of God's authority, 15 ; and as much hatred of God, *ib.* ; and are as much an argument of unregeneracy, *ib.*
- One of God's books of record, i. 170.
- A good, is entire and universal ; of hypocrites, partial, ii. 13.
- The force of, usually felt after the fact, more than before or in the fact, ii. 179.
- Hath a sense of eternal life and death, ii. 364.
- Peace of, founded on Christ's satisfaction, but only found in his service, iv. 126.
- Is a rule, a witness, and a judge, iv. 154 ; how to be used in these offices, 155.
- God alone can give laws to, iv. 384.
- To keep a good conscience, and to be faithful with God, though our temporal interests be endangered thereby, requires a lively faith concerning the world to come, vii. 157 ; a sincere love to Christ, 158 ; a well-grounded resolution in the truth, *ib.* ; a contempt of the world, 159 ; a sound belief of God's providence, *ib.*
- To smother and stife the checks of, doth but increase our misery, xii. 106.
- The testimony of, that we are the children of God, xii. 125 ; a secret spy within us, that observeth all our thoughts and actions, *ib.* ; called 'the candle of the Lord' (Prov. xx. 27), 126 ; the legal conscience condemneth, but the evangelical conscience acquitteth, *ib.* ; by nature is blind, partial, stupid, but by grace is pure, tender, pliant, *ib.*
- A good or a bad, the beginning of heaven or hell, xii. 465.
- In the guilty, an evidence of the certainty of eternal punishment, xiii. 49.

Conscience, its operations in awakening to a sense of sin, xiii. 277.

The nature of, xvii. 431 ; is God's vicegerent and deputy, 433 ; our best friend and worst enemy, 434 ; is corrupt as well as other faculties, and from a judge may become an advocate, excusing our partialities, 437 ; how we should exercise ourselves that conscience may perform its office aright, 439.

The nature and office of, xxi. 167 ; conduceth much to the glory of God and the safety of man, *ib.* ; the value of the judgment of, and how it should be regarded by us, 168 ; objections answered, 169.

The influence of a good, upon our communion with God, xxi. 188.

How keeping the commandments constitutes a gospel conscience, xxi. 205 ; reasons why this constitutes a good and quiet conscience, 206.

Consent to receive Christ a part of faith, ii. 350 ; must be deliberate. *ib.* ; voluntary, *ib.* ; resolved, 351 ; total, *ib.*

Consequences, the use of, xiv. 331 ; doctrine not expressed in plain scripture may yet be deduced thence by just consequence, *ib.*

Consideration, serious, necessity of, in order to repentance, vii. 125 ; of our past estate, 127 ; our present actions, *ib.* ; the tendency and issue of things, *ib.* ; who made thee, 128 ; why did he make thee, 129 ; how hast thou answered this end, *ib.* ; what is the character of such a course, 130 ; what will it come to, *ib.* ; how doth it concern you to come out of this condition speedily, *ib.* ; how happy will it be for you when you change your course, 131 ; what hopes by Christ, *ib.* ; necessity of, *ib.* ; special reasons for, 134.

God's, of the afflictions of his people, what it means, ix. 131.

A great help to the improvement of spiritual truths, xiii. 186.

Consolation the fruit of assurance, xvi. 314 ; what is meant by, *ib.* ; how it ariseth from assurance, 316 ; how it is dispensed on God's part, and how far required on ours, 318 ; exhortation to look after, 325 ; how to get it, 328 ; how to keep it, 331.

Constancy of mind necessary to christians, iii. 19 ; what produces, 20 ; a clear conviction of the truth, *ib.* ; resolution to adhere to the truth, *ib.* ; opposite is levity and inconstancy, *ib.* ; its causes, 21.

Constantius Chlorus, though a heathen, his respect for the consistency of christians, v. 284.

Consubstantiation, Lutheran doctrine of, confuted, x. 279.

Contentment is a quiet temper of mind about outward things, ii. 306 ; opposite to murmurings, *ib.* ; to distrustful and distracting cares, 307 ; to covetous desires, *ib.* ; motives to, *ib.* ; God is a sovereign Lord, *ib.* ; it is the wisdom and the will of God not to give to all alike, 308 ; earthly things are only useful to us in the present life, *ib.* ; comfort, safety, and happiness of this life lies not in abundance, 309 ; nothing absolutely necessary besides food and raiment, *ib.* ; these not hard to be obtained, 310 ; felicity of this life must be measured by its bearing upon a better, *ib.* ; a moderate estate freest from temptation, 311 ; God knows best what will do us good or hurt, *ib.* ; is only learned in Christ's school, 312 ; grounded in faith, humility, and weanedness from the world, *ib.* ; its fruits, 313.

A necessary part of a holy life, xiii. 337.

Continuing in prayer, reasons for, ix. 54 ; because the force of importunity is very great, *ib.* ; a deliverance is never so sweet, nor so thankfully improved, if it come at the first call, 55 ; because things often and earnestly asked of God come with the greater fulness of blessing when they come, *ib.* ; it argues an ill spirit when we will not continue pray-

- ing, 56 ; disobedience, *ib.* ; weakness of faith, *ib.* ; want of love, or coldness of love, *ib.* ; want of patience, or tarrying God's season till the promise bring forth, 57 ; we must not only continue, but continue instant, 58 ; because it is not enough to keep up the duty, unless we keep up the affections that must accompany the duty, *ib.* ; a seeming repulse or denial should make us more vehement, *ib.* ; God's dearest children are not admitted at the first knock, *ib.* ; we must not only continue praying when Christ seemeth to neglect us, but when he giveth a contrary answer, *ib.* ; whether God answereth or no, it is the duty of faith to answer itself, 59.
- Controversies* about trifles, great evil of, v. 117.
- Religious, cautions as to conducting, v. 262.
- The word to be made the judge of all, x. 460.
- Of the present age, importance of a clear and satisfactory knowledge in, xi. 123 ; rules regarding, *ib.*
- Controversy*, every private christian not bound to study, vi. 293.
- Conversation*, what kind of, honoureth religion, ii. 107 ; such as is carried on with diligence and seriousness, *ib.* ; such as is governed by the respects of the other world, 108 ; such as is characterised by exact purity and holiness, 109.
- Is generally either profane and sinful, vi. 126 ; or idle and vain, *ib.* ; or tattling, *ib.* ; or worldly, *ib.*
- Should be edifying, xviii. 392 ; because our tongue is our glory, *ib.* ; because holy conference and edifying discourse is a means of spiritual improvement, *ib.* ; because it is a great comfort and quickening to confer together of holy things, *ib.* ; because the well-ordering of our words is a great point of christianity, 393 ; in order to, we must get a good stock of sound scriptural knowledge, 394.
- Converse* and conference of godly persons comfortable and pleasant, and much excelleth the merriest meetings of the carnal, vii. 287.
- Conversion*, God keeps, in his own hand, i. 79.
- In the work of, God doeth all ; after, he still concurreth, i. 138 ; and that not only in the general, but in every act from the beginning of the spiritual life to the end, 139.
- How described in scripture, i. 141 ; enlightening the mind, *ib.* ; opening the heart, *ib.* ; regeneration, *ib.* ; resurrection, *ib.* ; creation, 142 ; not in power of man to convert himself, *ib.* ; objections answered, 143.
- In producing, God works according to man's nature and the principles thereof, i. 144 ; and to men's particular characters and tempers, *ib.* ; almighty power goes along with persuasion, 145 ; this power secret, but prevailing, *ib.*
- Of a sinner more pleasing to God than his destruction, i. 388.
- More hard to continue in, than to convert ourselves at first, iii. 179.
- Of a soul, how difficult, iii. 207 ; obstacles to, *ib.* ; Satan, *ib.* ; the perverseness of man's heart, *ib.*
- Beginning of, not in man's power, iv. 369.
- Of a sinner properly God's work, yet ascribed to men as the ministers and instruments of it, iv. 473, 478.
- Evident in fruit if not in feeling, v. 20.
- So described in scripture as to indicate the helplessness of man, v. 479.
- Causes of putting off, vii. 144 ; unbelief, *ib.* ; security, *ib.* ; averseness of heart from God, *ib.* ; love of the world and of present delights and contentments, 145 ; heinousness of putting off, *ib.* ; it is flat

disobedience to God, *ib.* ; ingratitude and unthankfulness for God's eternal love, *ib.* ; base disingenuity, *ib.* ; base self-love, when we can be content to dishonour God longer, provided that at length we may be saved, 146 ; great injustice and injury to God, *ib.*

Conversion, does every one know his own, or the way of it ? vii. 439 ; usually, yet there are exceptions, *ib.* ; manner of, *ib.* ; none converted but are first convinced of their danger and evil estate, *ib.* ; conviction, when it is strong and serious, cannot be without some compunction, *ib.* ; but the degrees of compunction are various, 440 ; as to the degrees, because no certain rule can be given, the measure must not be looked after, but the effects, 441 ; these are a hearty welcoming of Jesus Christ into the soul, *ib.* ; a thorough hatred of sin, *ib.* ; lively diligence in the spiritual life, *ib.*

Is a turning from the creature to God, xi. 391 ; from self to Christ, *ib.* ; from sin to holiness, both in heart and life, 392.

Requires a supernatural work upon us to cure our unholiness, as well as a supernatural work without us to overcome our guiltiness, xiii. 243.

If the grace given us in, were only that we might be converted if we would, divers absurdities would follow, xiii. 246.

Conviction of sin goes before conviction of righteousness, iii. 201.

Of the world, a matter of great importance, xi. 44 ; it is much for Christ's honour that even his enemies should have some esteem of him, *ib.* ; for the clearing of his process at the last day, *ib.* ; their conviction conduceth to others' conversion, 45 ; for the safety of the church, *ib.* ; they may be brought so far as to give the church the benefit of their gifts and abilities, power, and authority, 46 ; they serve as a warning to the saints, *ib.* ; serveth to lessen the judgment of some, to increase that of others, *ib.*

Not improved usually maketh a man turn devil, xviii. 359.

May come to nothing, xviii. 363 ; through levity, *ib.* ; addictedness to lusts, *ib.* ; unskilfulness in handling wounds of conscience, 364 ; want of God's grace, *ib.*

Convictions but occasion greater hardness of heart, vii. 132.

Of sin not to be slighted, xi. 48 ; but not to be rested in, 49.

Corrections, necessary, and contemptuous speeches or reproofs, differences between, iv. 243.

Corruption more exasperated when conviction begins, i. 102.

Sin so called, because it is a blasting of our primitive excellency and purity, ii. 215.

In man, hindering his believing in Christ, cannot be done away without the Spirit's manifestation, iii. 21 ; in the mind, ignorance, *ib.* ; and unteachableness, 213 ; in the heart, carelessness, *ib.* ; and stubbornness, 214.

Counsel of God in the gospel despised, slighted, and contradicted by the carnal world, ii. 105.

And intents of God, men set themselves to frustrate, when they will do things in despite of providence, iv. 337 ; when they seek by carnal policies to make void God's promises or threatenings, *ib.* ; when they, when crossed by providence, seek happiness elsewhere by unlawful acts and means, *ib.* ; when they say, *I will*, without God's leave, *ib.* ; when they make reiterated endeavours against the church, *ib.*

The scriptures give us good, for our general choice, vi. 230 ; and for

particular actions, *ib.* ; in perplexed and doubtful cases, help us to understand how far we are concerned in point of duty and conscience, 231 ; teach us to go to God for wisdom, *ib.* ; to ask God's leave and God's blessing, *ib.* ; to submit the event to God, *ib.* ; to make use of this counsel we need the fear of God, 233 ; meekness, *ib.* ; dependence, 234 ; obedience, *ib.*

Countenance, God's people may want the light of his, viii. 410 ; to teach them that earth is not heaven, *ib.* ; to conform them to Jesus Christ, *ib.* ; his justice requires it, when we surfeit of our comforts, and play the wanton with them, *ib.* ; to raise our value of spiritual comforts, 411 ; when the children of God want this light, they will pray and seek for the restoration of it, 412 ; because of the value of the privilege, *ib.* ; because they deal with God by faith, as others deal with men, 413 ; because they have tasted the sweetness of it, *ib.*

Courage, christian, is a power to suffer, as military is a power to do, great things, viii. 126 ; Peter exhibited the military when he ventured on a band of men, but failed in the christian when he was foiled by a damsel's question, *ib.* ; requires a heart weaned from the world, *ib.* ; a heart entirely devoted to God, 127 ; a heart purged from sin, *ib.* ; a heart that lieth under a deep sense of eternity and things to come, *ib.*

Covenant, new, not merely a law or commandment, i. 104.

Entrance into, is by a fixed, unbounded resignation of ourselves to God, ii. 134.

New, contains the only solid grounds of rejoicing, iii. 155.

Mercy and grace of, iii. 164 ; in the frame of it, *ib.* ; in the dispensation of it, *ib.* ; at the very close of all, 165.

That there was between the Father and the Son appeareth by such titles given to Christ as do infer it, iii. 376 ; by the words recorded in scripture that passed between God and Christ, *ib.* ; by the carriage of Christ, 377 ; what it is, *ib.* ; Christ's engagement to do something by way of merit and impetration, *ib.* ; and in the application of his merit, 378 ; God's promise that he shall have the help of the Spirit, 379 ; and success in his work, and final glory for himself and his people, *ib.* ; covenant with believers founded on this eternal covenant, 381 ; that with Christ a covenant of works, with believers of grace, *ib.* ; these two covenants give the most comfortable representation of Christ that can be made, 382.

Of works, condition of man under, very miserable, iv. 227 ; how we may know under which covenant we are, 228 ; a shrewd presumption that we are under the old bond if we cannot discern how our copy and tenure is changed, *ib.* ; much may be discerned from the present state of our hearts, 229 ; much of the suitableness or unsuitableness of our hearts to a state of grace, *ib.*

God hath ever delighted to deal with his creatures in the way of, v. 462 ; duties and privileges of the new, 463 ; privileges are pardon and life, *ib.* ; duties on entering into, are repentance and faith, 464 ; in our progress, there must be a constant renouncing and forsaking the enemies of God and our souls, 465 ; loving, following, and serving God, *ib.* ; living in the hope of the coming of Christ and of eternal glory, *ib.*

Not to be interpreted by providence, but providence by the covenant, vii. 258.

Covenant, new, exacts perfect, but accepts sincere, obedience, vii. 319.

New, quickening and enlivening grace promised in, ix. 94; both generally and particularly, *ib.*; encouragement to pray for grace, 95.

A manifest abuse of, to imagine that it countenanceth any licentiousness or liberty in sin, xi. 300; shown from God's design in setting it up, *ib.*; from its tenor and constitution, 301.

New, is a law, xi. 398; man, being God's creature, is his subject, and standeth related to him as his rightful governor, and therefore is to receive what laws he is pleased to impose upon him, *ib.*; man, as a reasonable and free agent, is bound voluntarily to yield up himself in subjection to his proper Lord, *ib.*; man, being bound to obey the will of God, needeth a law from God to constitute his duty, and direct him in it, *ib.*; the gospel, which is both our rule and charter, is the law which in Christ's name is given to the world, 399; agreeth with human laws in the promulgation of it with full authority, 400; in obligation and force, *ib.*; in having a sanction, *ib.*; in the sanction supposing an exercise of government according to law, 401; differs from ordinary human laws in that man in these laws barely enjoins authoritatively, but God condescends to reason, persuade, and beseech, 402; in that the law of God binds the conscience and the immortal souls of men, *ib.*

Of works, what it is, xvi. 438; all are by nature under this covenant, *ib.*; this is that which natural conscience sticks to, 439; this covenant, rightly understood, is the most ready way to convince justiciaries, and to prepare men for Christ, *ib.*

God's, with his people, xviii. 75; made to show the freeness of his grace, *ib.*; and the sureness of his mercy, 76; to leave the greater bond and obligation upon us, *ib.*; to make us more willing to serve him, entering upon his service by choice, 77; to put an honour upon his creatures, *ib.*; that both parties might be engaged to each other by mutual consent, *ib.*; none can be made with God without the interposing of a sacrifice, 78.

Legal, tenor of, xviii. 237; life promised to perfect obedience, a curse threatened to disobedience, 238.

God's people not only keep covenant with him, but the covenant keepeth them, xviii. 351; seal of, 352; those in covenant with him are his, *ib.*; by eternal election, *ib.*; by effectual calling, 353; by entering into covenant with him, *ib.*; he knoweth them, *ib.*; as elected, called in covenant, *ib.*; taketh notice of them with love, delight, approbation, 354; communicates to them saving benefits, *ib.*; their obligation to depart from all iniquity, 355.

Covenants, two, agree in their author, viii. 371; in the moving cause, which in both was the grace of God, 372; in the parties, God and man in both, *ib.*; in that God giveth sufficiency of strength to the parties with whom he made them to fulfil the conditions thereof, *ib.*; in that in both God kept up his sovereignty, and did not by his condescension part with anything of his dominion over men, 373; in both there is a mutual obligation on both parties, *ib.*; the conditions in both were suitable to the ends and scope appointed, *ib.*; differ in the ends, that of the first being to preserve and continue man in the happiness in which it found him; of the second, to restore him to the happiness which he had lost, 374; as to God, the glory of his creating bounty was the end of the first, the glory of his redeeming grace of

the second, *ib.* ; in their nature, the first stood more by commands and less by promises, the second more by promises and less by commands, 375 ; in the terms ; unsinning obedience the condition of the first, pardon offered in the second, 376.

Covenanting with God pressed, viii. 90 ; God's laws holy, just, and good, therefore we should not be backward to swear to him, *ib.* ; we are obliged by God's command, *ib.* ; actual consent and resolution quickens our sense of duty, *ib.* ; profitable to choose the strictest engagements, 91 ; necessity of, because of our laziness, *ib.* ; fickleness, *ib.* See *Oath and Resolution.*

Covetousness sold Christ, and envy delivered him ; these two sins still enemies to the christian profession, iv. 303.

And carnality compared, v. 272.

A base affection, that will put a man upon the basest and most unworthy practices, iv. 336.

Bringeth God's curse upon our estates, iv. 404.

Is an inordinate desire of having more wealth than the Lord alloweth in the fair course of his providence, vi. 379 ; and a delight in worldly things as our chiefest good, *ib.* ; its causes, 380 ; distrust of God's providence, and discontent with God's allowance, *ib.* ; shown by greedy getting, 381 ; and unworthy detention, 382 ; a great hindrance to compliance with God's testimonies, 383.

Scripture always representeth as an odious and detestable thing, xix. 192.

Creation distinguished from emanation, i. 436.

Should be nothing in our esteem, so far as it would be something separate from God, or in co-ordination with God, i. 276.

And providence, God's greatness and majesty seen in, i. 403.

Is either out of nothing, or *ex inhabili materia*, ii. 387.

New, is more than a moral change, ii. 386 ; or a temporary change, *ib.* ; or a change of outward form, *ib.* ; or a partial change, *ib.* ; belongeth to God, *ib.* ; far surpasseth that which maketh us creatures only, 387 ; God's way of concurrence to, *ib.* ; the mediation of Christ concerned in with respect to his merit, 388 ; and in regard of efficacy, 389 ; necessity of, *ib.* ; because of the badness of our former estate, *ib.* ; from the nature of God's work, 390 ; with respect to Christ, 391 ; with respect to the use which it serveth, *ib.* ; in order to present communion with God, *ib.* ; to service and obedience to God, 392 ; to future enjoyment of God, *ib.* ; known by a new mind, a new heart, and a new life, 394.

The new, doth carry a great correspondence with the old, iii. 183.

As a well-tuned instrument, but man maketh the music, iv. 294.

The morning of, xii. 180.

A work of omnipotency, xiii. 242.

Consideration of, a necessary exercise for the children of God, xiii. 389 ; discovers much of the essence and attributes of God, his goodness, power, and wisdom, *ib.* ; a wonderful advantage to faith in giving us hope and consolation in distress, 391 ; puts us in mind of our duty, *ib.* ; motives to quicken us to this necessary work of reflecting on creation, 392 ; directions how to improve it to comfort and profit, 397 ; special occasions when we should propose to ourselves thoughts of creation, 398 ; proper objects of meditation on God's several and special excellences, 400 ; the ends of the creation, 404 ; the fruits of solemn and serious thoughts on creation, 406 ; the truths and won-

ders of, understood by faith, and not by reason, 409; the world framed in an accurate, orderly, and perfect manner, 415; wherein this order and beauty consists, 416; objection answered, whence come all those disorders that are in the world? 420; the wisdom and majesty of God discovered in the order of causes and admirable contrivance of the world, 422; shows how pleasing order and method are to God, 424; discovers the odiousness of sin, that disjointed the frame of nature, 426; the instrument in creation was 'the word of God,' 429; meaning of the term, 430; *quest.*, whether all things were created in the twinkling of an eye by God's will and pleasure, or were done by distinct days, as the history in Genesis seemeth to intimate? 431; the matter or term from which the world was made, 433.

Creation, opinions of the ancients concerning, xiii. 412.

Creature, God defrauded by over-delight in, i. 238.

Greatest glory of, to serve the will and set forth the praise of the Creator, i. 438.

In what sense nothing, ii. 321; in comparison with God, 322; in exclusion of God, *ib.*; in opposition to God, *ib.*; the true apprehension of this mightily useful for the spiritual life, 323.

Cannot yield us any comfort without God's gift or grant, iii. 167.

Vanity of, matter of sense and plain experience, vii. 455; should be observed and improved by faith, 456; should moderate our desires, 457; our sorrows and fears, 458; our delights, *ib.*; stability of the word of God often opposed to, *ib.*

Meaning of the word in relation to waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God, xii. 148; how the creature waiteth, *ib.*; for what, 149.

In what sense made subject to vanity, xii. 157; by order of its natural estate, 158; in regard of the vanity of corruption, 159; in regard of its final dissolution and last change, *ib.*; in regard of its end and use, *ib.*; the way in which the creature came into the present state, negatively and positively expressed, 161; by man as a sinner, 162; by the will and power of the Creator, *ib.*; reasons why the innocent creature is punished for man's sin, 163; the creature still an instrument of sin, 164; in the curse on the creature man is punished, *ib.*; how far the creature shall be made partaker of the same glory with God's children, 167.

The new, produced by the Spirit, and cannot subsist without his continual presence, xix. 399.

Creatures are sanctified to us when we enjoy God in them, i. 153.

All, put us in mind of God, vii. 82.

Men as, are some way encouraged to ask of God the grace of the new creature, vii. 271; man is God's immediate workmanship, *ib.*; the making of man now is the work of God, as well as the making of the first man was, 272; man was created to serve God, 273; men are now strangely disabled to serve and please him, *ib.*; must be new made and born again before we can know or do the will of God, 274; when we seek this grace, or any degree of it, it is a proper argument to urge that we are God's creatures, 275; it is asking another gift, because we have received one already, *ib.*; God beareth much affection to man as he is his creature, *ib.*; creation implieth some hope, because God forsaketh none but those who first forsake

him, 276 ; there is encouragement to faith from the resemblance between creation and regeneration, 277 ; the manner of pleading thus some preparatory work of grace, *ib.*

Credulity, uncharitable, leads to detraction, ii, 277.

Cross, how to be taken up daily, ii. 116.

Romish worship of, is idolatry, iii. 100.

The inheritance of the Church (*Ecclesia est hæres crucis*—Luther), iv. 75.

We never advance more in christianity than under, vi. 223.

What it is to take up the, xvii. 3 ; how daily, 5 ; reasons why followers of Christ must prepare their shoulders for, 6 ; it is not enough to bear, but we must take it, 9.

Crosses, christians should look for, ix. 127 ; be prepared for, *ib.* ; bear with patience when they come, 128.

Crying sins, what so called, iv. 409.

CURE DISTRACTIONS IN HOLY DUTIES, HOW WE MAY, v. 441.

Curse, upon the impenitent and obstinate sinner, vi. 200 ; the knowledge of this duty doth but the more irritate corruption, 201 ; the exaction of duty doth either terrify or stupefy the conscience, *ib.* ; is upon all that he hath, *ib.* ; and all that he doeth, *ib.* ; he is bound over, body and soul, to everlasting torment, *ib.*

Every man is by nature under, x. 89 ; there is no way to come out from, but in closing with Christ, *ib.* ; there must be an unfeigned love to him, else the curse doth remain, *ib.* ; this love must be expressed by sincere obedience, 90 ; God's, is very dreadful, *ib.* ; we know not how soon God may carry it out, and cut us off from the possibility of grace, 91 ; is ratified at the last day by Christ's sentence, *ib.* ; shall be presently executed, *ib.* ; motives to come to Christ for removal of, *ib.*

Daily bread, why we are taught to pray for, i. 165 ; that we may pray daily, *ib.* ; that there may be family prayer, *ib.* ; to make way for our gratitude, *ib.* ; to show us every day that we should renew our dependence on God, 166 ; that we may not burden ourselves with overmuch thoughtfulness, *ib.* ; to teach us that worldly things are to be sought in a moderate proportion, *ib.* ; to make us think of the uncertainty of our lives, *ib.* ; to awaken us after heavenly things, *ib.*

Danger, secure hearts cannot endure to think of ; believers do, but more of Christ, iii. 200.

Of life, God's children may be in, from day to day, viii. 116 ; why God permits this, 117 ; to check security, *ib.* ; to wean us from creature confidences and dependency, *ib.* ; to check worldliness, *ib.* ; that they may value eternal life the more, 118 ; to try their affections to him and his word, 119 ; to show his power in their preservation, *ib.* ; and in overruling all that befalls them for the increase and benefit of his church and people, *ib.*

No kind of, should make us warp and turn aside from the directions of God's word, viii. 124 ; a christian should be above all temporal accidents, *ib.* ; God can preserve us, *ib.* ; we renounced all at our first coming to Christ, *ib.* ; our sufferings shall be abundantly recompensed and made up in the world to come, 125 ; constancy is necessary, *ib.*

Of a nation doth not lie in outward probabilities so much as in the

threatenings of the word, viii. 434 ; no armies so strong as to withstand the threatenings of the gospel, *ib.*

Danger, extreme, may sometimes tread on the heels of God's people, ix. 96 ; from the implacable malice of their enemies, *ib.* ; from the providence of God, who permitteth it for holy and righteous ends, 97 ; to exercise their trust and dependence, *ib.* ; to quicken to prayer, 98 ; that their deliverance may be more glorious, *ib.*

Of believers in their worldly state, x. 281 ; from within, 282 ; from without, *ib.* ; the god of this world, *ib.* ; the powers of the world, *ib.* ; the men of the world, 283 ; the things of the world, 284 ; Christ's apprehension of, 287 ; by reason of his interest, 288 ; his love, *ib.* ; his charge, *ib.* ; his experience, 289.

Darkness, in scripture, representeth ignorance, sin, and misery, v. 206 ; of sin, punished with that of misery, 208.

We are said to walk in, when we want either the light of direction or consolation, xviii. 51 ; believers may walk in, 53 ; supports under, 55 ; in our darkest condition God seeth us, though we see not him, *ib.* ; in our distresses we darken our estate more than needeth, 56 ; a dark hour is often the forerunner of a comfortable morning, *ib.* ; however matters go, it will certainly be well with them that fear God, *ib.* ; we must not dote upon sensible consolation, 57 ; God can draw light out of darkness, and give light in darkness, and turn darkness into light, *ib.* ; when we cannot interpret God's promises by his providences, we must interpret his providences by his promises, *ib.* ; we must distinguish between a part of God's work and the entire frame of it, 58 ; that is not best for us which we think best, *ib.* ; God's greatest severity to his people is consistent with his covenant love, *ib.*

Cursed estate is an estate of, xix. 247 ; ignorance in the understanding, *ib.* ; wandering from God, 249 ; outer darkness the end, *ib.*

Works of, so called because they are done by men in their natural state, xix. 300 ; because they are suggested by the temptations of the devil, 301 ; because they cannot endure the light, but seek the veil and covert of secrecy, *ib.* ; because they subject their doers to condemnation in everlasting darkness, 302 ; are unfruitful, *ib.* ; must have no fellowship with, 304 ; must reprove, 306.

Devil, his fall, mischief done to the church by, i. 108.

And Josiah instances of the infirmities of the saints reconciled through grace, xiii. 171.

Instances of his humility, xxi. 407.

Day of the Lord, why his second coming so called, i. 92, 99 ; an invisible kingdom, 100 ; until Satan be cast out of the throne, Christ hath no entertainment in the heart, *ib.*

Of the Lord, how it might be said to be at hand in the apostles' day, iii. 16 ; with respect of faith, *ib.* ; and love, *ib.* ; as comparing time with eternity, *ib.* ; as to particular men, *ib.* ; evil of inquiring after, and endeavouring to fix the time of, 17.

Of the Lord, comfort and happiness of, the coming of, v. 382 ; in the propagation of the gospel, *ib.* ; the reign of Christ, *ib.* ; the unity of the church, *ib.*

Of judgment, the necessity of it, xiii. 46 ; the certainty of it, *ib.* ; reason showeth that it may be, 47 ; faith showeth that it shall be, 48 ; Christ's interest concerned in it, 49 ; its universality illustrated by considering the several distinctions of mankind, 50 ; the person by whom we shall be judged, 51 ; why this honour is put upon the

second person in the Trinity, *ib.* ; the manner of it, 63 ; that all must appear is evidenced by the wisdom and justice of the judge, *ib.* ; the power, impartiality, and faithfulness of his ministers, the angels, 64 ; the nature of the business, *ib.* ; and the ends of the judgment, 65 ; how we shall be made manifest, 66 ; the matter about which we shall be judged, 72 ; why works are produced as the fittest way to glorify God and convince the creature, *ib.* ; how these are considered with respect to our sentence and doom, 77 ; what room and place these have with respect to punishment and reward, 79 ; the end as to different persons and rewards, 81.

Day of judgment, meaning of the word 'day,' xvi. 400.

Dead in the Lord are not perished, but live for ever with God in heaven, i. 368.

'Bury their dead,' meaning of the expression, ii. 122.

In Christ, when Christ died all believers became dead in him to sin and the world, xiii. 189 ; instances of this asserted in scripture, *ib.* ; how all believers died to sin when Christ died, although most were not then born, 192 ; how they can be dead to sin and the world, since after conversion they feel so many carnal motions, 194 ; the use of Christ's death to make us die unto sin and the world, 195 ; by way of obligation, engagement, and encouragement, 197.

'Yet speaketh,' meaning of the phrase, xiv. 29.

Deadness and indisposition, case of conscience regarding, vi. 240. See *Duty*, whether we are to do, &c.

God's children sometimes under, vii. 429 ; by reason of some sin committed and not repented of, or not fully repented of, *ib.* ; by reason of some good omitted, 430 ; by unthankfulness for benefits received, especially spiritual, 431 ; pride in gifts, *ib.* ; great and heavy troubles, *ib.* ; carnal liberty, or intermeddling with worldly vanities, *ib.*

Of spirit, occasioned by negligence and sloth in the spiritual life, viii. 103 ; by carnal liberty, *ib.*

DEATH, THE SAINT'S TRIUMPH OVER, ii. 439.

Death, is it lawful to desire ? i. 105 ; yes, but not to grow weary of life, *ib.* ; do all who have interest in Christ desire ? 106.

Of Christ, a double motive of—ransom for the delivery of a captive, and a price given for eternal life, i. 173.

Of Christ, why the subject of converse on the mount of transfiguration, i. 361.

In the greatest advancements we should think of, i. 362.

How Christ delivered us from, ii. 444 ; as a redeemer, *ib.* ; and a conqueror, 445 ; to believers the habitude and nature of it is changed, *ib.* ; the hurt of it is prevented, 447 ; they are eased from its terrors and horrors, 448 ; will be utterly abolished at the last day, *ib.*

In the Lord, may mean death for the Lord's sake, as of the martyrs, ii. 458 ; generally to die in the favour of God, 459 ; to die in a gracious manner, *ib.* ; in faith, *ib.* ; love, *ib.* ; zeal for God's glory, 460 ; obedience, *ib.* ; blessedness of, *ib.* ; presently the soul is with Christ, *ib.* ; completely blest at the resurrection, 461 ; secured by union with Christ and God's covenant with them, 469.

And hell, Satan, lusts, the world, vain fears of, to be checked by thought of Christ's conquest, iii. 471.

Case of conscience about wishing for, x. 393.

Death of Christ, they do not improve aright who seek comfort from it, and not holiness, xi. 12.

Of Christ recommended to us as a wonderful act of love, xi. 168 ; as a price and ransom for our souls and the blessings we stand in need of, 169 ; commemorated in the Lord's supper, not as a tragical story, but as a mystery of godliness, 170 ; was not only for our good, but in our room, 192 ; was not only to expiate our guilt, but to destroy the power of sin, *ib.*

Of Christ, serious reflection on, the sure way of subduing sin, xi. 197 ; a pattern to teach us how to deny the pleasures of the senses, *ib.* ; an act of love, which should beget in us love to God, and so make us tender of sinning, 198 ; the best glass wherein to view the evil of sin, *ib.* ; showeth us what a great benefit mortification is, *ib.* ; the sins of christians, who profess a communion with his death, are more criminal and scandalous than the sins of heathens, 199 ; a christian's living in sin is a greater injury to Christ than the persecution of the Jews who crucified him, *ib.* ; was the merit and price by which grace sufficient was purchased to mortify and subdue our old man, 200.

With Christ, a condition absolutely necessary to obtain subsequent grace, xi. 213.

And life, both endless, xi. 370 ; are the final issue of men's several ways, 371 ; equally certain, *ib.* ; the one wages, the other a gift, *ib.*

Temporal, the fruit of sin, xi. 373 ; eternal, consisteth of loss and pain, 374 ; the wages of sin, *ib.* ; the righteousness of it, *ib.* ; the certainty of it, 375.

Its suitableness to sin, xi. 414 ; the certainty of its connection with sin, 415 ; terribleness of, 416.

There is a twofold end and use of, to those that are in Christ, xii. 14 ; christianity affordeth the proper comfort against, 17.

Preparedness for, christians must be prepared to give their lives for the maintenance of their religion when God calls them to it, xii. 385 ; Christ requireth it, *ib.* ; such have been the trials of God's children in all ages, *ib.* ; it is neither strange nor grievous, 386 ; it is necessary to manifest the truth and reality of our graces, our faith in Christ, and love to him, and hope of salvation, *ib.* ; it may be for the profession of particular truths or particular duties, 388 ; considerations to press us to be prepared for death, 391.

The comfort of a well-spent life to a dying christian, xiii. 133.

Of Christ, its cause, xviii. 329 ; its occasion, 330 ; its effects, 331.

Of Christ for his people, its end was to sanctify and cleanse them, and make them a holy and peculiar people unto God, xix. 481.

A great gain and advantage to those who dedicate their lives to Christ, xx. 188 ; as soon as a man dieth, he is capable of this gain, *ib.* ; because the soul is distinct from the body, 189 ; can live and exercise its operations apart from the body, 190 ; the souls of saints do so live, *ib.* ; are in a blessed state, 192 ; pardon from all misery, *ib.* ; freedom from sin, 193 ; the vision of God, *ib.* ; full fruition of God, *ib.* ; comfortable adjuncts, 194 ; nothing lost but will be made up, 195 ; friends, ordinances, communion with God, comforts, 196.

Debt, sin comes under the notion of, i. 168 ; in respect of danger, 169 ; God our creditor, partly as a creator, partly as a lawgiver, and partly as a judge, *ib.* ; we are bound to him as the debtor to the creditor, 170 ; he hath his book of account, *ib.* ; a day of reckoning will come, *ib.* ; after the reckoning there is execution, *ib.*

Debt, difference between sin and all other, i. 171 ; none so great, *ib.* ; no day of payment is set, *ib.* ; the whole person liable for this debt, *ib.* ; there is no shifting or avoiding the danger, *ib.* ; all other debts cease at death, but not this, *ib.*

Sin comes under the notion of, in respect of the method of delivery, i. 172 ; Christ comes under the notion of a surety, *ib.* ; he made full satisfaction, *ib.* ; all who have interest in his death are set free from the great debt owed, *ib.* ; Christ hath also procured favour for us, 173 ; freedom is proclaimed in his name, *ib.* ; all who come to God through Christ may plead with God about their discharge, *ib.*

Debtors, to be forgiven, are all who have offended us in word or deed, i. 182. Believers are debtors not to the flesh but the Spirit, xii. 28 ; with respect to the order of nature, 29 ; by the condition of their spiritual being, 32.

Deceit is in the heart, in the mouth, or in practice ; none in Christ, iii. 367.

Deceitful dealing with God, an excellent way to discover, is to put the case in a sensible instance, or to parallel it with our dealings with one another, iv. 235.

Declaring our ways unto God, notes the laying open of our businesses or undertakings before him, vi. 243 ; all our straits, sorrows, and dangers, 244 ; our temptations and sins, 245.

Declinings, necessary to watch against the first, viii. 40.

Decree of election is of both end and means, iii. 105 ; sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, not causes but fruits of, 106 ; these being necessary fruits, are also evidences of, *ib.*

Decrees, God's, do not compel men to evil, iii. 374.

Of God, do not exclude the duty of creatures, and the work of second causes, iv. 338.

Of God, respect not only actions and events, but persons also, v. 125.

Of God showeth what *shall* be, his law what *must* be, v. 133.

Defection and apostasy, considerations to dissuade from, vi. 474 ; it is equal that our duty lasts as long as we would have God's blessing last, *ib.* ; we have the same reason to continue that we had to begin, *ib.* ; danger and mischievous effects of, 475 ; loss of the crown, *ib.* ; falling off more dishonourable to God than a simple refusal, *ib.* ; position after defection worse than at first, 476 ; all the promises are made to perseverance, *ib.* ; essential to assurance, *ib.*

In times of, when others contemn and forsake the ways of God, we should esteem them the more, viii. 320 ; to make amends for the contempt of others, *ib.* ; to show that we do not choose the ways of God upon foreign reasons, for fashion's sake, 321 ; there is an *anti-peristasis* in grace as well as nature, *ib.* ; to show the difference between God's people and others, *ib.* ; to defeat the enemies' purpose, *ib.*

Dejection and discouragement, in times of great, the work of a christian is not to *try*, but to *believe*, iv. 250.

Delay in turning to God, dangers of, vii. 138 ; life is uncertain, *ib.* ; the means of grace may not be continued, or not with the same power, 139 ; uncertainty of grace, *ib.*

Of religion, reproof of, ix. 408 ; your hearts are not like to be better, 409 ; the terms of the gospel will not be easier, *ib.* ; the suspicion that is upon a late repentance, *ib.*

Delays, in following Christ, exhortation against, ii. 128 ; causes of delay, 130 ; unbelief, *ib.* ; security, *ib.* ; averseness of heart, *ib.*

God's, to answer prayer designed to exercise our faith, vi. 250 : to

exercise our patience, 251 ; to try our love, *ib.* ; to enlarge our desires, *ib.*

Delight, God's, is in himself and all his attributes, and the manifestation of them in the world, but above all in his mercy, i. 195.

In God, one of the radical acts of love to him, ii. 237.

The saints', in God's statutes, vi. 148 ; in reading the word, in hearing, in conferring of it, in meditating and exercising the mind upon it ; in practice, *ib.*

In God implies a new nature, vi. 367 ; peace of conscience, or a sense of our reconciliation with God, *ib.* ; a good frame of heart, 368 ; some experience, *ib.* ; effects of, *ib.*

And complacency, the most acceptable to God of all our affections, vi. 369.

In God's love implieth obedience, vii. 317 ; love to the work for the work's sake, *ib.* ; they who have this are alone fit to ask mercy, 318 ; alone qualified to receive it, *ib.*

Delights which the godly find in God and a holy life far greater than all the pleasures and delights of the earth, vii. 4 ; more substantial, *ib.* ; more perfective, *ib.* ; their object is the commandments of God, 5 ; not folly or filthiness, *ib.* ; not only the promissory, but also the mandatory parts of the word, *ib.* ; not the study or contemplation of the justice of the commandments, but the obedience and practice of them, 6 ; reasons, 7 ; the matter of the commandments, *ib.* ; the state and frame of a renewed heart suited to them, *ib.* ; the helps and assistance of the Spirit, *ib.* ; the great encouragements which attend obedience, *ib.* ; present comfortable experiences, 10 ; because of their love of God, they have a value for all that cometh from God, and that leadeth to him, 11.

Deliverance of his people, God cometh in for, in times of greatest despair and unlikelihood, iii. 245.

From trouble never to be sought by carnal compliance, or the use of indirect means, vii. 357.

Or release from our troubles, we may beg of God, provided we do not beg it out of impatience of the flesh, but a desire of God's glory, ix. 142.

From temporal troubles, we may ask, ix. 133 ; God has promised it, *ib.* ; much of God is seen in it, *ib.* ; we have thereby greater opportunities to serve God, 134.

Delphos, oracle of, silenced at the coming of Christ, iii. 206.

Deluge, similitude between, and the day of judgment, xiv. 175.

Whether all that were drowned in, were eternally lost, xiv. 216.

Delusion, the punishment in this world of those seduced by antichrist, iii. 85 ; God the author of it, *ib.* ; sense in which he is, 87.

Denying the Lord is either open or covert, v. 156 ; in opinion, 164 ; and in practice, *ib.*

Departing of mankind from God fitly represented by the straying of sheep, iii. 300 ; implieth that we are brutish in our sin and defection from God, *ib.* ; proneness to err, *ib.* ; inability to return, 301 ; readiness to follow evil example, *ib.* ; exposure to danger, *ib.*

Dependence upon Christ, persuasions unto, i. 391 ; nothing can be done without him ; all things can be done by him for the good of his redeemed ones, *ib.*

Is that which keepeth up the acknowledgment of God in the world, i. 451.

Dependence upon God implieth a committing ourselves to his power, vii. 54 ; submitting ourselves to his will, *ib.* ; tarrying or waiting for his leisure, *ib.*

DESCRIPTION OF THE TRUE CIRCUMCISION, ii. 23.

Desertion of Christ by his Father the passion of his passion, ii. 264 ; what it was, 266 ; not in appearance or conceit only, but real, *ib.* ; not a separation of the Father from the Son, *ib.* ; nor a dissolution of the union of the two natures of Christ, *ib.* ; nor a cessation of God's love to him, *ib.* ; nor an abatement of his personal holiness, 267 ; nor an entire withdrawal of God's assistance and sustaining grace, *ib.* ; was a withdrawal of all happiness, 268 ; such desertion possible notwithstanding the union between the two natures, 269 ; was incomparably grievous, 270 ; carrieth a suitableness and respect to our sins, 271 ; our punishment, 272 ; our blessedness, 273.

Of Christ on the cross, what it was, iii. 403 ; personal union, not dissolved, *ib.* ; assisting and sustaining grace not wholly withdrawn, *ib.* ; he knew how to value the comfort of the union, *ib.* ; so near an interest and relation to God, *ib.* ; his trouble more than a believer's, because it was to be satisfactory, 404.

By God may be real or seeming, vi. 77 ; internal or external, *ib.* ; as to comfort or as to grace, 78 ; for correction or for instruction, *ib.* ; felt or not felt, 79 ; total or partial, *ib.* ; temporary or eternal, 80 ; reasons of, *ib.* ; incident to the most heavenly spirits, 81 ; directions regarding, *ib.*

Of his servants by God is in appearance, through the misgivings of their hearts, viii. 409 ; or real when he is angry for sin, 410.

Designs, God accomplisheth his greatest, by the most unlikely and despised means, iii. 242 ; that his glory may more appear, *ib.* ; that we may not see the end of his counsels, *ib.* ; that he may declare his displeasure against the pomp of the world, 243 ; that he may shame his enemies in their security, *ib.* ; that he may take off all cause of boasting from the creature, *ib.* ; that he may provide for the esteem of the meanest, 244.

Desire after God one of the radical acts of love to him, ii. 236.

Of Christ, not for ease, but for the rare beauty and perfection that are found in him, iii. 236 ; effects of, *ib.* ; a holy impatiency in the want of Christ, *ib.* ; a holy indignation at anything that would rival him in the affections, 237 ; or anything that would hinder the enjoyment of him, *ib.* ; a holy waiting, 238 ; a powerful command over the whole man, *ib.*

Holiness the proper object of, vi. 424 ; temper and constitution of the heart seen in, more than in doing, 425.

Desires, supreme end of, the glory of God, in conjunction with our own happiness, i. 3.

Much evil would ensue if all were granted, i. 379.

Against God's secret will not unlawful, when we afterwards submit to his revealed will, ii. 328.

Corrupt, make a corrupt mind, iii. 223.

When they mistake their object, miss their end, iv. 334.

A man is known by, as the temper of the body by the pulse, vii. 247.

Despair, as there is a raging, so there is a sottish, xviii. 293.

Despairing fears and blasphemous thoughts injected by Satan are not our sins, but may be punishments for our sins, i. 231.

Despised, God's people, when they are brought low, are usually, viii. 493 ; considerations to support under this trial, 494.

- Despondency* under difficulties, condemnation of, viii. 101.
- Detraction* venteth itself either by whispering or backbiting, ii. 275 ; what it is, *ib.* ; an unjust violation of another's fame, reputation, or that good report which is due to him, *ib.* ; is a sin against God, 276 ; a wrong to man, *ib.* ; proceedeth from malice and ill-will, *ib.* ; or from uncharitable credulity, 277 ; comes through rashness and unruliness of tongue, *ib.* ; or from carnal zeal, *ib.* ; whispering is when it is done privily, 278 ; backbiting when more publicly, 280 ; heinousness of the sin, 282.
- Deuteronomy*, Christ's answers to the three temptations taken from, i. 314.
- Deuteronomy* vi. 5, one of the four paragraphs the Jews were wont to write on their phylacteries and on their door-posts, and read in their houses twice a day, xiii. 169.
- Devil*, like a fly, which, if driven from one place, pitcheth upon another, i. 7. Fitly called the evil one, i. 232 ; every sin of his is a sin against the Holy Ghost, *ib.* ; unconverted men under his power, 234 ; God's children sometimes caught by his wiles, 235.
- Held in the chains of an irresistible providence, i. 259.
- Not lord of the world, i. 303 ; is the prince of this world, and the god of this world, not by right, but usurpation, 304.
- Departeth when thoroughly and resolutely resisted, i. 330 ; hath only weapons offensive, none defensive, *ib.* ; how to be resisted, *ib.*
- How set forth in scripture, iii. 67 ; by ignorance, *ib.* ; error, 68 ; idolatry, *ib.* ; bloody cruelty, 69 ; being the god of this world, *ib.*
- His envy and malice most bent against them that have most grace, v. 49.
- The great architect of wickedness, as Christ is of life and righteousness, v. 258.
- Governeth the dark parts of the world by slavish fear, but God governeth by love, ix. 469.
- His vaunt against christians (Cyprian), xii. 444.
- Devils* assent to the articles of the christian religion, iv. 241 ; horror the effect of their knowledge, 242.
- Shall be in a worse estate after the day of judgment than now, v. 209 ; fear the day of judgment, 211 ; tremble at that at which the atheistical loose christian scoffs, *ib.*
- DIE IN THE LORD, BLESSED ESTATE OF THEM WHO,** ii. 455.
- Differences* of opinion, may be, and often are, about lesser things in the church, ii. 68 ; care to be taken that these come not to a rupture and open breach, 69 ; to prevent this, all lenity and mutual forbearance must be used, 70.
- Among christians, may be so far heightened as that they shall groan one against another, as much as against the common enemy, iv. 424.
- Aggravated when carnal men intermeddle in religious controversies, v. 102.
- Among Protestants, we should choose the best way, but hold charity towards dissenters, vi. 301.
- Difficulties*, God never leaveth his people to utter and unsupportable, xviii. 446.
- Diffusion*, rapid, of christianity, the result of its power, viii. 338.
- DIGNITY OF CHRIST'S PERSON,** i. 413.
- Diligence*, necessity and seasonableness of, ii. 124.
- Required in keeping God's precepts, vi. 44 ; striving to keep the law in all the points of it, 46 ; at all times and places and in all companies, *ib.* ; with the whole man, *ib.*

Diligence required of christians in improving the present season in order to eternal life, xxii. 7.

Disappointment, reflections proper on occasions of, iv. 335.

Disciples, Christ loveth all, but not all equally, i. 340.

Of Christ, what it is to become, xvi. 483; must follow him or imitate his example, 487; wherein we should follow Christ, 489.

Discord, among brethren, sowers of, are the devil's factors, agents for the kingdom of darkness, x. 329.

Discords and estrangements between those that fear God, frequent, vii. 337; through carnal fear, *ib.*; prejudice, *ib.*; some offence may be given by us, *ib.*; difference in judgment about lesser things, *ib.*; the providence of God permitting it for wise reasons, 338; all due means should be used to heal, *ib.*; one great means is prayer, *ib.*

Discourse, a christian's, must not be profane, ix. 255; obscene or scurrilous, *ib.*; calumnious and censorious, *ib.*; proud and arrogant, 256; angry and bitter, *ib.*; nor idle, which tendeth not to the glory of God and the edification of our neighbour, 257; must be edifying, 258; because our tongue is our glory, *ib.*; because conference and edifying discourse is one means of spiritual growth and improvement to ourselves and others, *ib.*; it is a mighty comfortable duty to confer together of holy things, 259; the well-ordering of our words is a great point of christianity, and argueth a good degree of grace, *ib.*; means to, 260; divine illumination, *ib.*; a sight of the excellency of the word, *ib.*; a stock of spiritual knowledge, *ib.*; zeal for the glory of God, and love to the souls of others, 261; wisdom, *ib.*; watchfulness and heed, *ib.*

DISCOURSES, SEVERAL, TENDING TO PROMOTE PEACE AND HOLINESS, ii. 1.

Diseases, Christ's action of taking away, a type of his taking away sin, iii. 262.

The soul hath its, as well as the body, iii. 286; of the soul greater than of the body, *ib.*; sin the great sickness of the soul, 287. See *Sin*.

Disobedience, children of, xix. 232; stubborn, obstinate, and ignorant sinners, *ib.*; disobey either the light of nature or the light of the gospel, *ib.*; misery of, 237; God's people must not be partakers with, 239.

Dispensations of God are right as to the cause, the measure, and the end, vii. 289; to consider the justice and faithfulness of, would much quiet the minds of God's people, 291.

Disputes against the grace and promises of God, man's nature much given to, iv. 50.

Distinctions, civil, christianity doth not abolish, xix. 428.

DISTRACTIONS IN HOLY DUTIES, HOW WE MAY CURE, v. 441.

Distraction of thoughts in worship, a great sin, and a degree of hypocrisy, v. 443; causes, 449; Satan, who lieth in wait to hinder the prayers of the saints, *ib.*; the natural levity of our spirits, 450; practical atheism, *ib.*; strong and unmortified lusts, *ib.*; want of love to God and holy things, 451; slightness and irreverence, or want of a sense of God's presence, *ib.*; the curiosity of the senses, 452; carking and distrustful cares, *ib.*; remedies, 453; go to God and wait for the power of his grace, *ib.*; meditate on the greatness of him before whom we are, *ib.*; mortify those lusts that withdraw the mind, 454; prepare for the duty, *ib.*; be nearer to your purpose, *ib.*; bring to every holy service strong spiritual affections, 455; remember the weight and consequence of the duties of religion, *ib.*; let every wandering make you more humble and careful, 456; cultivate a

- constant heavenliness and holiness of heart, *ib.*; practise frequent solemn meditation, *ib.*
- Distraction* and ruin, men usually most secure and carnal before their own, iv. 408.
- Diversity* of rank and degree, rich and poor, high and low, an act of the will of God, xxi. 146; this ought the more to move us to attend to the wants of the poor and needy, 148.
- Divine* things, good to illustrate, by similitudes taken from earthly, iv. 282.
Truths are received and improved by sound belief, serious consideration, and close application, xii. 319; they challenge our faith, 320; we should not pass them by with a few running and glancing thoughts, *ib.*; their application is both direct and reflexive, *ib.*; we should awaken ourselves to more earnest and serious consideration on particular occasions, 321.
- Divinity* of Christ, no greater proof of, than his resurrection, iii. 351.
Of Christ proved, v. 161.
- Division* and dissentiency among God's people a great cause of the decay of godliness, v. 433.
- Doctrine*, the drawing of the bow, application the hitting of the mark, iv. 357.
Corrupt, produceth corrupt fruits, v. 280.
Perverse, and a perverse aim are seldom severed, x. 219.
None so sound but a corrupt heart will abuse it, xi. 306.
- Doctrines* and points of divinity, we should not precipitate our judgment concerning, iv. 135.
Fundamental, and necessary for salvation, are plain, viii. 348.
- Dominion*, God's sovereign, a great prop to faith, i. 328.
- Double-minded* man, one that hath two souls, may imply either a hypocrite or one that is distracted and divided in his thoughts, or one whose mind is tossed to and fro with various and uncertain motives, iv. 55.
- Doubt*, not a duty, iii. 281.
- Doubtfulness* of mind, the cause of uncertainty in life and conversation, iv. 57.
- Doubling*, doctrine of, keepeth conscience on the rack, and leaveth men to the torment of their own distracted thoughts, iv. 51.
- Drawing* near to God, what it is, iv. 367; how effected, 368; special acts in, *ib.*
- Dreams*, waking, two sorts of, v. 231; of opinion, when we hug error instead of truth, *ib.*; of hope, when we cherish presumption instead of faith, 232.
- Drunkenness*, nature of, xix. 391; heinousness of, 393; a wasteful profusion of the blessings of God's providence, *ib.*; of our fame, *ib.*; of our bodies, *ib.*; of our souls, 394.
- DUTIES, PREFERENCE OF, ii. 5.**
- DUTIES, HOLY, HOW WE MAY CURE DISTRACTIONS IN, v. 441.**
- Duties*, particular and private, not to be done in public, i. 5.
We may use accustomed, but not out of custom, i. 21.
Preference of, ii. 6; all that God commandeth must be respected, *ib.*; yet all are not equal, nor all sins equal, 7; simple of the first table greater than of the second, *ib.*; moral and substantial take precedence of ceremonial observances, though these belong to the first table, 8; when the breach of a ceremonial precept bringeth with it the transgression of a moral precept, then we are not to transgress in the smallest externals, 10; if the externals of God's worship, instituted by

- himself, must give place to mercy, much more ought externals of human institution, 11.
- Duties*, slight, suit best with a heart that is unwilling to come under the power of religion, ii. 16.
- Performed by the christian as a thank-offering rather than a sin-offering, out of love to God rather than fear, ii. 55.
- Of christianity, cannot be rightly discharged while the heart cleaveth to earthly things, ii. 134.
- All human, must give place to the duty we owe to God, ii. 122.
- Praiseworthy to be easy to be entreated *in*, but not *from*, ii. 329.
- A christian never turns second-table into first-table, ii. 373.
- Must be done, events referred to God, ii. 382.
- Christ honoured in, when we look for their acceptance in him, iv. 19 ; when we look for assistance from him, *ib.*
- Commendation of, is the ready discharge of them, iv. 131 ; when the soul deliberateth about, it neglecteth, *ib.*
- Done truly when done in God's sight, iv. 378.
- Whether we are to do, under deadness and indisposition, vi. 240 ; influence of grace not the warrant of duty, but the help, *ib.* ; sinful indisposition cannot excuse us, 241 ; natural men commanded to pray and perform duties, therefore renewed men, *ib.* ; outward acts of duty commanded as well as inward, *ib.* ; we are to wait humbly in the use of means for the power of grace, *ib.* ; acting in spiritual duties fits us for them, *ib.* ; a supply cometh in ere we are aware, 242 ; we are to rouse ourselves, *ib.*
- To be done, though we be in a state of deadness, indisposition, and straits of spirit, vi. 334.
- How we honour Christ in performing, xiii. 438.
- Where faith gives a willing mind, bodily infirmities will be no let or hindrance, xiv. 404.
- Duty*, three things incline the soul to : a forcible principle, a mighty aid, a high aim, ii. 233 ; all these are where faith is, *ib.*
- And privilege, connection of, ii. 348.
- A great part of man's, dependeth on prayer seriously performed, iii. 136.
- In the institution of, there is a word of command and a word of promise, iv. 128.
- Not only the work of, but all the circumstances of, must be regarded, iv. 216.
- Coming immediately out of our hands would yield an ill savour, therefore Christ intercepteth it in the passage, and so it is perfumed in the hands of a mediator, iv. 254.
- One, cannot excuse the omission of another, vi. 57.
- Cautions about, vii. 148 ; do not believe the devil, that there will be a more convenient season, *ib.* ; let not the world choke the word, *ib.* ; consult not with the flesh, 149 ; be not discouraged with tediousness and difficulty, *ib.* ; be not discouraged by apparent withholding of God's grace, 150.
- The end of deliverance, vii. 216.
- And obedience, God's children think of, when they think of mercy, ix. 53.
- Persistence in, a ground of confidence before God, ix. 134.
- Dwelling* in tents, of the patriarchs, teaches us a variety of lessons, xiv. 265.
- Dwelling-place*, God is his people's, xviii. 171 ; for defence, 174 ; comforts, 177 ; rest, *ib.* ; none sure for us on this side God, 184.
- Dying*, the words of, apt to be much observed, xix. 14.

Early turning to God's ways, advantage of, vii. 136.

Coming to Christ, the desirableness and advantages of, xvi. 412, 446.

Earnest, the nature of an earnest, xii. 484; its end and use, 485; they who have the earnest of the Spirit are and may be confident of their future glorious estate, 487; the nature of this confidence, *ib.*; the opposites of it, 488; its effects, 489; its properties, 491; how this confidence ariseth from having the earnest of the Spirit in our heart, 492.

Earth, stability of, an emblem of the stability of God's promises, vii. 411; is the effect of God's word, *ib.*; nothing appeareth whereon the globe can lean and rest, *ib.*; its stability perpetual, 412; in the midst of changes, *ib.*; in upholding, all those attributes are seen which are a stay to a believer's heart, as wisdom, power, goodness, *ib.*

Earthly-mindedness, the temper and disposition of such men as are for the present in a state of damnation, xx. 134; is minding of earthly things only, *ib.*; or chiefly, 135; is a renouncing of the true God, 137; is a glorying in shame, 139; endeth in everlasting destruction, 142; exhortation against, 143; dissuasives from, 145.

Easiness to be entreated, different from flexibility, iv. 319; must be shown in condescension to all honest and just motives and requests, *ib.*; yielding to the persuasions of the word, *ib.*; yielding to the counsels of others when better reason is discovered, *ib.*; in matters of dispute, not jangling beyond sobriety, *ib.*

EATER, MEAT OUT OF THE, v. 377.

Effectual calling, faith the fruit of, xii. 281; the fruit of God's eternal purpose, which he purposed in himself, to save us by Christ, 282; love to God a sure and sensible note of, 283.

Calling, the properties of, xii. 288; the ends of, both on God's part and the creature's, 289; in this calling God sheweth forth his love and grace, 290; it is an act of power, 291; exhortations to make our calling and election sure, 292; signs by which the sureness of our calling may be made known to us, 293.

EIGHTEEN SERMONS ON ANTICHRIST, iii. 1.

Elect, do not all at once obey the heavenly call, ii. 121.

Given to Christ by way of reward, iii. 407; and by way of charge, *ib.*

Certainty of their salvation, x. 213; Christ's notice of, 214.

Are in time distinguished from others by being conformed to the image of Christ, xii. 303; this conformity consisteth in three things—in sufferings and afflictions, in righteousness and holiness, and in felicity and glory, 304; why this conformity to the image of Christ is the distinction between the elect and others, 305; it suiteth with God's design of recovering man out of his lapsed estate, *ib.*; they are all called christians after Christ's name, 306; they are sealed by the Spirit, *ib.*; Christ is their example, *ib.*; they who are no way like Christ have little hope of getting to heaven, 307.

Election, eternal, of ourselves and others, the great matter of our thanksgiving to God, iii. 104; arises from the mere love of God, *ib.*

Doctrine of, should be preached, to detect the pride of man, to extol the glory of God in our salvation, as a great incentive to holiness, as a ground of solid comfort, iii. 110.

Refusal to accept the gospel on the ground of the uncertainty of, iii. 333; enough in Christ's death to merit pardon for ten thousand times more than are, or ever shall be, in the world, *ib.*; though sufficient for all, the efficacy and benefit intended for believers, *ib.*; God intended him

- such a sufficient sacrifice to the world, 334 ; God serious and earnest in the offer of Christ to all, *ib.*
- Election*, calling, or promise of God, does not supersede the use of means, v. 488 ; God hath bidden us believe his promises, but forbidden us to tempt his providence, 489.
- To privileges of grace, matter of great thankfulness, x. 197.
- The purpose of God in election is the calling of certain persons according to his supreme will, xii. 295 ; arguments in confirmation of this doctrine, 298 ; exhortation to admiration of elective grace, 300.
- Since all men sinned in Adam, God had done us no injury if he had left us to perish in this estate, xx. 354 ; it was of the great love of God that he provided a redeemer and saviour for us, 355 ; to bring about faith in Christ crucified, he sends messengers with the glad tidings where he will and to whom he will, 356 ; the gospel, where it is sent, prevaleth not on all alike, 356 ; the cause of this, 357 ; God's call is earnestly and affectionately managed by warning, teaching, and persuasion, *ib.* ; besides outward means, there is much common grace to help, 359 ; if men do all that they can, will God give them grace ? 360 ; faith in Christ and salvation by him is the mere gift of God, *ib.* ; that this grace is given to some and not to others floweth from God's eternal decree, 362 ; exhortation to make our calling and election sure, *ib.*
- Ends*, the christian's, ix. 438 ; the glory of God, *ib.* ; the saving of his own soul, *ib.* ; the good of others, 439.
- Enemies*, of our souls, conquered by Christ, cannot harm us, but rather do us good, iii. 468.
- Love of, is a high grace, and recommended to us by Christ's own example, xix. 19.
- ENGLAND'S SPIRITUAL LANGUISHING, WITH THE CAUSES AND CURE, v. 411.
- Engrafting*, wherein the natural process is unlike the mystery of union to Christ, xi. 183 ; wherein it is like, *ib.*
- Enjoyment* of God is mediately in this world, immediately in heaven, vi. 112.
- Enjoyments*, the blessing of all, in God's hand, i. 163.
- Worldly, their uncertainty, iv. 69 ; they may leave us, we must leave them, *ib.* ; resembled to a flower, beautiful, but fading, 70 ; the fairest are the most fading, 71 ; perishing in themselves, but especially when the hand of Providence is stretched out against them, 72.
- Enlargement* of heart is general or particular, vi. 325 ; general, is at regeneration or conversion to God, *ib.* ; consists in freedom from the power of sin, *ib.* ; and from the bondage of conscience, or fears of death and hell, 326 ; particular, is the actual assistance of the Lord's grace, carrying us on in the duties of our heavenly calling with more success, 327 ; an effect of wisdom and knowledge, *ib.* ; of faith, 328 ; of comfort and joy, through the assurance of God's love, *ib.* ; a fruit of love, 329 ; necessary in order to our running the way of God's commandments, *ib.* ; hindrances of, 330 ; mistakes regarding, 331.
- Enlightenment* by the Spirit, is not giving a new revelation, vi. 164 ; is negative and positive, taking away the veil, and infusion of light, *ib.* ; necessary to give us a clear sight of the truths of God, 166 ; and an applicative sight, *ib.* ; an affective sight, 167 ; a transforming sight, *ib.* ; a lust-destroying light, *ib.*
- Enmity*, the whole world the enemies of christians, xii. 325 ; how far this enmity is permitted to extend, *ib.* ; reasons why we need not be troubled at this opposition, 326 ; objections answered, 330.
- Between Christ and Satan, on Satan's part is both of nature and

design, on Christ's part, of nature and office, xviii. 17 ; such is between the confederates on either side, 18.

Enmity to God, different kinds of, described, xiii. 296.

Enoch, book of his prophecy considered spurious and apocryphal, v. 290.

A type of the ascension of Christ, and an example of the fruits of faith, xiv. 33 ; whether he was translated in soul and body, *ib.* ; whether he died in the translation, *ib.* ; whither he was translated, 36 ; an assurance to the fathers of eternal life, as Christ in gospel times to believers, 37.

Envy argueth either a nullity or a poverty of grace, a nullity when it reigneth, a weakness when it is resisted and not overcome, iv. 303 ; ariseth from pride, is carried out in covetousness and evil desire, and ends in discontent, 304.

Natural corruption doth most of all bewray itself by, iv. 348.

Is a sin whereby we grieve at another's good, whether hurtful to us or no, xviii. 376 ; at the prosperity of the wicked, 377 ; people of God subject to fall into, 378 ; should not be so affected, 379 ; mischievous effects of, 383 ; remedies for, 385.

Epictetus, his saying as to glorifying God, xiii. 130.

Equality of all men by nature, xix. 435 ; possible in the course of God's providence, 436.

Equivocation, jesuitical, unjustifiable, vi. 286.

Erring from God's commandments is either of frailty or obstinacy, vi. 194.

Error, not good to brand things with the name of, till we have proved them to be so, iv. 105 ; to be as carefully avoided as vice, 106.

Is taking and catching, of a marvellous compliance with our natural thoughts, iv. 474.

Proceedeth either from ignorance or from judicial blindness, viii. 54.

Errors in the church, breed atheism in the world, ii. 88.

In doctrine breed troubles of mind, iii. 18.

Damnable, take not effect on God's elect, iii. 77.

Popish, some more capital, others not so deadly, iii. 79.

Of judgment, as well as sins of practice, may bring damnation on the souls of men, iii. 95 ; some more than others especially damning, *ib.* ; from the matter, if destructive of the way of salvation by Christ, 96 ; from the manner, when men profess what they do not believe, *ib.* ; when they are vented to the seducing of others, and rending the church, 97 ; when, though they do not err fundamentally, they debauch christianity, *ib.* ; when there is gross negligence, or no pains taken to know better, *ib.* ; ways and errors of Popery damnable, *ib.*

If all, and the memorials of them, annihilated by the power of God, enough in the heart of one man to revive them next day, v. 115 ; first appearance of, many times modest, 117.

Come in blushing, with a modest dress, but usually go out of the world with a great deal of shame, v. 285.

Usually not long-lived, v. 393 ; in judgment as carefully to be avoided as vice in conversation, 397.

Establishment is confirmation in grace received, iii. 177 ; is habitual or actual, *ib.* ; is in the doctrine of faith, 178 ; in every good work, or in holiness of life, *ib.* ; very difficult, 179 ; its subject the soul with its faculties, *ib.* ; the mind or understanding, *ib.* ; the will, 180 ; the affections, 181, necessary for duties, *ib.* ; afflictions, *ib.* ; conflicts, 182 ; prevents not only falling away, but shaking, *ib.* ; its necessity,

- 183 ; to be sought of God, 184 ; especially to be sought when we begin to decline, 185 ; in unsettled times, 186.
- ESTATE, BLESSED, OF THEM THAT DIE IN THE LORD, ii. 455.
- Esteem*, christians should not religiously value others for external and carnal advantages, xiii. 220 ; not to deny civil regard and honour to the wicked and carnal, but render that respect which is due to their rank and quality, *ib.* ; the cause of God must not be abandoned because those of the other side have more outward advantages, 221.
- Of Christ, how Christ must be esteemed, speculatively and practically, xiv. 463 ; reasons why Christ must be so esteemed that his worst may be better to us than the world's best, 465.
- ETERNAL EXISTENCE, CHRIST'S, i. 413.
- Eternal* punishment may, without injustice, be inflicted for sin of short continuance, v. 288.
- As God is, so is his word, vii. 391.
- Life not a chimera, vii. 405 ; not upon impossible terms, *ib.* ; not upon a defective conveyance, *ib.*
- Life everywhere propounded in scripture as the great encouragement of our endeavours either in subduing sin or perfecting holiness, xii. 83 ; reasons proving that the life promised as the reward of mortification is eternal life, 83 ; the expediency of the promise of eternal life as the fruit of the mortification of sin, 86 ; the nature of this life, its personal benefit and happiness, *ib.* ; a threefold use of the reward of eternal life in the work of mortification, 87 ; the sufficiency and powerfulness of the motive, because of its certainty and excellence, 88 ; compared with life natural and spiritual, 89.
- Life must be expected in the way of God's promise, xii. 198 ; its expectation is certain and desirous, 199.
- Life, the qualifications of those who shall enjoy this blessed estate, xii. 436 ; different persuasions in point of certainty as to interest in, 438 ; reasons why we should attend upon the work of assuring ourselves the possession of eternal life, 439 ; the virtue and force of this assurance, 440 ; exhortation to belief in the promised glory, 442 ; the necessity of this belief, *ib.* ; it constituteth a main difference between the animal and spiritual life, 443 ; it is little credited in the world, *ib.* ; evidence of this, 444 ; how faith in the gospel worketh us to the other world, 446 ; how we should rouse up our faith, and more firmly believe the promised glory, 447 ; next to a sound belief of it there must be an earnest expectation of it, *ib.* ; we should diligently prepare and seek after it in the way of holiness, 448 ; clear up our interest in it, 449 ; and improve it to the vanquishing of temptations, *ib.*
- Punishments and rewards, their end is that every man may receive according to his deserts, xiii. 81 ; the distinction of persons, *ib.* ; as there are different persons, so there are different recompenses, 82 ; the notions by which these different states are expressed, 83 ; they are alike eternal, 85 ; how it can stand with the justice of God to cast men into everlasting torment, *ib.* ; the sentence certain, speedy, and unavoidable, 87 ; executed upon the wicked first, 88.
- Life, the right and interest of believers in, proved from scripture and by reason, xiv. 40 ; persuasions to faith on this ground and motive, 42 ; directions how to exercise and act faith in order to eternal life, 43 ; the love and grace of God in providing such an estate, 46 ; a comfort to God's children against want, trouble, and death, *ib.*

Eternal life, the work of faith respecting, xv. 75.

Life, what it is to have, xxi. 131.

Eternity is of infinite, interminable duration, without beginning or ending, vii. 391 ; as without beginning and end, so without change, 392 ; of God, proved by scripture and reason, *ib.* ; seen in his wisdom, *ib.* ; his power, 393 ; his goodness and mercy, *ib.* ; belongs to him as a governor, *ib.* ; as a benefactor, 394 ; of creatures must be understood as communicated, dependent, and extending to the future, but not to the past, 395 ; thoughts of God should lessen our estimation of all other things, 396.

Frequent and serious meditation upon, doth greatly promote the great ends of the gospel, vii. 399.

And time, things of, compared, xiv. 468.

We were made for, xviii. 284 ; puts a value upon things in themselves small, whether good or evil, 288.

Euchites, the ancient, their error as to prayer, xvii. 492.

Eusebius on the Chocabites and Nazarites, xiii. 228 ; the Epistle to the Galatians supposed to be written against these sects, *ib.*

Evangelists, their narratives of the temptation of Christ reconciled, i. 270.

Events, the glory of, belongs to God himself, i. 81.

Everlasting life, Enoch an assurance of, to the fathers, as Christ to believers, xiv. 37.

Evidence (ἔλεγχος), meaning of the word, xiii. 345.

EVIL OF LOOKING BACK, ii. 130.

Evil, may either be 'the evil one' or 'the evil thing' (Mat. vi. 13), i. 232.

Deliverance from, implies God's weakening the strength of inbred corruption, that we may not be foiled by it, i. 239 ; if we be foiled by it, that we may not lie in it, nor cease to resist it, *ib.*

Speaking, of another, not always unlawful, yet hard to keep from sin, ii. 277 ; cautions regarding, *ib.*

Must we in no case speak, of another? vi. 420 ; be sure that it is not a downright slander, *ib.* ; speak not *of* him, but *to* him, 421 ; if of him, it should be with tenderness and grief, *ib.*

Must be kept at a distance, as it is evil, and contrary to the holy nature and will of God, viii. 28 ; must refrain from every sinful course, *ib.* ; not only from notorious sins, but those that are plausible and of reputation in the world, 29 ; from outward and inward, *ib.* ; from profitable and pleasant, *ib.* ; from sins against either table, *ib.* ; from great sins and small sins, 30 ; from evil though done out of a good intention, *ib.* ; from our own special sins, 31 ; from the sins of the times wherein we live, *ib.* ; from all the occasions and appearances of, *ib.* ; reasons, 32 ; sins will weaken our graces, *ib.* ; and weaken our comforts, 33.

Evil-doers, separation from, is necessary for a conjunction with God, viii. 177.

Evil-speaking is either whispering or backbiting, iv. 380.

Evil times, sad symptoms of, vii. 353 ; when reformation is rejected, and corruptions settle upon their own base, *ib.* ; when our deliverance is likely to prove a mischief and a misery, because we are not prepared to receive it, *ib.* ; when there is a damp upon the spirit of prayer, and men give over seeking to God for deliverance as a hopeless thing, *ib.* ; when God is upon his judicial process, and no course is taken to reconcile ourselves to him, 354 ; when dispensations tend, or seem to tend, to the removal of the candlestick, *ib.*

- Evils* of this life, how far God hath undertaken to keep his people from, i. 240.
 Better borne when they are undeserved and involuntary, when we fall into them, rather than draw them upon ourselves, iv. 26.
- Exact* or circumspect walking, the duty of God's children, xix. 346; have a strict rule, *ib.*; a holy God, 347; he is our witness, *ib.*; and our approver and judge, *ib.*; are children of light, 348; helps to, 356.
- Exaltation* of Christ began with his resurrection, x. 191; advanced in his ascension, *ib.*; his sitting at the Father's right hand, *ib.*; useful for our comfort and our instruction, 193.
- Example* of Christ of great support to us in all our troubles, ii. 345.
 Of Christ, the heavenliness of it and the courage of it, x. 385.
- Examples* of suffering saints in the word a comfort in affliction, vii. 34.
 Good, should be given and taken, xx. 116; responsibility for others, 117; encouragements to follow good, 118; caution against evil, 119; helps to make us exemplary, 120.
- EXCELLENCY OF SAVING FAITH, ii. 140.
- EXCUSE, NONE AGAINST A SPEEDY OBEYING CHRIST'S CALL, ii. 121.
- Excuses*, common, for putting off acceptance of the gospel, ii. 124; the difficulty of religion, *ib.*; the danger of it, 125; want of time to attend to it, *ib.*; want of power to do good, *ib.*; insufficiency of, 126.
 Always the sign of a haughty heart, ix. 206.
 For negligence in God's service, ix. 476; carnal men are ill versed in the art of excusing evil, and that which they think maketh for them usually maketh against them, 477; argue an ill spirit and an unwilling heart, 478; specimens of, 479.
- Exhortations*, to mingle, with prayer, a great abuse, i. 25.
- EXISTENCE, CHRIST'S ETERNAL, i. 413.
- Expectation* of the promised future blessedness must be serious and earnest, vii. 364; lively, *ib.*; constant and unconquerable, *ib.*; sure and certain, as built upon God's truth and faithfulness, *ib.*
- Experience*, hope wrought by, produceth not only a conditional certainty, but an actual confidence of our own salvation, iii. 159.
 Comfortable, that flows from obedience, vii. 10; peace, *ib.*; joy in the Holy Ghost, *ib.*; particular, when borne out in confession of truth in time of trial, 11.
 Of God's grace in preserving us from sin and danger should encourage us in his ways, viii. 206; because of the obligation, *ib.*; this is such a mercy as gives us hope of more mercy in that kind, 207.
 Of former times, an encouragement to trust God for the future, ix. 123.
- Experiences*, of the saints, carnal men not fit to judge of, vi. 267.
 How the word is accomplished in the course of God's providence, and inward feelings of our own hearts, to be observed, vi. 403.
 Of the Lord's quickening and awakening our hearts will be remembered, vii. 434; and should be, 435.
- EXPOSITION, PRACTICAL, OF THE FIFTY-THIRD CHAPTER OF ISAIAH, iii. 187.
- EXPOSITION, WITH NOTES, OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES, iv. 1.
- EXPOSITION, WITH NOTES, ON THE EPISTLE OF JUDE, v. 1.
- Expositions*, false, confuted by inspection of the context, scope of the writer, comparing of obscure places with clear, iii. 25.
- Externals*, in religion, either commanded by God, ii. 47; or invented by men, 48.
 Over-doing in, is usually an undoing in religion, ii. 96.
- Eyes*, lifting up of, implies faith, hope, and patience, viii. 268.
 Lifting up to heaven, indicates the raising of the heart to God in

prayer, x. 111 ; spiritual reverence of God, 112 ; confidence in God, and a disclaiming of all sublunary confidences, *ib.* ; taking off the heart from the world, and from carnal desires, *ib.*

Fainting, of the soul is when comfort is quite gone, vii. 354 ; arises from the tediousness of present sorrows and pressures, 355 ; or from a fervent and strong desire, *ib.* ; either causeth great trouble and dejection of spirit, or defection and falling off from God, *ib.* ; considerations to preserve us from, 356.

It is a great infirmity and weakness if a christian should faint in a time of trouble, xii. 227 ; reasons why, *ib.* ; weariness and fainting compared, *ib.* ; in this weakness, if left to ourselves, we should fail but for the help of the Holy Spirit, 228 ; they who rouse themselves up and use all means are in a nearer capacity to receive this help than others, 229 ; exhortations against fainting under troubles, 230.

FAITH, SAVING, EXCELLENCE OF, ii. 140.

FAITH, LIFE OF, A TREATISE ON THE, xv. 45.

Faith, begotten in the word, exercised in prayer, i. 30.

Its nature is to appropriate and apply, i. 55.

Hope, love, and zeal, lead christians to desire Christ's second coming, i. 115 ; also their experiences, 116.

Three things in, assent, acceptance, dependence, i. 390.

Convinces us of the worth and truth of the things promised by God through Christ, ii. 141 ; what that is by which the just do live, 142 ; it looketh mainly to heaven, *ib.* ; the sure ground which it goeth upon is God's promise through Jesus Christ, 143 ; its nature is trust and confidence, 145 ; its immediate fruit and effect is a forsaking all other hopes and happiness for Christ's sake for the blessedness which he offereth, 146.

Doth not merit salvation as a reward, ii. 153 ; is assent, consent, and affianced, 154 ; is a believing in Christ, 155 ; the prime benefits which it respecteth are reconciliation with God, and the everlasting fruition of him in glory, 156 ; immediate acts and effects of, 158.

And repentance, in what they agree, ii. 194 ; in what they differ, 195 ; reasons why these are required in order to pardon, 196.

A firm and cordial assent to truth, ii. 349 ; a consent to receive Christ as offered, 350 ; trust in him for the blessings he hath procured for us and promised to us, 351.

Why required that we may receive benefit by Christ, ii. 353 ; in respect of God, that our hearts may be possessed with a full apprehension of his grace, *ib.* ; with respect to Christ, because it alone can apprehend the whole dispensation of grace by him, 354 ; because till we believe in him, we can have no comfort or use of all his offices, *ib.* ; with respect to that holiness and obedience which God expecteth from the creature, 355 ; with respect to our comfort, *ib.* ; confutation of presumptions regarding, 356.

Alone is but as sight, with love as taste, iii. 81.

Though the gift of God, yet we must labour for, iii. 215 ; to see our own weakness, *ib.* ; to manifest our obedience to God, and meet him in his own way, *ib.* ; to manifest our desires after it, 216 ; because, although we may not get faith by using the means, we shall not without using them, *ib.* ; likely that God will meet us in his own way, *ib.* ; his usual way to meet those that seek him, *ib.*

Is to a godly, as reason is to a natural man, iii. 226.

Faith, a knowledge or apprehension of Jesus Christ, iii. 421 ; yet there is a knowledge, and there are apprehensions, of Christ, which are not faith, *ib.* ; effects of faith ascribed to knowledge, *ib.* ; most considerable acts of faith expressed by words proper to knowledge, *ib.* ; some objects of faith are things to be known and apprehended according to the revelation of God, 422 ; faith opposed to such things as imply a defect of knowledge, *ib.* ; God's work in reference to the begetting of faith plainly expressed to be a work upon the understanding, *ib.*

Why, of all other graces, the one that justifies, iii. 435 ; it is the most receptive grace, *ib.* ; most loyal and true to God, *ib.* ; makes the way more sure, *ib.* ; it was by unbelief that we fell, so by faith we are restored, *ib.* ; acts of justifying, 436 ; two implied, a sight of ourselves, and of our inability to help ourselves, *ib.* ; formal explicit acts, 437 ; knowledge of Christ, his goodness and excellency, *ib.* ; desire, *ib.* ; seeking of Christ, *ib.* ; receiving and resting upon Christ, *ib.* ; is always renewing its own acts, 438 ; aimeth at the increase of itself, *ib.* ; humbleth and smiteth for sin, 439 ; purgeth the heart from sin, *ib.* ; sets a high price and value upon Christ, *ib.* ; worketh by love, *ib.* ; how it justifies, 440 ; not as a joint cause with works, *ib.* ; not as an act of grace in us, *ib.* ; not as merely receiving the witness of our justification, *ib.* ; as an instrument which God hath deputed to the apprehension and application of Christ's righteousness, *ib.*

Those who have faith must look for trials, iv. 32 ; those that are under trials must look to their faith, *ib.*

Pretences of, easy and usual, iv. 233.

The life of our lives, the soul that animateth the whole body of obedience, iv. 237.

Barren, is dead, iv. 244 ; because it may stand with a natural state, in which we are dead in trespasses and sins, *ib.* ; because it receiveth not the quickening influences of the Spirit, *ib.* ; because it wanteth the effect of life, which is operative, *ib.* ; because it is unavailable to eternal life, *ib.*

And presumption, the difference between, doth not lie in the security of persuasion, but the grounds of it, iv. 247.

How made perfect by works, iv. 253, 255 ; works do not perfect by communication and imputation of their perfection to it, but by stirring, exercising, and intending the natural vigour of it, 254 ; its influence upon all a christian's actings, *ib.* ; because it hath the advantage of a sweet principle, working by love, *ib.* ; presents strong encouragements, *ib.* ; breaketh the force of opposite propensions, 255.

Purifieth, not in the Popish sense, as a most perfect grace, or as a good work done by us, but in its relation to Christ, as it receiveth Christ and his satisfactory righteousness, iv. 257.

Dead, cannot be true, and true cannot be without works, iv. 269.

Doctrine of, mercy of God in delivering, v. 106 ; in committing to writing, 107 ; in preserving, 108 ; in stirring up men for its opening and application, *ib.* ; that it is given to our nation, *ib.* ; and to believers, in the power and efficacy of it, 109 ; duty of the church to publish, own, and defend, 110 ; and to preserve and transmit in purity to the next age, *ib.*

Often expressed by the terms motion, coming, running, going, seeking, vi. 22.

The adventon of, vi. 454 ; waiting of, *ib.* ; obstinacy and resolution of,

455 ; submission and resignation of, *ib.* ; prudence of, *ib.* ; obedience of, *ib.*

Faith in a promise, how we may know that it is of God's raising, vii. 25 ; if the promise be not mistaken, and we do presume of that absolutely which God hath promised conditionally, *ib.* ; when the qualification of the person is not clear, we must not absolutely promise ourselves the effect, 26 ; in the promises of spiritual and eternal mercies, when God's conditions are performed by us, *ib.* ; when God raiseth in our minds some particular express hope to things of a temporal nature, and where our qualification is clear, *ib.*

True, includes in it an election and choice of Christ, not only as good, but as more excellent, more necessary for us, more beneficial to us, than all other things, vii. 154.

Planted in the heart is nourished and increased by more knowledge and understanding, vii. 222.

Opening the eyes of, argueth a closing of the eye of sense, so that we are not withdrawn by vain objects, vii. 362 ; nor discouraged with contrary appearances, *ib.*

Necessary to make application of the blessings promised in the word of God, viii. 173.

Hope, and patience are apt to fail, viii. 271 ; because these graces are weak in the best, and may fail under long and sharp trials, *ib.* ; because temptations raise strange clouds and mists in the soul, *ib.* ; carnal affections are hasty and impetuous, 272 ; man's mutability, *ib.* ; this failing but an infirmity of the saints ; though their hope be weak and ready to faint, it is not quite dead, *ib.*

And obedience must be well grounded, or else they will have no stability, viii. 455 ; they cannot be well grounded but upon such a doctrine as is true and righteous, *ib.* ; the true and righteous doctrine must be backed with a strong and powerful authority, strictly and severely enjoined, *ib.* ; this divine authority, truth and righteousness, is only to be found in God's testimonies or in his word, 456 ; they that would receive the word as the word of God must be soundly convinced of, and seriously consider, this righteousness and faithfulness in the testimonies which he has commanded, 461. See *Testimonies* which God, &c.

And hope, distinction between ; we believe things past, present, and future, but hope for things to come only ; of things to come, we believe both promises and threatenings, but hope only for things desirable, ix. 220.

To the working of, there usually concur the light of the Spirit, external confirmation, and the use of fit instruments, x. 221.

The word is the proper means to work, x. 227 ; miracles neither necessary nor to be expected, *ib.* ; illapses of the Spirit, without waiting on the word, not to be expected, *ib.* ; cannot be without knowledge, 229 ; light of, is serious and considerate, 230 ; realising, *ib.* ; wrought by the Spirit, *ib.* ; transforming, 231 ; undoubted certain, *ib.* ; is a receiving the word, 232 ; as the word of God, *ib.* ; the whole word, *ib.* ; with the whole heart, 233 ; implieth an act of the will, *ib.* ; accompanied with some sensible objection, *ib.* ; this affection accompanied with a pursuit, or serious making after these hopes, 234 ; these endeavours supported by affiance, *ib.* ; is a receiving Christ, *ib.* ; implieth that our whole and sole dependence must be entirely carried out to him, 235 ; that he is received as an all-sufficient

- Saviour, every faculty seeking contentment in him, *ib.* ; making after him with the earnest motions and lively affections of the soul, as desire and delight, 236.
- Faith*, the necessity of, in temporal affliction, xii. 145.
- And hope, the cognation that is between, xii. 202 ; wherein they differ, *ib.*
- And love, exercise great influence on our victory over the world, xii. 399.
- Is such a belief of God's love to us in Christ as giveth us a lively sense of it in our souls, xii. 281 ; faith is the fruit of effectual calling, *ib.*
- Hope, and love, evidence to the christian that heaven is his home, xiii. 5.
- And sight contrasted and distinguished, xiii. 12 ; the one is for earth, the other for heaven, 14 ; until we have sight it is a great advantage to have faith, 16 ; the relief faith yields in prospect of eternal life, *ib.* ; reasons why those having faith are not satisfied till they have sight, 17 ; sight either ocular or contemplative, 18 ; if we have faith we may be sure we shall have sight, *ib.* ; prepares us for, and gives us a title to, the things expressed by sight, 19 ; we must walk or live by faith, 20 ; reasons why, *ib.* ; the advantages of living by faith, 21.
- Spiritual life a matter of, xiii. 207.
- Hope, and love, our light, life, and power, implanted in us in the new creation, xiii. 244.
- Difference between the acts and the effects of, xiii. 323 ; the word sometimes taken for the doctrine, sometimes for the grace, 324 ; faith and hope distinguished, 325 ; gives such a reality to things hoped for as if they were actually enjoyed, 326 ; this is done four ways—by hope, by the promises, by Christ, and by the first-fruits, *ib.* ; the first-fruits of faith are union with Christ, the joys of the Spirit, and grace, 330 ; the benefit and advantage of this act, and the use of faith in the spiritual life, 332 ; it is very necessary, *ib.* ; it gives strength to all the graces of the spiritual life, 333 ; *Quest.* whether suffering or active faith manifests the greater love to God ? *ib.* ; how we may discern whether we have that faith which is the evidence of things hoped for, 339 ; exhortation to work up faith to such an effect that it may be the substance of things hoped for, 342 ; means and duties to this end, 343 ; true faith an evidence or convincing light concerning eternal verities, 346 ; there are in faith four things—a clear apprehension, *ib.* ; a convictive light, 348 ; an overpowering conviction, 349 ; and a practical conviction, 350 ; exhortation to examination and trial whether we have such a faith as is an evidence or convincing light, 351 ; difference between the light of faith and common knowledge, *ib.* ; the evidence of faith is conversant about things unseen by sense or reason, 354 ; the advantage of this in the spiritual life, 356 ; encouragements to living by faith, 360 ; reproof of those that are all for sense and present appearance, *ib.* ; directions to discover whether we have that faith that can believe things unseen, 363 ; persuasives to get it, 369 ; directions to get and increase it, 372 ; objection answered, that faith makes way for fond credulity, 371 ; the fathers under the law had the same kind of faith that we have, 374 ; free grace no novel doctrine, *ib.* ; by faith the fathers obtained renown in the church, 375 ; to get and maintain faith should be our principal care, *ib.* ; means to this end, 376 ; the faith of the elders was an active faith, that discovered itself in good fruits and gracious actions, 377 ; a good report one of the rewards of faith, 379 ; the manner in

which this reward is dispensed, 382 ; whether eying a good report in the exercise of faith is not vainglory, 384.

Faith of Abel, what it was, xiii. 465 ; nature of the testimony he received, 474.

Differences believers from the world in the duties of religion, xiii. 466 ; how it does so, *ib.*

Cases of conscience—(1.) Concerning the discerning work of faith, how shall we do to see him that is invisible, and rightly conceive of God in prayer so as to find an awe of him upon our spirits? xiii. 471 ; (2.) Concerning the receiving part of faith, how shall we do to interest ourselves in the assistance of Jesus Christ, and borrow help from heaven when we are employed in duties of worship? 472 ; (3.) Concerning the reasoning work of faith, how far assurance is necessary, that we may set faith on arguing when our evidences are dark? 473.

How we are justified by, xiii. 477 ; different respects in which God, Christ, and faith are said to justify in scripture, *ib.* ; does not justify in the sense of the Antinomians, as receiving witness of the Spirit's testimony, 478 ; the fruit of effectual calling, *ib.* ; how God looks upon us as justified, 479 ; reasons why faith is deputed to this service, 480 ; what kind of faith it is that justifies, 481 ; in the acts of, there are some things implied and some things express and formal, *ib.* ; that which is implied is knowledge and feeling, *ib.* ; that which is express is resting upon Christ or a closing with Christ, 483 ; this last usually expressed in scripture as coming to Christ, running to Christ, seeking Christ, and receiving Christ, *ib.* ; rules concerning these acts of faith, 485.

Without faith it is impossible to please God, xiv. 72 ; the kind of faith here implied, 73 ; a mere general faith in the being of God not enough, *ib.* ; opinions of the ancients as to faith, 74 ; no saving faith but in Jesus Christ, 76 ; objections answered, 77.

Of infants, opinions of the fathers as to, xiv. 81 ; subjects of election before birth, 82 ; difference between the children of believers and of unbelievers, 83 ; children dying in infancy have faith, 84 ; what kind of faith this is, *ib.* ; is a work of the Holy Ghost, 86.

The excellency of, xiv. 101 ; the necessity of, 102 ; why God hath put so much honour on this grace, 103 ; is the mother of obedience, 105 ; knowledge, assent, and affiance necessary parts of, 106 ; different degrees of, 110 ; the lowest degree of saving faith, what it is, 111 ; leaning on the Lord, what it is, 115 ; faith bringeth God most glory and us most good, 118 ; how we must do to get faith, 119.

Ground of Noah's, xiv. 177 ; God usually gives warning of approaching judgments, *ib.* ; God usually revealed himself to holy and righteous persons, 179 ; revelation the ground of faith, 180 ; the word of God the revelation of the Spirit, *ib.* ; threatenings and promises alike objects of faith, 183 ; necessity of the threatenings, 185 ; *Quest.* whether the children of God, those especially that have received the first-fruits of the Spirit, may make use of the threatenings and terrors of the Lord? 186 ; directions how to use the threatenings, 188.

The strength and force of Noah's, xiv. 189 ; reasons why it is the property of faith to be moved by such things as are not liable to sense, 190 ; reproof of the security of the world with respect both to particular and general judgments, 191 ; the fruits and consequences of Noah's faith, 195 ; godly fear a fruit and effect of faith, *ib.*

as it works upon the promises, begets love and hope; it works upon the threatenings, begets fears, 195; what this godly fear is, 196; the difference between servile and filial fear, 197; as the fear of Noah was the fruit of his faith, so his preparing the ark was the fruit of his fear, 201; this act considered in several regards, *ib.*; the ark a type of Christ, 203; as Noah was buried alive in the ark, so are we 'buried with Christ in baptism,' 204; wicked children of believing parents are partakers in the temporal blessings of the covenant for their fathers' sakes, 205; encouragements to godly parents concerning their children, *ib.*; since children are beloved of God for their parents' sakes, this should serve to shame and terrify those born of godly parents who are not so themselves, 206; how the faith of Noah condemned the world, 207; the advantages derived from the example of the godly, 208; christians should walk so that they may condemn the world, not by their censures, but by their lives, 212; directions, *ib.*; motives, 213; whether all that were drowned in the flood were eternally lost, 216.

Faith, wherever it is, bringeth forth true obedience, xiv. 227; the ground of this obedience is the call of God, which usually consists of a command and a promise, *ib.*; this call is of grace, 228; when God calls us to grace, we are not only to leave sin and the world, but all things that are dear to us, 229; when we give up ourselves to Christ, God would have us sit down and count the charges, 230; faith may sometimes make a halt and grow weary, but it rouseth itself up again, 231, 423; it constantly adheres to God, though it doth not presently find what it believes and expects, 231; how we shall know that we are called of God, 232; how we should behave ourselves in our calling, that we may manifest the obedience of faith, 237.

It is not enough that we live by faith, we must also die by faith, xiv. 281; reasons why, *ib.*; what it is to die in faith, 284; reasons why they that would die in faith must live in faith, 290.

Is contented with the promises though it cannot have actual possession, xiv. 293; the advantage of the promises to, *ib.*; there is not only a work of faith upon the promise, but upon the heart of the believer, 295; is an act of apprehension, 298; it apprehends the blessings as real, *ib.*; it pondereth the worth of them, *ib.*, there is actual expectation, 299; that there is assent and persuasion proved from scripture, *ib.*; this persuasion rests on God's truth and power, 300; is an act of the will as well as of the understanding, 302; the affection that is exercised in embracing the promises is joy, 303; this joy is manifested partly by the lively act of it in meditation, partly by the solid effects of it in our conversation, 303; the need there is of the power of the Spirit in the whole business of faith, 305; the difference between faith and other things, *ib.*

The trial of Abraham's faith, xiv. 353; the greatness of it, *ib.*; his behaviour under it, 354.

In difficult cases, we must do our duty, and refer the event and success to the power of God, xiv. 369.

Spieth light at a little hole, xiv. 420.

Teaches men openly to renounce all worldly honours, advancements, and preferments, when God calls us from them, or when we cannot enjoy them with a good conscience, xiv. 431; how far the honours and glories of the world are to be renounced, *ib.*; how faith operates in this renunciation, 434; use of this doctrine, 439; sundry considera-

- tions and motives to check ambition and affectation of worldly greatness, 443 ; exhortation to those in honour to be of Moses' spirit, 446.
- Faith*, whoever would have commerce with God must have faith, xiv. 476 ; as necessary to religion in general, so also in duties of worship, *ib.* ; but especially in the sacraments, 478.
- Living by, what it is, xv. 48 ; implies assent, consent, and affiance, *ib.* ; how and when we are said to live by faith, *ib.* ; this life must be extended not only to spiritual duties and acts of immediate worship, but to all the actions of our natural and temporal life, 51 ; we never act nobly or live comfortably till we live by faith, *ib.* ; this life is glory begun, 52 ; if we would have this life begun in us, we must study the grounds of faith in the promises of the gospel, wait for God's power to settle our hearts on these grounds, and look for the operations of the Spirit, 53 ; the effects of it, 54 ; how we may improve this life to a cheerful walking with God in a course of obedience, *ib.*
- The work of, with respect to justification, in what it consists, xv. 58 ; how we must set faith a-work, 61.
- The work of, with respect to sanctification, in what it consists, xv. 69 ; with respect to the promises, 71 ; with respect to mortification and vivification, 72 ; with respect to the life of glorification, 75 ; how we must do that faith may have its perfect work with respect to this life of glory, 83 ; the work of faith with respect to this present life, 85 ; some maxims and principles of faith that have an influence on this life, 88 ; the acts of faith with reference hereto, 93 ; how we may bring our hearts thus to live by faith, 98.
- The necessity of temptations to, xv. 102 ; is the great remedy against temptation, 104 ; the grounds and support of a christian's faith in the midst of temptation, 107 ; the acts of faith with respect to temptation by Satan, 110 ; in what sense faith is said to overcome the world, 113 ; what this faith is, 114 ; the necessity and profit of the work of faith respecting this kind of temptation, 115 ; the acts of faith in its victory over the world, 117 ; how we may bring our hearts into such a frame as will enable us to triumph over the temptations of the world, 119.
- The need of, in troubles and afflictions, xv. 121 ; the grounds and principles of faith under affliction, 124 ; the work of faith under affliction, 131.
- The influence of, upon obedience, xv. 135 ; the obedience that is required of us, *ib.* ; the necessity of faith as to this obedience, 137 ; the work of faith in order to obedience, 141 ; what we must do that faith may have such an influence upon us, 143.
- The use of, in prayer, xv. 145 ; the kind of faith requisite in prayer, 146 ; the necessity of faith in prayer, 150 ; reproof of those that do not pray in faith, 151 ; exhortation to faith in prayer, 152 ; how we may know that we pray in faith, 153.
- The use of, in hearing the word, xv. 154 ; the word a proper object of faith, 155 ; in order to profit, hearing must be accompanied by faith, *ib.* ; how many things come short of true faith, 160 ; what the true faith is that must be mingled with the word, 161 ; the necessity of this mixture in order to profit, 163 ; the efficacy of faith in the hearing of the word, 169 ; whence faith hath this power, *ib.* ; reproof of divers sorts of hearers, 171 ; exhortation to entertaining the gospel with a sound and lively faith, *ib.* ; how we may get this faith, 172.

Faith, the work of, is to apply the promises, wait in the use of means, use meditation, and so stir up love, xvi. 263.

We must not measure faith by the person, but the person by his faith (Tertullian), xvi. 268.

A means to allay trouble of heart, xvi. 352; fear and sorrow vanquished by, 353.

The nature of, xvii. 110; the object, 111; the assent, 112; historical and temporary, to be excluded, 113; the kind of consent, 115; the properties of, 117; the sight of, considered as to its certainty and power, 118; the acts of, 119; self-denial essential to, 122; love, 125; relation of the word to faith, 126; the acts of faith as to the word, 129; the effects these acts produce, 131; notes of a strong and grown faith in respect to the word, 133; love of Christ, 135; victory over the world, 140; waiting on God, 144.

Of the centurion, the nature of it, xvii. 147; how it was wrought in him, 149; the fruits of it, *ib.*; encouragements from his example, 153.

The Syrophenician woman an instance of, xvii. 155; the kind of woman she was, 156; her trials and temptations, 157; her victory over them, 161; application, 164.

Abraham a pattern of, xvii. 167; the ground of his faith, 168, 179; what the seed was that was promised in the covenant, 169; what the blessings, *ib.*; the strength of his faith, 170, 181; his clear vision and sight of Christ, 170; his rejoicing in Christ, 173; the grounds of this rejoicing, 174; the nature of it, 176; how far difficulties are to be considered, 183; the fruit of his faith, 188.

The foundation of all true christianity, xvii. 420; the requisites of a sound belief, 422; hope the immediate effect and product of, xvii. 423; godly conversation the consequent and fruit of sincere belief, 424; reasons why this is true christianity, 427.

The necessity of, xvii. 461; the nature of, 462; the objects proper to, 463; the kind of sight there is in, 464.

'The eye of the soul,' xvii. 462.

True and lively, doth apprehend all things as present in God that is wanteth in the creature, xviii. 171.

A means to be justified, confession a means to be saved, xviii. 245.

Saving, determined partly by the object or matter believed, xviii. 251, partly by the subject of it, or the acts of the soul about it, *ib.*

And confession connected as cause and effect, xviii. 255; or as the sign and the thing signified, *ib.*

Love and hope, the main pieces of the christian armour, xviii. 454; their nature, 455; their mutual respect to one another, 458; their use in the spiritual conflict, 459; they impel us to do our duty with all diligence, *ib.*; restrain and subdue corrupt inclinations, *ib.*; fortify against evil without, 460; without them we cannot pray to God, or hold any sweet communion with him, *ib.*; without them we are not prepared for death and judgment, 461; means of getting, 463.

In Christ, the nature of it, xxi. 212; how faith in Christ and love to the brethren are conjoined, 216.

FAITHFUL FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST MUST EXPECT TROUBLE, ii. 113.

Faithfulness of God in all the troubles and afflictions of his people, vii. 291; to be acknowledged, not only in the general, but with reference to ourselves, *ib.*; not only when we are at ease, but under the sharpest and smartest discipline, *ib.*; this acknowledgment must be from the

heart, 292 ; not enough to acknowledge justice, but faithfulness also, *ib.* ; must be fixed by faith as past all question, 293. See *Affliction, Faithfulness, &c.*

Faithfulness of God relateth to his promises, whereby he hath engaged himself to his people, vii. 407 ; dependeth upon his unchangeable nature, but is confirmed to us by experience, *ib.* ; the experience of all generations doth confirm, *ib.* ; experience of, in former ages, of use to those that succeed, 409 ; to be satisfied of, of great importance to believers, 410. See *Earth, stability of.*

Christ's, to his Father, in revealing his mind, and in referring all to his glory, x. 219.

Fallen state of man, disorder of, xix. 57 ; the creature preferred before God, *ib.* ; the body before the soul, *ib.* ; earth before heaven, and time before eternity, 58 ; danger of, *ib.*

Falling away from the power and practice of godliness, iii. 34 ; indicated by coldness in duties, *ib.* ; and boldness in sinning, 35 ; from a true religion to a false, *ib.* ; out of weakness of mind, *ib.* ; or out of vile affection, 36.

Falsehood is either in point of opinion or practice, viii. 54.

A man should say nothing but what he really thinks, xiv. 328 ; it is the right of our neighbour that we should speak the truth, *ib.* ; a lie is a perversion of the order of nature, *ib.* ; we resemble the devil in nothing so much as in falsehood and lies, 329 ; God never dispensed with this precept, *ib.* ; nothing more odious to the light of nature, *ib.* ; especially odious in matters of religion, *ib.* ; cautions against dissimulation, 330.

FAREWELL SERMON, ii. 409.

FAST SERMON ON ISAIAH xliii. 22, xv. 298.

FAST SERMON ON MALACHI iii. 7, xv. 315.

FAST SERMON PREACHED BEFORE THE PARLIAMENT, xvi. 23.

Father, in what sense God is, i. 40 ; of Christ, as the second person, and not only as incarnate and mediator, *ib.* ; of men, in a general consideration and respect, by creation, 41 ; this gives some advantage in prayer, 42 ; more particularly, in Christ God is the father of believers, 43 ; this conduceth to our confidence in prayer, 45 ; and furthereth our duty in prayer, 48.

How God performs the part of, i. 46 ; giving his children free access to him, *ib.* ; supplying all their wants, *ib.* ; pitying their miseries, 47 ; disciplining them with indulgence, wisdom, and care, *ib.* ; providing guardians for them, *ib.* ; laying up an inheritance for them, *ib.*

Called the only true God, to exclude the idols of the Gentiles, and to note the order and economy of salvation, x. 141.

Being first in order of the persons, is to be looked upon as the party offended by sin, x. 223 ; as the highest judge, 224 ; as the supreme author, it was his contrivance and motion to Christ to regard the case of sinners, *ib.* ; as the supreme cause, he assisteth Christ in the accomplishment of his work, 225 ; as supreme judge, he appointeth his sufferings, and the measure of the satisfaction he is to make, *ib.*

God is, in a general sense, of all by creation, xix. 7 ; more especially of his own people by adoption, 8 ; we must submit to his fatherly authority when we cannot see our interest in his special fatherly love, 10.

Fatherhood of God, speaketh comfort to us, iii. 143 ; and duty, 144 ; his fatherly love floweth in the channel of redemption, 144.

- Faults* of men, two great, the one in point of choice, the other of pursuit, vi. 289.
- Favour*, three things commend, ii. 342; the goodwill of the giver, *ib.*; the greatness of the gift, *ib.*; the unworthiness of the receiver, 343.
- God's, his people desire earnestly and constantly, above all things, vii. 119; when they have not yet attained any sense of it, 120; when they have lost it by sin, *ib.*; their earnestness in seeking, *ib.*; reasons why they so prize, 121.
- God's, furnisheth us with a remedy against wants, troubles, sins, vii. 315; is the fountain of all blessing, *ib.*; sweetens every comfort, 316.
- And mercy, God's constant method to encourage all who serve him, by showing them all manner of expressions of, viii. 378; objections answered, *ib.*; should encourage us in waiting upon him and praying to him, 380.
- And loving-kindness, God's, the main argument which his children have to plead in prayer, ix. 89; a modest, pious, and humble argument, *ib.*; a comfortable, encouraging argument, 90.
- Fear*, why excited in holy men by manifestations and appearances of God, i. 402; to humble them to whom he vouchsafed so great a favour, *ib.*; to prepare them for making known his will by leaving an impression of his excellency upon them, 403.
- Slavish, the cause of enmity to God, ii. 243.
- Of God, and regard of men, two restraints which God hath laid upon us, the one to preserve religion, the other to preserve human societies, iv. 336.
- Slavish, hateth God for his holiness, and feareth him for his wrath, v. 361.
- Of God is either servile, a fear of wrath, which the worst may have, vi. 408; or filial, a fear of reverence, *ib.*; the latter the great principle that both hindereth us from sin and quickeneth us to duty, 409.
- Of God is either servile, by which a man feareth God and hateth him, vii. 172; or filial, by which he feareth God and loveth him, *ib.*; the latter includes the fear of reverence, 173; and the fear of caution, *ib.*; is the grand principle of obedience, *ib.*; the great pull-back and constant preservative of the soul against sin, *ib.*; the great excitement to obedience, 174; not contrary to our blessedness, 175; not contrary to our comfort and joy in the Lord, *ib.*; not contrary to courage and holy boldness, *ib.*; not contrary to the grace of the gospel.
- And knowledge maketh up a godly man; knowledge without fear breedeth presumption, and fear without knowledge breedeth superstition and blind zeal, vii. 335.
- Carnal, caution against, viii. 7.
- Of God, double—filial, which draweth us to him, and servile, which driveth us from him, viii. 231.
- Of God's judgments not an infirmity, but a duty, viii. 234; usefulness of, 235.
- Slavish, a great hindrance to the faithful discharge of our duty to God, ix. 462; begotten in us by a false opinion of God, 463; that he is tyrannical in his laws, 467; niggardly in his gifts and helps of grace, *ib.*; hard to please and easy to offend, 468; these prejudices very natural to us, 469.
- There is a twofold—filial and servile, childlike and slavish, xii. 101.
- Of the Lord an argument to persuade us to sincerity and obedience, xiii. 91; they who take the Lord for their father and themselves for

his children must consider him as an exact and impartial judge of all their actions, *ib.*; the strictness and justice of his judgment, 92; his final sentence a matter of terror, 93; the execution, in case of failure in our duty, terrible beyond expression, *ib.*; the wrath of God the greatest evil that can befall us, *ib.*; different kinds of fear distinguished, 96; reasons why true fear of the Lord should have an influence upon us, 97; the means how this fear cometh to be raised in us, *ib.*

Fear that sanctifieth, and that only awakeneth for a time, distinction between, xviii. 360.

Holy, is of two kinds—of reverence, xviii. 411; of caution, 412.

Fears, carnal, hinder the soul from closing with the mercy that is in Christ, iii. 202; of God's anger, *ib.*; of being too bold with the promises, *ib.*; of the sin of presumption, *ib.*

And cares relieved by consideration of God's faithfulness, vii. 298.

Fearlessness in owning the testimonies and ways of God before any sort of people in the world, incumbent on us, vi. 491; holy boldness in confession a special gift of God, *ib.*; a duty contained in our first dedication and resignation of ourselves to Christ, *ib.*; confirmed in us by faith, 492; love to God, *ib.*; fear of God, *ib.*; a deep sense of the world to come, 493.

Felicity, temporal, christians are not to reckon on, i. 333.

Fervency in prayer arises from a broken-hearted sense of our wants, and a desire of the blessing we need, i. 37.

Filthiness, all sin is, iv. 148; but chiefly covetousness, lust, anger, and malice, *ib.*

'*Finished*, it is,' in what sense said, xix. 31; all the scripture prophecies which spake of Christ's death and sufferings were now accomplished, *ib.*; the substance of the types was accomplished, 33; all was finished that was necessary to make him a fit pattern of patience to us, *ib.*; all was fulfilled which God determined to be done for the expiation of sin, 35.

First-born from the dead, a title of Christ, i. 455.

First-fruits of the Spirit, what they are, xii. 186; what use they serve, 187; they that have received the first-fruits of the Spirit groan and wait for a better estate than they now enjoy, 188; they are more apprehensive of the misery of this life than others are or can be, 190; more sensible of sin as a burden, 191; they are confirmed in the belief of the certainty of this better estate, 192; do in part know the excellency of it, *ib.*; are prepared and fitted for it, *ib.*; and their right and title to it is assured, 193; none but those who have the first-fruits of the Spirit will hope for eternal life, 194.

Of faith, in what they consist, xiii. 330.

'*First shall be last*,' not universally and necessarily, but for the most part, xxii. 42; not only persons, but nations and communities, *ib.*; is to be understood with respect to matters of religion, *ib.*; and last may be first, 48.

Flesh, confidence in, what it is, ii. 46; trusting in external privileges and performances, *ib.*; this confidence natural to men, 49; why a good christian should have none, 51.

Lust of, means the inordinate motions of corrupt nature, ii. 285; derived to us from Adam in his apostasy, 287; prompts to do those things which are most acceptable to sense, or agreeable to worldly or carnal ends, *ib.*; still remains in the christian, though not in full force,

- 288 ; is importunate to be pleased, 289 ; lusts of, different in different men, 292.
- Flesh* and spirit, mean corrupt nature and the new nature, xi. 392 ; both serve, to those who are influenced by them, as a guiding and inciting principle, *ib.* ; those who are under the prevalency of the one principle cannot wholly obey and follow the other, *ib.* ; every christian hath these two principles in himself, the one by nature, the other by grace, 393 ; though both be in the children of God, yet the Spirit is in predominancy, *ib.* ; the prevalency of the principle is known, not only by the bent and habit of the will, but by the settled course of the life, *ib.*
- Or spirit, all men are after the one or the other, xi. 438 ; there is a twofold original, 439 ; producing a twofold principle, *ib.* ; supported and assisted by contrary powers, *ib.* ; under a distinct covenant, *ib.* ; issuing into two places or eternal states, heaven and hell, 440.
- Things of, are either things manifestly evil, as all vices and sins, xi. 441 ; or things good in their own nature, but immoderately affected, *ib.* ; minding of, what? 443.
- What is meant by, xii. 37 ; what it is to live after, *ib.* ; what is the death threatened to those who so live, 39 ; its consistency with the justice, wisdom, and goodness of God, 40 ; the certainty of its accomplishment, 44 ; the folly of those who would reconcile God and the flesh, 46 ; dissuasives from living a fleshly life, *ib.* ; means to come out of this estate and course of sin, 49.
- Knowing Christ after the, not the respect he looked for while on earth, but by faith, in the spirit, xiii. 222 ; there is a knowing Christ after the flesh since his ascension into heaven, 224 ; by a naked profession of his name without conformity to his laws, *ib.* ; by acts of sensitive affection in reading or meditating on the story of Christ's sufferings, or when you hear his passion laid open in a rhetorical manner, 225 ; by expressing our respect more in pomp and pageantry than serious devotion, or a hearty obedience to his laws, or worshipping him in spirit and in truth, 226 ; by herding with a stricter party whilst yet our hearts are unsubdued to God, 227 ; reasons why this knowing Christ after the flesh will do us no good as to the salvation of our souls, *ib.* ; reproof of those who please themselves with this deceit of the heart, 228.
- FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST, FAITHFUL, MUST EXPECT TROUBLE, ii. 113.
- Fool*, none like the sinner, that ventureth his soul at every cast, and runneth blindfold upon the greatest hazard, iv. 300.
- Forbearance* towards erring brethren enforced by lowliness, meekness, long-suffering, and love, ii. 71 ; considerations to press to, 77.
- Brotherly, to be exercised towards those who hold the foundation, x. 331.
- Forgiving* our debtors not a meritorious cause of God's forgiving us, i. 182 ; nor a pattern or rule to him, 183 ; it doth not import priority of order, as if our acts had the precedency of God's, *ib.* ; it doth not import an exact equality, but some kind of resemblance, 184 ; it is a condition or moral qualification which is found in persons pardoned, *ib.* ; it is a sign or note of a pardoned sinner, *ib.* ; it is a necessary effect of pardoning mercy shed abroad in our hearts, *ib.* ; it is a duty incumbent on them that are pardoned, *ib.* ; it is an argument breeding confidence in God's pardoning mercy, 185 ; consists in forbearing

- others, *ib.* ; rooting out all desires of revenge, 186 ; and being ready to do to them all offices of love, *ib.*
- Forgiveness* of sin includes the grant of a pardon, i. 177 ; the continuance of this privilege, 178 ; the sense of it, 179 ; the assurance of that sense, 180 ; the effects of pardon, or freedom from those evils which are the fruits of sin, *ib.*
- Of injuries, cases respecting, i. 189 ; not incompatible with seeking reparation of wrongs in the way of justice, *ib.* ; yet this is to be done cautiously, 190.
- Necessity of treating with God about, i. 195 ; since man hath a conscience, a conscience inferreth a law, a law inferreth a sanction, a sanction inferreth a judgment, a judgment inferreth a condemnation, to the fallen creature ; there is no avoiding this condemnation, unless God set up another court ; in that court our plea must be grace, *ib.*
- Invites to return to God, and inclines to serve him, ii. 186 ; lays the foundation for solid comfort and peace in the soul, *ib.* ; makes us capable of eternal happiness, *ib.*
- Of injuries implieth removal of inward grudges, and readiness to do all duties of love and kindness, ii. 376.
- Form* of God means the divine essence, as clothed with honour and glory, xviii. 124.
- Formalist* in the use of ordinances like a traveller, godly man like a merchant, vi. 23.
- Formalists* will make conscience of a tradition, while they dispense with a commandment, v. 443.
- Formality* proceedeth from want of due thoughts of God's majesty, i. 405.
- Fornication*, looked upon among the Gentiles as a thing indifferent, xix. 190 ; arguments against, *ib.* ; a common sin, 197 ; a grievous lie, 198.
- Forsaking* all things in the world cannot be without faith, nor faith without it, ii. 159.
- The world, how far this is to be esteemed a duty, xvi. 470 ; reasons why we must do so when God by his providence calleth us to it, 473.
- Is either outward, inward in point of comfort, or inward in point of grace, xviii. 447.
- Fortitude*, christian, difference between, and military valour, xix. 3.
- Foundation* of God (2 Tim. ii. 19), what it is, xviii. 349 ; a bond, obligation, or contract, 350 ; sure on God's part, *ib.* ; made sure on our parts, 351.
- Frailty*, the Lord considereth his people's, natural and spiritual, i. 327.
- Fraudulency* and hypocrisy hateful to God, viii. 218 ; falsehood in ordinary commerce, *ib.* ; in matters of religion, *ib.*
- Freedom* of the redeemed is not from the duty of the law, but from sin and the curse, i. 423.
- From wrath and hell a privilege, from duty and obedience none, v. 145.
- Free grace* no novel doctrine, xiii. 374.
- Friend*, a true, is a foe to our sins, i. 345.
- Friends*, pious, loss of, a ground of mourning, ii. 436 ; comfort under, 437.
- Friendship* necessary for every one that would live in the world, i. 341 ; of the good should be with the good, *ib.* ; because like doth best sort with like, *ib.* ; because friendship with the bad would make the good like them, 342 ; because love to God should put us on loving his people, *ib.* ; because that love which is built upon holiness is the most durable, 343 ; though we owe, to all who fear God, yet some few may be chosen for intimacy and spiritual solace, 343 ; caution to be used in

the choice of these, *ib.*; duties must be faithfully discharged in counsels and reproofs, 345; after all, but an outward help, 346.

Friendship, sinful, as drunkard with drunkard, robber with robber, vii. 181; civil, when men converse together for trade or other civil ends, 182; religious, which is built on virtue and grace, *ib.*; must be to all who fear God, *ib.*; yet to some more intimately, *ib.*; our converse with these must be improved to the use of edifying, *ib.*

And fellowship with the godly a great blessing, vii. 336.

Fruition of God in glory one of the prime blessings of the gospel, ii. 157.

Fundamentals and essentials in religion, ignorance of, damnable, and denial heretical, v. 118.

FUNERAL SERMON, ii. 423.

FUNERAL SERMON ON MR CHRISTOPHER LOVE, ii. 439.

FUNERAL SERMON ON MRS JANE BLACKWELL, ii. 455.

FUNERAL SERMON, DR MANTON'S, xxii. 125.

Garments of salvation, to be had from Christ alone, xii. 463; why none but those who are clad with these can earnestly desire to be clothed upon with the house which is from heaven, *ib.*

Of salvation, motives to press us to get clothed with the, xii. 465; what we must do that we may not be found naked, but clothed, 466.

Generation, who shall declare, various interpretations, iii. 345; who can tell the endless ages that Christ shall live after his resurrection, *ib.*

Gentleness of true wisdom opposed to severity of practice, rigour of censures, and insobriety of disputes, iv. 349.

Christ's, in bearing with the failings of his disciples, x. 222.

Gifts, good, descend or come down, not fall down, from heaven, iv. 110.

Diversity and variety of Christ's, to his people, ix. 431; every one hath some talent or other to improve for God, *ib.*; there is a great variety in the talents which we have, *ib.*; diversity of employments or offices, *ib.*; of kinds of gifts, *ib.*; of measure and degree, 432; this diversity cometh from the same free love of God, *ib.*; our account must be answerable to our receipts, *ib.*; reasons of this diversity, *ib.*; to show the liberty of his counsels, *ib.*; that all may know that all fulness is only in him, 433; for grateful variety, *ib.*; that every one in sight of his own wants may be kept humble, *ib.*; to maintain love and mutual respect, *ib.*; to strengthen the bonds of union, *ib.*

All the good, which God hath bestowed upon men increase by good use, but wither and are lost by negligence, ix. 484; diligence is the means, and God's blessing the cause, of all increase, *ib.*; this increase must be understood of the same talent, not in another kind, 485; this increase is given by degrees, 488; and continued till all be full and perfect, *ib.*

Of his people by the Father to the Son gives us an interest both in God and Christ, x. 320; hath put the business of our salvation into safe hands, 321.

Of the Spirit, various kinds of, xii. 3.

All we have received from God is both a gift and a trust, xvi. 364; there are differences in the benefits and in the receivers, *ib.*; all flow from the mere grace of God, *ib.*; are all given as an estate in trust, not for enjoyment merely, but for use and service, 368; the end of the distribution, 370; the encouragements God's stewards have to be faithful, 373; are not given to all in the same measure, 374; reasons why, 377; whether we receive little or much, all is in reference to

- an account, 379 ; at the day of doom this account will be produced, and all without exception called to this reckoning, 381 ; our account will be answerable to our mercies, 382 ; how far it will be required of us, 383.
- Gladness* in the hearts of his people allowed by God, xviii. 372 ; wrought by God, *ib.*
- Glorification* taketh not away the substance and natural properties of the body, i. 357.
- Of Christ, the comfort and salvation of men doth much depend on, x. 127 ; is a pledge of ours, 128 ; a pledge of his satisfaction, *ib.* ; a clearer ground of hope to the creature, *ib.* ; he is really put into a greater capacity to do us good, *ib.* ; all his offices have a new qualification, and are exercised in another manner, 128.
- Of Christ is of the whole person of the Mediator, x. 185 ; is by a clearer manifestation of his Godhead, and the exaltation of his humanity, 186 ; Christ earnest for, for our sakes, 187 ; is the pledge and earnest of ours, 193.
- Glorify* God, what it is to, x. 174 ; acknowledge his excellency upon all occasions, *ib.* ; perfect subjection and resignation of our wills to his will, 175 ; to his laws, *ib.* ; to his providence, *ib.* ; entertaining the impressions of his glory upon us, *ib.* ; by an exemplary conversation, 176 ; when we are active for his interest in the world, *ib.* ; doing the work which he hath given us to do, 177 ; when he is the great scope and end of our lives and actions, *ib.*
- Glorifying* God, directions for, i. 89 ; be holy, *ib.* ; study his name, *ib.* ; submit to his providence without murmuring, *ib.* ; live to public ends, *ib.* ; do not endure the least profanation of God's name, *ib.*
- Christ, an evidence of our interest in the Father, x. 259 ; and in the Son, 260 ; and in the Spirit, *ib.* ; is the great condition of the covenant of grace, *ib.* ; is a carrying out of God's great end, 261 ; a pledge of our interest in his intercession, *ib.* ; is by faith, 262 ; in accepting Christ, *ib.* ; and presenting Christ, 263 ; by holiness of conversation, *ib.* ; in our enjoyments, 264 ; by doing and suffering for the advancement of his interest and kingdom, *ib.* ; by zeal for his institutions, 266 ; by solemn meditation and admiration of the excellency of his person and the fulness of his redemption, *ib.*
- Glory* of God, why to be sought in the first place, and with the greatest affection, i. 69 ; marks of seeking, in the first place, 73.
- Due to God's name, i. 88.
- Degrees of, i. 368.
- Future, is for both body and soul, iii. 118 ; purchased by Christ, promised by Christ, prayed for by Christ, bestowed by Christ, 119 ; is not only by, but with Christ, *ib.* ; improvement of the belief of, 121.
- And innocency itself beclouded, iii. 478.
- Of a rich man is his humility, iv. 68.
- In heaven, the continuance of, is of mercy, not merit, v. 54.
- In ascribing to God, we pray that his glory may be more sensibly manifested, v. 373 ; more seriously and frequently acknowledged, *ib.* ; more deeply esteemed, *ib.*
- Degrees of, in heaven, ix. 459.
- God's, much advanced in Jesus Christ, x. 123 ; our respects to Christ must be so managed that the Father also may be glorified, 124.
- Of God, in redemption, more than in creation and providence, x. 170.

- Glory* already given by Christ to his people, though they have it not yet in possession, xi. 61.
- Of Christ in the excellency of his person, xi. 102 ; the charity of his human nature, *ib.* ; the beholding of, is our happiness in heaven, 103.
- Life of, an object of faith, xi. 216 ; grounds of believing, 217 ; the infinite love of God, *ib.* ; the everlasting merit of Christ, *ib.* ; the almighty power of the sanctifying Spirit both to change the soul and raise the body, *ib.* ; the immutable covenant or promises of the gospel, 218 ; the unquestionable right of those who are dead with Christ, *ib.*
- Of God, should be the main aim of a christian in all his actions and thoughts, xiii. 121 ; love of Christ the root and principle of this, 122 ; how nearly the glory of God and the good of the church are conjoined, *ib.* ; whether in every action a christian is always bound to consider the glory of God, 123 ; actions likely to be misinterpreted and tend to our dishonour, yet, if the glory of God call for them, they must not be omitted, 125 ; the interest God hath in us by creation, preservation, redemption, and dedication, obligeth us to live to his glory, 126 ; we are above all creatures fitted for this, 127 ; all our relations are disposed of for this end, 129 ; all our gifts and abilities, 130 ; we must take care not only, negatively, that God be not dishonoured, but, positively, that he be honoured and glorified in all states and conditions, businesses and employments, 131 ; motives to induce a more earnest regard of the glory of God, 133 ; means to this end, 134.
- Of God, how far we are to intend the, in every action of our lives, xv. 280.
- Hope of eternal, should be ever cherished in us, xix. 142 ; because it is a special act of the new nature, *ib.* ; because the great end why the scriptures were written was to beget and cherish this hope in us, *ib.* ; because the keeping up of this hope is the distinguishing character between the temporary and the sincere convert, 143 ; because it is our great support against difficulties, *ib.* ; most needed when we come to die, *ib.*
- Put upon the saints is relative and adherent, xix. 491 ; inherent and internal, 492 ; circumstantial, *ib.*
- Gnostics*, so called from their knowledge, were the impurest heretics, iii. 431.
- Feigned the world was made by angels, xiii. 432.
- Goats*, the wicked compared to, by reason of their unruliness and uncleanness, x. 44.
- God* a father, and that both by creation and covenant, i. 28.
- To be praised in every address to him, i. 243.
- Apprehended as a holy and happy being, and his communication of himself to a reasonable creature is either in a way of holiness or a way of happiness, ii. 267.
- All, and the creature nothing, a notion which the scripture much delighteth in, ii. 321.
- The Father, whatever was done by Christ as Mediator, or whatever was done to Christ, is attributed to his counsel and appointment, iii. 316 ; he designed the person, *ib.* ; qualified him for his office, *ib.* ; inflicted his sufferings, 317 ; exacted his obedience, *ib.*
- To be glorified for his mercy and goodness, iii. 321 ; in appointing Christ as Saviour, *ib.* ; in fitting him to bear sin, *ib.* ; in loving him for it, *ib.* ; in rewarding him for it, *ib.* ; he alone to be glorified, 322.

- God* cannot be tempted of evil, iv. 86 ; apparent exceptions not real, 87.
 So to be feared as also to be trusted, so trusted as also to be feared, vii. 281.
 His goodness, that he will be all things to his people, viii. 173.
 And Christ, what may be known concerning, x. 153 ; that there is a God, *ib.* ; evidenced by his works of creation, *ib.* ; of providence, 154 ; from the common consent of all nations, *ib.* ; from our own consciences, *ib.* ; from several experiences, *ib.* ; that God is but one, 156 ; that God is one in three persons, 158 ; that God, who is one in three persons, is the only true God, 161 ; concerning Christ, he is sent, *ib.* ; this implieth his divine original, *ib.* ; his distinct subsistence, 162 ; his incarnation, 163 ; the quality of his office, *ib.* ; the authority of his office, 164 ; that he is Jesus, a saviour, 165 ; that he is Christ, an anointed saviour, 167.
 Being a creator, is also an owner, xii. 29 ; his being an owner qualifieth him for being a ruler, *ib.* ; his power and right in us cannot be alienated by our sin, 30 ; nor made away by his bestowal of gifts on the creature, 31 ; this right so inherent in God that he cannot communicate it to another, *ib.*
 A searcher of the hearts of men, xii. 243 ; in what sense he is said to know the mind of the spirit in prayer, 251.
 The patron of human societies and the refuge of the oppressed, xii. 323 ; he is with and for his children, *ib.* ; his providence either external or internal, 324.
 The nature and providence of, an evidence of the certainty of eternal rewards and punishments, xiii. 47.
 A threefold justice of, distinguished, xiii. 73.
 His essence and attributes may be discovered in creation, xiii. 389.
 Method and order pleasing to, xiii. 424.
 What it is to please God, xiv. 48 ; what it is to come to God, 49 ; what it is to walk with God, 52 ; the necessity of pleasing God, 62 ; impossible without faith, 73.
 Belief in the being of, the first point of faith, xiv. 125 ; the advantage to the spiritual life derived from meditation on this truth, *ib.* ; the existence of God proved by reference to conscience, 127 ; the consent of all nations, 129 ; the book of creation, *ib.* ; providence, 131 ; and several experiences, 132 ; we should charge this truth upon our hearts to check whispering and suspicion against the being and glory of God, 133 ; reproof of those that either wish down or live down this supreme principle, 134 ; cautions against such opinions and practices as strike at the being of God, 135 ; religious libertinism, *ib.* ; denying particular providences, 136 ; denying the immortality of the soul, 137 ; Popery, *ib.* ; expectation of light beyond scripture, *ib.* ; hypocrisy, epicurism, and scoffing, 138 ; directions for times of strong temptation, 139 ; certain seasons when this principle is most liable to be assaulted, 140 ; direction to us in our addresses to God to avoid customariness, irreverence, and deadness, and to beget confidence, 142 ; how we may keep our hearts in prayer under a sense of God's being, so as to conceive of him aright, 144.
 Is not ashamed to be called their God, meaning of the phrase, xiv. 338 ; what it is to have God for our God, 342 ; who they are that have God for their God, 344 ; this doctrine should be improved by us to contentment with our portion, comfort in distress, and dependence on God for future supplies, 346 ; but especially to a hope and expecta-

- tion of better happiness than the world yields, 348 ; exhortation to take God for our portion, and to make sure that he is so, 349 ; how we may know whether God be our God, 351.
- God*, truth of, meditation upon, a help to faith, xiv. 370 ; power of, the great encouragement of faith, 371 ; how hard a matter it is to believe in, 371 ; how sinful this is, 373 ; directions how to make use of God's power so as to find support in it, *ib.* ; how we may improve it in meditation, 374 ; God's power reacheth to and beyond the grave, even to giving life to the dead, 376 ; if we believed this as much as we should, we should not be so easily amazed at lesser difficulties, *ib.*
- The cause we have to praise him above angels and men, xvi. 48.
- Why Christ is so called, xvi. 230 ; that he is God proved from the nature of his offices and work, and from scripture, 234.
- How he is said to have winked at ignorance in Acts xvii. 30, xvi. 398.
- Of peace, in what sense God is said to be, xvii. 377 ; the grounds of this peace, 378 ; the evidences that God is pacified, *ib.* ; the conveyance of this peace to us, 380 ; reasons why all increase of grace comes from God as the God of peace, *ib.*
- To be loved not only for the goodness that floweth from him, but for the goodness that is in him, xviii. 135.
- And Satan in earnest competition for the heart, xviii. 403.
- We should endeavour to resemble, as near as may be, xix. 169 ; in moral goodness and holiness, 170 ; in doing good to all, enemies not excepted, *ib.* ; and that either in giving or forgiving, 171.
- Delights not in the death of a sinner, but in his conversion to life, xxi. 464 ; it is contrary to the nature of God to be otherwise affected, 467 ; wherein God hath shown that he takes pleasure in our conversion rather than in our ruin and destruction, 468 ; God not the cause of man's destruction, 471.
- God's* if we be, God is ours, vii. 447 ; the former is first in our apprehension, *ib.* ; the best check to temptation, 448 ; the former most appropriate as a plea with God, the latter when we would revive our drooping souls, *ib.* ; the former the more humbling way, *ib.*
- Justice, power, and mercy, exemplified in his dealings with the creatures, xii. 162.
- Forming us (*ὁ κατεργασάμενος εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο*), meaning of the expression, xii. 476.
- Giving us the earnest of his Spirit, meaning of the expression, xii. 476.
- Enmity to sinners, xiii. 299 ; condescension in the work of reconciliation, 301.
- Being and bounty, two principles necessary to be firmly believed by all that would entertain communion with God, xiv. 153 ; we are bound to believe not only his essence but his providence, viz., that he regardeth human affairs, and will judge accordingly, 154 ; vengeance and punishment not so necessary to our faith as reward, 156 ; meaning of the word, 157 ; this reward principally in the next life, 158.
- Dealing with Noah and the world in his time a pledge and type of his dealing with the world in all after ages, xiv. 173.
- Knowledge, its nature and properties, xxi. 174 ; scriptural reasons for belief in this knowledge, 178 ; how this truth is entertained by men, 180 ; the use of it, 181.

Godliness in the use of lawful delights lieth in the mean between superstition and profaneness, ii. 100.

A great point of, is contentment, ii. 306.

True, grounded in faith, directed by knowledge, defended on the right hand by temperance against the allurements of the world, on the left, by patience against the hardships of the world, iv. 33.

The worst and most afflicted part of, better than all the joys and comforts of the world, iv. 376.

Decay of, shown by the languishing of zeal and neglect of public duties, v. 425; by insipid formality and dead-heartedness, 426; by loathing of heavenly manna, 427; by plain apostasy, *ib.*; by the wounds religion receives in the house of her friends, 428; by religion being made the stalking-horse to self-seeking designs, 429; by want of endeavours to diffuse religion, *ib.*; by snarling at piety and purity, 430; by the currence of scandalous sins, 431.

The way of, not a gloomy way, vii. 74.

Not a holiday suit, but for constant wearing, viii. 384.

And holiness, formal difference between holiness signifieth the purity of our actions, and godliness the respect they have to God, ix. 373.

There is such a sin as antipathy against the power of, x. 371; scripture teacheth that it is so, 372; gives instances, 373; men will not own that they hate others for their goodness, *ib.*; proofs that they do so, 374; the servants of God are most hated and troubled by the worst men, *ib.*; the best men are most hated and maligned, *ib.*; religion escapeth not, though accompanied with meekness, &c., *ib.*; invention of lies and ridiculous crimes to palliate their hatred, *ib.*; if any are humble, mortified, serious, they are suspected, *ib.*; the joy of wicked men when they have anything offered to justify their opposition, *ib.*

What it is, xvi. 152; the necessary graces, 153; the ordinances about which it is conversant, 155; how it must be exercised in worship, 158; in conversation, 161; exhortation, 162.

The greatest wisdom, xiii. 118.

Godly, show their esteem of Christ by labouring after communion with him, iii. 259; by rejoicing in him when they have found him, *ib.*; by prizing those things in which they find most of him, *ib.*; by their boldness in professing him, *ib.*; by seeking his honour and praise more than their own concerns, 260; by avoiding all things whereby he may be dishonoured and disesteemed, *ib.*; by accounting reproaches and afflictions for his sake honourable, *ib.*

Are the best neighbours, iv. 320.

Life, since the fall, not known by perfection of grace so much as by conflicts with sin, iv. 360.

Man can be satisfied with no portion but God himself, vi. 113; his choice known by his endeavours to get anything of God into his heart, 117; by his prayers, *ib.*; by his behaviour under trouble, when other things fail, *ib.*; by his delight in God, *ib.*; by his mourning for his absence, *ib.*

Fear a fruit of faith, xiv. 195; what it is, 196; difference between servile and filial fear, 197.

Advantages derived from the example of, xiv. 208; should walk so that they may condemn the world, not by their censures, but by their lives, xiv. 212.

Calamities of, in this life, show that we have much more to hope for from Christ in the life to come, xix. 125.

- Goel* (kinsman-redeemer) suiteth with no person so well as Christ, ii. 293 ; meaning of the term, 294.
- Golden rule* applies not only to actions, but to words and thoughts, ii. 373.
- Good*, must be done *well*, i. 148.
- And evil, by what measure we are to determine, i. 379 ; not by our fancies and conceits, but by the wisdom of God, *ib.* ; with respect to the chief good, 380 ; not always the good of the flesh, or of outward prosperity, *ib.* ; a particular must give way to a general, 381 ; not to be determined by sense, but faith, *ib.*
- Delight of doing, much greater than the cost, ii. 35.
- All from above, yet there are pipes and conveyances through which it comes, iv. 110 ; thought that all is from above prevents glorying in ourselves, 111 ; vaunting over others, *ib.* ; envy of those who have received more than ourselves, *ib.*
- Chiefest, Augustine reckoneth two hundred and eighty-eight opinions of, iv. 122.
- Not enough to do, but must do with labour, care, and diligence, v. 97.
- God is, primitively and originally, the creature but derivatively, vii. 108 ; the chiefest, and other things only in subordination, *ib.* ; infinitely, *ib.* ; eternally, 109.
- God doeth, to his servants, vii. 193 ; from the inclination of his own nature, *ib.* ; the obligation of his promise, 194 ; the preparation of his people, *ib.* ; persuasion of this truth one of the first things in religion, *ib.* ; arguments, 195 ; he doeth good to his enemies, therefore much more to his servants, *ib.* ; evil men give good gifts to their children, much more he to his, *ib.* ; he never giveth his people any discouragement, or just cause to complain of him, *ib.* ; if he doth not give them the good things of this world, he giveth them better things in lieu of them, 196 ; the evil things of this world he turneth to good, *ib.* ; he doth give them so much of the good things of the world as is convenient for them, *ib.* ; his doing them good is chiefly in the world to come, *ib.*
- And evil, by what measure to be determined, vii. 252 ; not our fancies and conceits, but the wisdom of God, *ib.* ; its respect to the chief good or true happiness, 253 ; not always the good of the flesh, or of outward prosperity, 254 ; a particular good must give way to a general good, and our personal benefit to the advancement of Christ's kingdom, *ib.* ; not to be determined by present feeling, but by the judgment of faith, 255.
- For christians, is not always the good of the flesh, or of prosperity, viii. 254 ; God knoweth what is good for us better than we do ourselves, *ib.* ; that which is not good in its nature may be in its fruit, 255 ; good is not to be determined by feeling, but faith, *ib.* ; that may be good for the glory of God which is not for our personal benefit, 257.
- That which is our chiefest, and last end, is our god, and occupies the place of God, viii. 390.
- And evil, a monstrous conceit to deny the distinction between, viii. 457.
- Some do, by chance, ix. 270 ; some by force, 271 ; some out of craft and design, 272 ; the man of God by choice, *ib.*
- In some sense no mere man is good, xvi. 423 ; in what sense men may be said to be good, *ib.* ; in what sense not, 424 ; the goodness of God explained, 428.
- Man is one that seeketh after the chief good, and adhereth constantly to God in Jesus Christ as his only felicity, xviii. 466 ; and chooseth the

way which God hath prescribed to him to walk in, *ib.* ; is sincerely, not perfectly good, *ib.*

Good and evil, sense of, not wholly extinguished in the heart of man, xix. 310 ; shown by shame and fear, 311 ; in the unconverted produceth hypocrisy, in the converted shyness and abhorrence of sin, 312.

Goodness, all creature, but a stricture of that perfect good which is in God, vii. 108.

God's, to all the creatures, should confirm his people in hoping for saving grace or spiritual good things, vii. 188 ; we may reason from the less to the greater, *ib.* ; they in their rank have their supplies, and we in our rank have ours, 189 ; God doeth good to every one according to their necessity and capacity, 190 ; the devil seeks to weaken our opinion of, 191 ; thoughts of, will be of great use in all afflictive providences, *ib.* ; a great motive to repentance, *ib.* ; sweetens the duties of holiness, 192 ; quickens and enhances prayers for grace, *ib.* ; and fidelity, the fountain of all that we have, *ib.*

Of God is natural, vii. 236 ; moral, *ib.* ; beneficial and communicative, *ib.* ; God hath in him whatsoever is useful and comfortable to us, *ib.* ; he hath a strong inclination to let out his fulness, and is ready to do good on all occasions, 237 ; he is the fountain of all the good we have or are, *ib.* ; a time will come when he will be all in all, *ib.* ; his goodness manifested to us in our creation, 238 ; in our redemption, *ib.* ; in daily providence, *ib.* ; those who come to God ought to have a deep sense of, 239 ; this sense must be the fruit of faith, *ib.* ; of constant observation of the effects of his goodness vouchsafed to us, *ib.* ; of deep and ponderous meditation, 240 ; of new and spiritual taste, *ib.* ; sense of, necessary to check our natural legalism, *ib.* ; to enable us to justify God against the prejudices of the unbelieving world, *ib.* ; to humble us, 241 ; to give life to faith and trust, *ib.* ; to move us to repentance, 242 ; to move us to love God, 243 ; to console and support us in affliction, 244 ; to be a ground of prayer, *ib.*

God's, in creation, xviii. 136 ; in redemption, *ib.* ; in the mercies of daily providence, 137 ; in the rewards of grace provided for those that love him, *ib.*

Righteousness, and truth, put for all the christian graces, xix. 258 ; the Spirit, received by the gospel, worketh all, in the hearts of believers, 260.

Goods, the two bastard, with which the world is enchanted are pleasure and profit, viii. 307 ; old people are all for profit, young people all for pleasure, *ib.*

Good report, qualifications necessary to obtain, xiii. 377 ; a reward of faith, 379 ; how it is bestowed, 382 ; whether eyeing a good report is not vainglory, 384.

Good works, walking in, implies spontaneity and progress, ii. 397 ; kinds of, 398 ; works of worship, *ib.* ; of our calling, *ib.* ; of righteousness, *ib.* ; of charity, 399 ; of sobriety, watchfulness, mortification, self-denial, *ib.* ; requisites to, *ib.* ; new creatures obliged to, 400 ; fitted and prepared for, *ib.* ; necessity of, 402. See *Works*.

The more advisedly done the more commendable, xiv. 430 ; the greater the temptation the more self-denial, *ib.* ; the more thorough the self-denial the better, *ib.* ; the purer the principle the better the action, *ib.*

What they are, xvi. 275 ; the requisites of a good work, 278 ; what it is to be zealous of, 279 ; the place of zeal with respect to, 280 ; exhortation, 283.

Gospel, proclamation of, compared to the jubilee, i. 173.

The main and principal point of, that Jesus Christ is God's beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased, i. 383.

Not merely gives good counsel, but hath the force of a new law from the great king and lawgiver of the world, i. 396.

Sum of, ii. 102.

How to be justified by its sincere professors, ii. 106 ; it must be approved and received by themselves, *ib.* ; must be professed and owned when it is vilified in the world, *ib.* ; this profession must be honoured, and recommended to others, by a holy conversation, 107 ; why it must be thus justified, 109 ; because of the charge that is put on us to testify for God, and justify his ways, *ib.* ; because it deserveth to be justified by us, *ib.* ; those who condemn it yet do in some manner at the same time justify it, 110 ; if we do not justify religion, we justify the world, *ib.* ; Christ will one day justify all his sincere followers before men, angels, and devils, 111 ; because of the necessity of justifying wisdom in the times we live in, 112.

God's hand seen in directing the course of, ii. 203.

God's wisdom and prudence shown in, ii. 259 ; its privileges, pardon and life, *ib.*

May be clearly preached, and yet few believe, iii. 194 ; so in the time of the prophets, 195 ; of John the Baptist, *ib.* ; of Christ in the flesh, 196 ; in our own times, 198 ; is the arm and power of God, 203 ; in respect of the sense and meaning of it, 204 ; as it manifests his power, *ib.* ; as it is a glorious weapon in his hand, *ib.* ; because in one sense it worketh much even upon those on whom it has least effect, *ib.* ; God's design by preaching it, 205 ; to purchase the world for a kingdom for Christ, *ib.* ; to conquer the enemies of Christ, 206 ; to convert souls, 207 ; how to be heard, 209 ; none believe, but those to whom it is revealed by the Spirit, 210.

What it doth for the justification of sinners, iii. 417 ; discovereth perfect righteousness, *ib.* ; and a way how this righteousness may be made ours, 418 ; and that way is a sure way, *ib.* ; by it God glorified, *ib.* ; and the creature satisfied, *ib.*

Certainty of, iv. 119 ; demands strong assent, 120 ; excellency of its rewards, 121 ; purity of its precepts, 122 ; sureness of its principles of trust, 123.

Is a law, iv. 163 ; a law of liberty, 164 ; its matter freedom, *ib.* ; obedience is from free principles, gratitude and thankfulness for mercy and grace, 165 ; we have the assistance of a free Spirit, *ib.* ; we do it in a free state, a state of sonship and well-pleasing, 166.

Doth as exactly require a care in our speeches and actions as the law, iv. 218.

And grace of God, in itself not pliable to carnal purposes, v. 145 ; hath been abused to looseness, laziness, licentiousness, 146.

Requireth our utmost endeavours, our bewailing infirmities and defects, but accepts of sincerity, vi. 28.

Doctrines of, not only true, to work upon the understanding, but good, so as to move and draw the will, vi. 93.

Every article of faith in, a mystery to be wondered at, vi. 262.

Still danger of being ashamed of, though christianity is in fashion, vi. 494 ; simplicity of, contemned by the wise of the world, *ib.* ; the stricter profession of the ways of God is under reproach, *ib.* ; the stricter sort of christians may be the poorer sort, *ib.* ; considerations

against being ashamed of, *ib.* ; short continuance of the world's glory, *ib.* ; God the fountain of honour, *ib.* ; shame argues insincerity, *ib.* ; the eternal recompense, 495 ; the world's judgment not to be stood upon, *ib.*

Gospel covenant, stability of, vii. 401 ; emblem of, in the immutable constancy of the heavens, 402. See *Heavens*, fit emblems, &c.

Excellency of the doctrine of, in certainty and clearness, x. 199.

Doctrine of, is the pattern and mould according to which the new creation is framed, xi. 318.

Is a law, xi. 395 ; a law of the Spirit, *ib.* ; of the Spirit of life, 396 ; of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, *ib.* ; is both our rule and our charter, 399. See *Covenant*, new.

Righteousness, what it is, xii. 461 ; carrieth the notion of a garment, 462.

Called the 'word of reconciliation' and the 'ministry of reconciliation' (2 Cor. v. 18, 19), xiii. 282.

What is said in, to whom, and by whom, xv. 52.

The earliest, xvii. 241.

As a subject for meditation, xvii. 331.

What it doth to produce goodness in the world, xix. 261 ; by its laws and precepts, *ib.* ; by the discoveries it maketh, 262 ; the examples it propoundeth for our imitation, 263 ; the rewards and encouragements which it offers, 264 ; Spirit's co-operation with, 265.

Gospeller, carnal, dealt with, x. 63.

Government, civil, is of God, but the special form not determined by him, v. 239.

God's moral, is by laws, vii. 415 ; natural, is that order into which, by his positive decree, he hath necessitated and disposed all creatures for the benefit of the world, *ib.* ; is ordinary, 416 ; or extraordinary, *ib.* ; no creature can decline or avoid, *ib.* ; celestial bodies are his servants, *ib.* ; angels are his ministers and hosts, 417 ; winds, seas, and storms, *ib.* ; sickness and disease, *ib.*

Of God is not for the ruler's benefit, but the subjects' welfare, xi. 335.

Of the world, God's way of, both external and internal, xii. 8.

God's governing power consists in legislation and judgment, xii. 30.

God's, seen in rewarding, xviii. 418 ; in punishing, *ib.* ; in all acts of judicature, God is no respecter of persons, 419.

Church, is directive rather than authoritative, xix. 429 ; must be meekly submitted to, *ib.* ; civil, 438 ; economical, *ib.*

Grace, increase of, produces increased sense of want, i. 37.

A diffusive, spreading thing, i. 79.

And mercy, distinction between, i. 161.

Revealed and offered in the most comprehensive terms, that none may be excluded, or have just cause to exclude themselves, i. 494.

The more it is tried and exercised, the more it is evidenced to be right and sincere, i. 331 ; strengthened by trial, *ib.*

Sanctifying, inseparable from pardoning, i. 424.

Sanctifying and renewing, to be got from Christ, i. 443.

Exhibits not only the goodness, but also the wisdom and prudence of God, ii. 257.

General, must in some way be made particular, else it cannot profit us, ii. 305.

Every act of, hath a necessary dependence upon that work of Christ which is most suitable to it, iii. 353.

- Grace*, in the covenant of, Christ sustains several relations, iii. 385; the testator or author of the covenant, *ib.*; the mediator of the covenant, *ib.*; the surety of the covenant, 386; the prime federate, *ib.*; union with Christ entitles to benefit from his actings in all these relations, 386.
- Has influence on every faculty, and especially on the understanding, iii. 423.
- Exercise of, must not be interrupted till it is full and perfect, iv. 35; they that have true, will not be satisfied with little, 36.
- Always, after a taste, longeth for more, iv. 129.
- Its glory not obvious to the senses, but inward and hidden, iv. 191.
- We have not a right apprehension of, till we can see it yieldeth us more than the world can yield us, iv. 351; those that would have, must take the right way to obtain, *ib.*
- Not impossible, or without passions and affections, iv. 468.
- True, differences between, and false, or formality, v. 37; restraining, is only an awe upon the conscience, inclining men to forbear sin, though they do not hate it, *ib.*; common, may be in them that fall away and depart from God, 38; characteristics of in Heb. vi. 4, 5, *ib.*
- Immediately wrought by the Holy Spirit, yet our thoughts in believing must not stay till we ascend and come up to God the Father, v. 41; because all beginneth with the Father, *ib.*; whatever is done by Christ is done with respect to the Father's love, *ib.*; a great support and comfort to faith to consider of the Father in the act of believing, *ib.*; in the Father's love are many circumstances which are very engaging to the soul, which are not to be found in the other divine persons, 42.
- Directing, necessity of, v. 51; from the blindness of our minds, 52; the forgetfulness of our memories, *ib.*; the obstinacy of our hearts, 53.
- Importance of growth in, v. 87; where there is life there will be growth, *ib.*; if we do not grow, we go backward, *ib.*; an ill sign to be contented with a little, *ib.*; we cannot have too much, 88; according to our measure of, so will be our measure of glory, *ib.*; suiteth with our present state, *ib.*; suiteth with the bounty and munificence of God, *ib.*; a necessary piece of gratitude, 89; may learn of our Lord Jesus, *ib.*; may learn of worldly men, *ib.*; observations concerning growth in, 90; infallible signs of, when we grow more spiritual, more solid, more humble, 91.
- Influence of, not the warrant of duty, but the help; not the ground or rule, but the efficient working cause, vi. 240.
- Preventing, working, co-working, vi. 271.
- The great work of, is to make God our last end and our chiefest good, vi. 373.
- Necessity of, to bring us into a state of doing God's will, vi. 377; Pelagian system, *ib.*
- Frees from the yoke of oppressing fears, and the tyranny of commanding lusts, vi. 483.
- Sanctifying, to understand and keep God's law, the best gift that God has to bestow, vii. 247.
- The life of, begun and carried on in a constant way of dependence upon God, vii. 433; vitality or liveliness of, not dispensed by a certain law, but according to the sovereign will and good pleasure of God, 434.
- God gives habitual, called the new heart, viii. 188; and actual, *ib.*; uses of the latter, 189; to direct us in the exercise of grace formerly

received, *ib.*; to excite and quicken the habits of grace, *ib.*; to strengthen us in work, *ib.*; to sustain the grace that we have against the assaults and temptations, and varieties and casualties, of the present life, *ib.*; necessary because of the natural changeableness of our spirits, *ib.*; and of the daily assaults of Satan, 190; because of the great impression which our temporal condition makes upon us, *ib.*

Grace, sustaining, to be asked earnestly of God because of our necessities, viii. 193; care lest it be forfeited by presumptuous sins, *ib.*; must not expose ourselves to temptation, seeing it is not at our beck, *ib.*

Sustaining, must be sought with all earnestness and importunity, viii. 202; they will do so who have a sense of their own weakness, the evil of sin and the comfort of perseverance in obedience, 203; must be asked, because God will show his sovereignty, *ib.*; renewed prayer is itself a means of perseverance, 204; constant safety of God's people lies in, 205.

The great privilege of the covenant of, is to be taught God's statutes, so as to have a real impress of them upon the heart and mind, viii. 284.

Daily and hourly, necessity of, viii. 383; appears from the strictness of christianity, *ib.*; the necessity of the word of God, 384; they who make it their business to please God in all things, and take his word for their rule, soon see a need for divine direction, and establishing grace, 385; value of the blessings, 386; the children of God sensible of their need of, and cannot choose but pray for, 388.

Throne of, set up everywhere in the church, ix. 112.

A saving work of, is an inward principle of life, and that in such a degree and measure as the unsound, though the most glorious professors of the gospel, do not attain unto, ix. 333; expressed sometimes with respect to the original author, pattern, and fountain of it, which is God, and so called the divine nature, 334; sometimes with respect to the meritorious and procuring cause, and so Christ is said to live in us, &c., *ib.*; with respect to the immediate author and fountain, which is the Spirit who dwells in us, 335; with respect to the instrument, the word of God, called the engrafted word, *ib.*; effects of, 337; a habitual inclination of heart towards that which is good, *ib.*; towards a godly life, *ib.*; not only an inclination, but a readiness, and preparedness, 338; an earnest impulsion, which quickeneth us to all holy endeavours of obedience, 339; a habitual aversion to all that is evil, *ib.*; not a bare abstinence from sin, but a hatred of it, 340; a hatred of sin as sin, *ib.*; this so strong, that sin is thereby more and more weakened and subdued in the soul, 341; how to be got, 345; from Christ, *ib.*; in the use of the means of grace, *ib.*

They who have most, have none to spare, ix. 387; with respect to our great hopes, *ib.*; our great temptations, *ib.*; our comfort, *ib.*; to the nature of grace, *ib.*; a sign we have none if we think we have too much or enough, 388; all is too little to stand before the Lord, *ib.*; every one is to be considered according to his own advantages, *ib.*; the greatest have often the greatest corruptions and temptations to wrestle with, 389; may easily have too little, cannot have too much, *ib.*; because of the conformity that should be between us and Christ, begun on earth, perfected in heaven, *ib.*; because a little is not so honourable to God, *ib.*

Means of, are sprinkled with the blood of Christ, xi. 12.

- Grace* does not depend upon foresight of faith, works, or perseverance, xi. 111.
- Followed with grace, xi. 214; and with glory, *ib.*; life of, not matter of sense, but of faith, 216.
- Three doctrines of, apt to be abused, xi. 300; the free pardon or exemption from condemnation which the new covenant hath provided for sinners, *ib.*; the liberty and exemption from the rigour of the law, *ib.*; the doctrine of perseverance, *ib.*; vindication of these doctrines, 302.
- Its work, xi. 320; the doctrine of the gospel is in conversion imprinted on the heart, *ib.*; the fruit of this imprinting is obedience, 323; this obedience is from the heart, 324.
- It is much for the glory of God that he can maintain, in the hearts of his people, xi. 489.
- It concerneth us more to act, than to know whether we have, xiii. 173.
- The earnest of glory, xiii. 331.
- Necessary to receiving the testimony of the Spirit, xiv. 15.
- Of God, what it is, xvi. 38; the moving cause of all the blessings of the covenant, 39; doth not exclude faith nor works, 41; error of Papists as to the merit of works through grace, *ib.*; reasons why grace is the original cause of all the blessings we receive from God, 42; cautions against abuse of grace, 44; the darkness there was in the world as to the knowledge of grace before its discovery in the gospel, 49; what and how much of grace is now discovered, 50; is the great means of salvation, 56; reasons, *ib.*; motives and encouragements to a greater regard of the gospel, 59; directions, 63; the salvation which the grace of God bringeth is free to all, 65; reasons, *ib.*; grace teacheth us holiness by way of direction, argument, and encouragement, 68; grace and corruption draw inferences and conclusions from the same premises, 69; the first thing grace teacheth is the renunciation of evil, 71.
- Men may go far in religion, yet come short of true grace, xvi. 410; instance in the rich young man in the gospel, *ib.*; what was commendable in him, *ib.*; nature of the question put, *ib.*; the kind of person, 412; the reasonableness, necessity, and profit in God having our first and best, *ib.*; the manner of his address, 415; wherein lay his defect, 416; cautions against resting in a common work, 418; Christ's answer, 421; his expostulation, *ib.*; his instruction of him, 423; why Christ referred him to the commandments, 434; why the commandments of the second table only are mentioned, 436; why 'defraud not' and 'deprive not' is put for the last commandment, 437; the young man's reply, 444; why Jesus loved him, 456.
- They prosper best in, that most faithfully and diligently use the means, xviii. 423.
- Objective and subjective, distinguished, xxi. 67; the operation of subjective grace in enabling believers to avoid sin, *ib.*
- Graces*, perfection of, not discovered till we are put on heavy and great trials, iv. 35.
- Pretended, are fruitless and unprofitable, iv. 232.
- Directions how to reflect upon, as evidences of our estate, iv. 248; be loyal to Christ, *ib.*; go to work evangelically, and with a spirit suiting the gospel, 249; go to work prudently, understanding the nature of marks, and the time to use them, *ib.*; be humbly thankful, because all is from God, 250.

- Graces*, fundamental radical, are love, faith, and trust, reverence and fear, vii. 89.
 Of the Spirit, comprised under faith and repentance, ix. 336.
 Of the Spirit both an ornament and a defence, xii. 460.
- Gracious* heart seeth all things in God, and God in all things, vi. 139.
- Gradation* of evil, v. 282.
- Greatness* of mind, to be able to live above the creature, ii. 435.
 Of station, the aggravation of baseness, iv. 182.
 Worldly, entitled to civil respect, iv. 189.
- Great ones* of the world have most of God's bounty, and give him the least acknowledgment, i. 156.
- Grief* to see God's law broken argueth a good spirit, vii. 56; for the sin that is committed, 57; and the punishment that is incurred, *ib.*; argueth that they have a due sense of things, which others have not, 60; a due sense of the evil of sin, *ib.*; of the wrath of God, *ib.*; of the certainty of the threatenings, 61; of the bane which cometh to communities from the increase of the wicked, *ib.*; cometh from a good cause, *ib.*; in the general, argueth a good constitution of soul, *ib.*; a deep resentment of God's dishonour, *ib.*; compassion to men, 62; produceth good effects, *ib.*; deterreth us from sinning ourselves, *ib.*; puts us upon mourning and humiliation, *ib.*; maketh us more careful to reform others, *ib.*; justifieth our zeal in reproving, 63; delivers us from the common judgment, *ib.*
- Groaning*, of the creature, what it is, xii. 177; in what sense the creature is said to groan, 179; how we are concerned in this groaning, *ib.*; how we become aware of the groaning of creation, 184; lessons to be derived from it, *ib.*
 What it implies, xii. 187; why we should groan and long for a better estate than that which we now enjoy, 189.
 Exhortation to rouse up our languid and cold affections to more earnestly groan and long for heavenly things, xii. 195; directions how we may attain to this frame of heart, *ib.*
 The groans of believers more than the pompous petitions of hypocrites, xii. 252.
- Groan*, those that sincerely believe and wait for a blessed immortality do also groan for it and earnestly desire it, xii. 451; the reasons for this groaning, *ib.*; because of sin and misery, *ib.*; the excellency of our future estate requireth it, 454; the three theological graces imply it, *ib.*; the Holy Ghost stirreth up these groans in us, 455; these desires are necessary because of their effect, *ib.*; the state of the present world sets the saints a groaning, 456.
- Grudgings*, mutual, between brethren, a usual forerunner of judgment, iv. 425.
- Guilt*, nothing but an obligation to punishment, i. 197.
 Of their own miscarriages, men would fain transfer to others, iv. 83; and to God himself, *ib.*; blaming his providence, 84; ascribing sin to the defect and faint operation of divine grace, 85; laying miscarriages upon fate, &c., *ib.*; being angry they know not why, *ib.*; most grossly, when they think he useth any suggestion to their soul to persuade and incline it to evil, 86; when they suppose his decree to necessitate sin, *ib.*
 To be avoided as carefully as shame, iv. 303.
- Gunpowder Plot*, two grounds of thanksgiving usual on the anniversary of: that the devices of the plotters came to nought, that the mischief returned back on themselves, viii. 130.

'*Hallowed be thy name,*' why this petition put first, i. 66.

Hands, cleanness of, noteth good works, as pureness of heart implieth faith and holy affections, iv. 371.

Happiness, false imaginary, keeps men from God, ii. 53.

Our chief, consists in the vision and fruition of God, xii. 265.

Worldly, the greatest misery that can light upon men to be condemned to, xviii. 296.

The highest worldly, may consist with God's hatred, and the greatest adversity of the saints with his love, xviii. 305.

Hardness of heart, what is meant by, xvii. 192; the nature of it, *ib.*; the kinds of it, 196; the causes of it, 199; the heinousness of it, 202; observations concerning it, 205; application, 209; exhortation to beware of, 213; means to a cure, 214, 238; Pharaoh a notable instance of, 221; a judgment of God on obstinate sinners, *ib.*; how God hardeneth the heart, 226; the causes of it, 231, 234, 236.

Haste to keep the commandments of God, importance of, vii. 135; ready obedience is a good evidence of a sound impression of grace on our hearts, *ib.*; the sooner we turn to the ways of God, the better we speed, 136; danger and hazard in delay, 137; mischief of delay, 140; the reasons for delay are very inconsiderable, 141; there are very urgent reasons to quicken us to make haste, 143.

Hatred of sin, our duty, viii. 56; because this is the true principle of resistance against sin, *ib.*; because it is a true distinctive evidence between the good and the evil, *ib.*; implies a universal repugnancy in every part of a man against sin, *ib.*; is a fixed and rooted enmity, *ib.*; is an active enmity, *ib.*; such an enmity as desires and endeavours to destroy it, both root and branch, 58; must be universal, 59; every sin hateful to God, and therefore should be to us, *ib.*; our covenant relation with God implies that there be no reservation, 60; every sin doth damage and mischief to the soul, *ib.*; is a part and fruit of true wisdom, *ib.*

Two kinds of, viii. 330; of flight and aversation, *ib.*; of enmity, 331; with both, false ways must be hated, *ib.*; different from mere anger, *ib.*

The world's, christians must expect, x. 365; especially ministers, 366; by the malice of men, 367; by the providence of God, *ib.*

The world's, to the people of God, reasons of, x. 376; difference and estrangement in course of life is a provoking thing, *ib.*; differences about religion are very deadly, *ib.*; it is not only a difference about religion, but between the true religion and false, *ib.*; causes of, 377; the devil's instigation, *ib.*; on man's part pride, which is impatient of reproof, *ib.*; and envy at God's favours bestowed upon them, 378; exhortation against, 379; advice to those who are the subjects of, 380.

Of the world towards the children of God, a thing not to be wondered at, xxi. 103; what is meant by 'the world,' *ib.*; who are God's children, 105; the nature of the hatred of the one to the other, 106; the reasons of this hatred, 107; how we are so apt to wonder at the hatred of the world, 108; why this is forbidden, 109; reasons to take off our wondering, *ib.*

Of our brother, what it is, xxi. 123; what is meant by our 'brother,' 125; the nature of this hatred, 126; how it is murder, 127.

Headship of Christ over his church, consists in government and influence, i. 458; as governor, it belongs to him to make laws that shall bind all his people, *ib.*; to institute ordinances for worship, 459; to appoint

officers, *ib.* ; to maintain and defend his people in the exercise of these things, *ib.*

Headship, belongeth to Christ according to both his natures, i. 460 ; duties which this relation bindeth us to, 463.

Of Christ over his church in regard of influence is by the gift of his Spirit, i. 460.

Healing by Christ's stripes, iii. 286 ; implies a disease incurable by human art, *ib.* (see *Disease* and *Sin*) ; consists in delivering from sin, 290 ; its fault, 291 ; its stain, *ib.* ; its guilt, *ib.* ; its punishment, *ib.* ; begun when we repent and believe, *ib.* ; is carried on by degrees in sanctification, 292 ; completed in heaven, *ib.* ; means of, his stripes, *ib.* ; how to be got, 294.

Hearing of Christ, what it imports, i. 395 ; requires a resolute consent or resignation to his teaching and instruction, 396 ; this resignation must be unbounded and without reserve, 397 ; it must be speedy as to the great solemn acts of submission, *ib.* ; must be real, practical, and obediential, 398 ; reasons why this prophet must be heard, *ib.* ; it is the beloved Son of God that speaks, *ib.* ; the matter which he speaketh is the best that can be spoken or heard, *ib.* ; danger of not hearing him, 399 ; questions for self-examination concerning, 400 ; advice to weak christians regarding, 401.

Of the word should be highly valued, iv. 131 ; should be ready to take all occasions of, 132 ; preparation necessary for, 144 ; chiefly the laying aside and dispossessing of evil powers, 146.

Of sincere prayer, how God manifests, vi. 249 ; inwardly by his Spirit, *ib.* ; outwardly by his providence, 250.

Heart, never right but when it lieth under the awe of a command, i. 130.

May be overcharged when the stomach is not, i. 163.

Corruption in, makes us liable to Satan's temptations, i. 239.

Difference between one that is hard against God and soft for God, and one that is hard for God and soft against God, ii. 329.

Stablishing of, implieth firmness of faith and constancy in grace, iv. 422.

To do good, they who have, will soon find an occasion, v. 97.

God requireth, in his service, vi. 354 ; external profession is nothing, *ib.* ; external conformity is nothing worth, *ib.* ; it is the heart wherein God dwelleth, not the tongue or the brain, 355 ; if Christ have it not, Satan will have it, *ib.* ; if we love any, we give them the heart, *ib.* ; this is what all may give him, 356 ; the whole, *ib.* ; how shall we know that we give God all the heart in an evangelical sense ? 360.

Of man set between two objects ; corruption inclineth it one way, and grace another, viii. 149 ; inclination of, to good is the fruit of grace, 150 ; the ground of obedience, *ib.* ; not a simple approbation of the ways of God, *ib.* ; not a bare desire or wish, 151 ; not a hypocritical will, *ib.* ; when so inclined, the judgment determineth for God, *ib.* ; the will is poised and swayed with love and delight, *ib.* ; the bent of the will is seconded with constant endeavours, *ib.* ; without this inclination obedience cannot be cheerful, 152 ; or uniform, *ib.* ; or constant, *ib.*

A worldly frame of, may be known by the working of the thoughts, counsels, and deliberations, x. 386 ; by esteem of worldly things, 387 ; the bent and resolution of the will, *ib.* ; a special sagacity and dexterity in the matters of the world, and a dulness in the things of God, *ib.* ; the stream of the desires, *ib.* ; grief at worldly losses and disappointments, 388 ; extraordinary solicitousness about outward

provision, *ib.* ; excessive delight in worldly comforts, *ib.* ; envying the worldly happiness of others, *ib.*

Heart, is *terminus actionum ad intra, et fons actionum ad extra*, xi. 324.

Hearts of men are under the dominion of God, i. 79.

God alone sets right, or inclines them from their natural bent to his own testimonies, vi. 372 ; the heart of man must have an object to cleave to, *ib.* ; being destitute of grace, is wholly carried out to temporal things, *ib.* ; cannot be set upon that which is spiritual and heavenly, 374 ; this frame of heart cannot be altered till we are changed by God's grace, 375 ; in this change there is a weakening of the old inclination to carnal vanities, and a new bent and frame of heart bestowed, 376 ; though thus changed, the heart is ever and anon apt to return to the old bent and bias again, 377.

Heathens had a sense of the necessity of worship, as well as the being of a God, i. 26 ; ascribed to God weakness and harshness, 27.

Moral, may have a cooler hell, iv. 214.

Heaven, in what sense God is in, i. 57 ; why he dwells in, 59.

How God's will is done in, i. 124.

The redemption of the church by Christ the subject of the talk and discourse we shall have in, i. 362.

Mutual recognition of the saints in, i. 369 ; and their mutual conference, *ib.*

The hope of, a comfort in all tribulations, i. 376 ; men would have, without considering the way that leadeth to, 377 ; considerations for the remedy of this, 378 ; God a governor as well as a benefactor, and must be respected in both relations, *ib.* ; the terms and means appointed conduce to mortify our love to false happiness, *ib.* ; the care and due observance of the means shows the value of the true happiness, *ib.* ; the difficulty of our salvation lies not in respect to the end, but the means, therefore the trial of our sincerity must rather be looked for there, *ib.* ; this self-denying resignation of ourselves to God, to bring us to heaven in his own way, is necessary, 379 ; the end and the means are inseparably connected, *ib.*

Our way to, lieth through the world, ii. 101.

The perfection of holiness, ii. 207.

We should live always either *for* or *upon*, iii. 159.

One way to, many to hell, iii. 304.

God will not give a double, iv. 402.

As much of, as possible should be enjoyed here, vi. 181.

Those that shall be finally rejected by the Lord may have a desire of the joys of, ix. 410 ; they desire good, happiness in the general, *ib.* ; they would not only have good in the general, but some eternal good, 411 ; yet their inclinations to it are but weak and ineffectual, *ib.* ; if they like the end, they dislike the means, *ib.*

The proper home of a christian, and not this present world, xiii. 3 ; reasons why, 4 ; qualifications necessary for the enjoyment of heaven as our eternal home, 6 ; why God's children count themselves not at home till admitted into the perpetual society of Christ, 9.

What the looking for, is that is practised by the saints, xiv. 270 ; the influence of looking for, on the christian life, *ib.*

Various metaphors by which it is expressed in scripture, xiv. 340 ; resemblances between heaven and a city, 270, 340 ; wherein it differs from other cities, 340 ; how it is a prepared city, 341.

Our great employment in, will be to think of God, to rejoice in his glory, to love and praise him, xix. 103.

- Heaven* a city, as a place of habitation, xx. 147; as a community under the same laws, and enjoying the same privileges and immunities, 148; as an estate of perfect peace and eternal happiness, *ib.*; believers have a right to, 149; their manner of living should be suitable, *ib.*; in the exercise of graces, *ib.*; in the use of the means whereby they may attain it, 152; in courses suited to its properties, 153; citizens of, mortify their members, *ib.*; reasons, *ib.*; motives to seek after, 156.
- Heavenly* things, those who would be christians indeed must make their scope xx. 98; habitually and actually, 99; explicitly and implicitly, *ib.*; necessity of, 100; that we may be sincere, *ib.*; to direct our way, *ib.*; to quicken our endeavours, 101; for our joy and solace, *ib.*; to defeat the temptations of sense, *ib.*; to make us constant, *ib.*; to engage us in a uniform course of holiness, *ib.*; persuasives to, *ib.*
- Heavens*, fit emblems of the stability of the word of God, vii. 402; God's constancy and truth appear in, 403; profit of this comparison, *ib.*; that we may set the sureness of the word against the diffidence and distrustfulness of our own hearts, *ib.*; to comfort us when our hopes are delayed, *ib.*; to support us against the various changes in the state of worldly things, *ib.*; not only when our hopes are delayed and obscured, but when they are contradicted by present appearances, 404; to wean us from the fading vanities of the world, *ib.*
- Heinousness* of sin best represented in the death and agonies of Christ, xiii. 196.
- Heir*, meaning of the word, xiv. 217.
- Heirs*, all God's people are, iv. 195; to a kingdom, 198; a kingdom engaged by promise, 199; to those who love God, *ib.*
Of promise, how they are distinguished from others, xii. 23; the use of this mark of distinction, *ib.*; the time how long this abideth with us, *ib.*
- Heirship*, the dignity of, inferred from our adoption as heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, xii. 131; the greatness and excellency of this inheritance, *ib.*; is a comfort against adversities and afflictions, *ib.*; the agreement between the children of God in respect of heirship and others, 132; wherein they differ, 134; the properties which show the greatness of this inheritance, *ib.*; its gloriousness, *ib.*; eternal and undefiled, 135; its blessedness, *ib.*
- Hell*, a place and state of inexpressible torments, x. 4; deprivation of all consolation and happiness, 5; suffering of woe and misery, 6; grief and sorrow, *ib.*; vexation and indignation, 7; against God, *ib.*; against the saints, *ib.*; against themselves.
God hath ever told the world of, x. 78; sparingly in the Old Testament, *ib.*; fully in the New, 79; heathens had a sense of eternity and fancies of a heaven and hell, *ib.*; the devils are orthodox on this point, *ib.*; not merely a state of death, but of torment, *ib.*; is local, 80; objections answered, *ib.*; torments of, begin presently after death, 83; shall receive their full and final accomplishment at the last day, 84; eternity of, 87.
Of hells, that the reprobates must all depart, and lose the fountain of God in Christ, x. 92; in this part of the torment all are equal, *ib.*; is the greatest part of the punishment, *ib.*; the more bitter because it is of their own procuring, 93; is irreparable, *ib.*
Torments of, x. 95; real and horrible, such as are more terrible than fire, *ib.*; extremity of, cannot be told, *ib.*; the whole man, both

body and soul, under the pains of, *ib.* ; worm that never dieth, conscience, 96 ; worketh on what is past, *ib.* ; fire that is not quenched, 97 ; an active sense of the wrath of God, *ib.* ; everlasting, 98.

Help, God's, needed from first to last for going in the way of his commandments, vi. 365 ; because he keeps the power in his own hand, that his grace may be all in all, *ib.* ; that we may be encouraged to set upon the exercise of grace in the midst of weaknesses, difficulties, and temptations, *ib.* ; to keep us humble and lowly in our own conceit, *ib.* ; to incline the heart to God, and God to the heart, by acts of friendship and familiarity, 366.

And deliverance in time of trouble to be sought of God, ix. 63 ; because he is the author of our troubles, *ib.* ; he challengeth the prerogative to be the God of salvation, *ib.* ; there is comfort in dealing with God, whatever our case be, because of his all-sufficient power, and because of his goodness and readiness to help, 64.

Helplessness of man set forth by emphatic expressions of scripture, v. 478 ; requires an almighty power and all-sufficient grace, 479.

Helps, if God taketh away ordinary, he can supply us by means extraordinary, i. 336.

Henry III. of France slain in the same chamber where the massacre of the Protestants was contrived, ii. 381.

Heresies, why so many against the gospel, none against the law, iii. 183.

Heretics enter the church under a colour and show of profession, v. 122 ; intrude into the office of preaching, 123 ; creep into people's hearts and affections by plausible pretences and insinuations, *ib.*

And libertines usually turn persecutors, v. 270.

Heritage, God's testimonies are a believer's, viii. 135 (see *Testimonies*) ; questions for self-examination upon, 142 ; exhortation concerning, 144.

Hidden life, the estate and happiness of God's children is hidden for the present, xii. 150 ; how they are hidden, *ib.* ; as to their persons, *ib.* ; as to their life, 151 ; as to their privileges and the glory of their estate, 152 ; from whom they are hidden, 153 ; from the world, *ib.* ; from themselves, *ib.* ; why their glory is hidden, 154.

Hiding-place, divine protection set forth under the notion of, viii. 168 ; implies secrecy, *ib.* ; capacity to receive us, 169 ; safety till the trouble be over, *ib.* ; not only safety, but comfort, *ib.*

'*Hind* of the morning,' Christ so called, because from the very beginning of his days the days compassed him about, iii. 252.

Holiest christians are humblest, x. 69 ; none do duties with more care, and none are less mindful of what they have done, *ib.*

Holiness of God, his special glory, i. 88 ; the attribute that men most forget, *ib.*

Necessity and excellence of, ii. 211.

Effectual calling is to, iii. 116 ; that there may be a likeness between the caller and the called, *ib.* ; the nature of the calling enforceth, 117 ; the grace showed in the calling obliges to, in point of gratitude, *ib.* ; calling enables us to be holy, 118.

Of God's people, the aim both of his special providence and of his grace, v. 32.

Serious desire of God's people after, vi. 48 ; arises from the new nature that is in them, 49 ; from love to God, which implieth subjection and conformity to him, *ib.* ; from experience of the ways of God, of the goodness and enlargement of heart that is to be found in them, *ib.*

Arguments by which the scripture urges, vi. 86.

- Holiness* a means of maintaining communion between us and God, and keeping up an interest in him as our only happiness, vii. 117.
- To be studious in practical, is the way to increase in spiritual understanding, viii. 23 ; these have God's promise, *ib.* ; they have a greater clearness of mind and understanding, *ib.* ; the more we practise, the more religion is exemplified and made sensible, 24 ; they that practise, study things with more affection than others, *ib.* ; the more fruitful any grace is, the more doth it abound with us, *ib.*
- Implieth a freedom from sin and defilement, x. 292 ; of God, *ib.* ; he is essentially holy, *ib.* ; infinitely holy, 293 ; originally holy, 294 ; should be so regarded in prayer, *ib.* ; to beget humility and godly fear, *ib.* ; to make us prize Christ, *ib.* ; it is God's special glory, 295 ; especially when we deal with him for grace and sanctification, *ib.* ; God's worship must be holy, 296 ; the worshippers must be in a holy state, *ib.* ; with holy and prepared affection, 298 ; must converse with him in a holy manner, 299 ; worship should make us holier, *ib.*
- Preciousness of, xi. 13 ; the fruit of Christ's death, a thing dearly bought, *ib.* ; the beauty of God, *ib.* ; that which maketh us amiable in the sight of God, *ib.* ; much of our everlasting blessedness lieth in, *ib.* ; a great part of our salvation by Christ, 14 ; and a means to the rest, *ib.*
- Obligatory under the gospel, xi. 433 ; Christ came not to dissolve our obligation to God, but to promote it rather, *ib.* ; Christ, by virtue of his merit, dispenseth regeneration, or the spirit of holiness, 434 ; in entering into the gospel state, we entirely and readily give up ourselves to do the will of God, *ib.* ; the more we obey the law, our participation of the blessings of the gospel is fuller and our comfort stronger, *ib.* ; is part of our salvation, as well as remission of sins, 437 ; is the better part of our deliverance, *ib.* ; is a means to the rest, *ib.*
- Of life, several arguments to, xii. 16.
- Grace a teacher of, xvi. 68.
- Of Christ, as to his person and office, xvii. 408 ; the unction which is the fruit and consequent of Christ's holiness, 412.
- What it is, xvii. 444 ; reasons why holiness, both of persons and actions, should be greater under the gospel dispensation than under that of the law, 447.
- HOLY DUTIES, HOW WE MAY CURE DISTRACTIONS IN, v. 441.**
- Holy Ghost*, reprobates and hypocrites may be said to be partakers of, as to common gifts, xii. 3 ; Balaam and Judas instances, *ib.* ; our covenant with, implieth both our duty and our benefit, 5.
- The bond of union between us and Christ, xii. 22.
- His work doth either concern the duties of the new covenant, or the privileges of the new covenant, or what is common to them both, xviii. 220.
- Holy Spirit*, right carriage towards, in mortifying the deeds of the body, xii. 80.
- Holy things*, it argueth a gracious frame of heart to take all occasions to set our minds a-work on, ix. 81 ; argueth plenty of divine knowledge, *ib.* ; spiritual delight and strong love, 82 ; sincerity, *ib.*
- Home*, people of God may be reduced to such exigencies that they have none on earth, xviii. 172 ; to correct and humble them for the dishonour done to God in their dwellings, *ib.* ; for their trial, to see how they will bear it for God's sake, 173 ; to show God's sovereignty over them, 173 ; to spread the knowledge of the gospel, *ib.*

Honour, God hath twisted his own, with our interest, and ordered both for his own glory, vii. 320

Double, put upon man, that God hath ordained him to conquer his enemies, and hath made him lord over his other creatures, xviii. 13.

Hope, christian, not a devout sloth, but an encouragement to diligence, ii. 63.

Good, its objects, without excluding intervening blessings, are the coming of Christ to our comfort, iii. 157; the resurrection of the dead, *ib.*; the vision of God, *ib.*; our heavenly inheritance, *ib.*; as a grace, is twofold—a hope which is the immediate effect of regeneration, and a hope which is the fruit of experience, 159; its effects, consolation in troubles and confirmation in holiness, *ib.*

A gift of God, not only as he giveth the objects, but as he worketh the grace, iii. 160; by illumination, *ib.*; by inclination, *ib.*; by excitation, *ib.*; his free gift, *ib.*; the gift of hope an encouragement in prayer, 161; God would not raise a hope to disappoint it, *ib.*; he that giveth us hope will give us all things necessary to the thing hoped for, 162; they that have received good hope through grace have God's nature and promise to rest on, *ib.*; they that have this hope are thereby exposed to the scorn of the world, and so God is in point of honour engaged to stand by them, and justify their hope and trust, 163; advantage to the spiritual life to have wrought in us by grace, 165; it maketh us diligent and serious, *ib.*; patient and mortified, 166; heavenly and holy, *ib.*; how to get, *ib.*; remove the impediments, *ib.*; wait on all means of profiting, and use the known means of grace more conscionably, *ib.*

Distinguishes christians from pagans, from temporary and slight believers, and from the glorified, iii. 164.

Keepeth the believer alive in his fainting, vii. 357; draweth off the mind from things present to things future, 358; representeth the excellency and the certainty of these future things, *ib.*; lays hold of the great promise of eternal salvation, *ib.*

Bred or nourished in us by the word of God, vii. 360; to expect things not promised, or not as they are promised, is groundless presumption, *ib.*

That will bring shame and confusion, viii. 199; worldly hope, *ib.*; carnal security, 200; of the wicked, characteristics of, *ib.*; of God's children, characteristics, of, 201.

Lively, grounded upon the word of God, will put us upon vigilancy and diligence in prayer, ix. 76.

There is a vain and groundless, ix. 220; a rational and probable, *ib.*; a firm and certain, *ib.*; a full assurance or an assurance not full, *ib.*; necessary to quicken and enliven our duties, 221; to sharpen our affections after heavenly things, *ib.*; to set our heart at rest, so that we may go on cheerfully in God's service, *ib.*

Cheereth itself by frequent and serious thoughts and delightful meditations of the thing hoped for, x. 53; by hearty groans, sighs, and language, 54; by lively tastes and feelings, *ib.*; of heavenly blessedness should put us upon serious diligence and earnest pursuit after it, *ib.*; must moderate our fears, sorrows, and cares, so as no temporal thing should unreasonably affect us, 55.

An effect of regeneration and also an effect of experience, xii. 118.

In sorrow, creation teacheth us a lesson of, xii. 182.

Is a desirous expectation of some promised good, xii. 197; the pro-

mises a ground of hope, *ib.* ; the great promise and object of our hope is salvation by Christ, or eternal life, 198 ; called the 'hope of salvation,' *ib.* ; it is patient and earnest, 199 ; reasons proving that hope is a necessary grace, 200 ; from the state of the believer in this world, *ib.* ; from the new nature, *ib.* ; the uses for which it serves, *ib.* ; quickening our duties, *ib.* ; vanquishing temptations, 201 ; comfort in tribulations, *ib.* ; that we may die peaceably and with comfort, *ib.* ; the cognation between faith and hope, 202 ; wherein they differ, *ib.* ; the excellency of hope, *ib.* ; none can be saved without hope, 203 ; how far all are bound to hope for salvation, *ib.*

Hope, Several kinds of, distinguished, xii. 205 ; hope in the creature and hope in God, *ib.* ; carnal men hope for that in the creature which is only to be found in God, *ib.* ; hope in God is either irrational or rational, 206 ; irrational hope is vain and groundless, *ib.* ; rational hope is built on solid grounds, *ib.* ; there is a firm and certain hope, without which no man can be a christian, 207 ; this certain hope is twofold—one sort necessary, grounded upon the offers of the gospel, the other profitable, grounded upon the evidence of our sincerity, and is the fruit of assurance, *ib.* ; implieth a certain persuasion and an earnest expectation, 210 ; to strengthen the certainty of our persuasion we must often revive the grounds of hope, and encourage earnest expectation by a diligent pursuit after the thing hoped for by all holy means, *ib.*

May be either a natural affection or a spiritual grace, xii. 216 ; the object of hope as a natural affection is a future benefit, possible but difficult to be attained, *ib.* ; the object of hope as a spiritual grace is something promised by God and believed by us, 217 ; reasons why we may surely hope for that which neither sense nor reason can inform us of, 218.

They only hope for eternal life who continue in the pursuit of it with patience, xii. 222 ; this hope which produceth patience is well-grounded and lively, 223 ; how this hope produceth patience, 224 ; persuasions to this patience of hope, *ib.*

There is a twofold hope—the one necessary, the other profitable, the one the fruit of regeneration, the other of experience, xii. 448 ; the principle of all human acts, *ib.* ; showeth itself both by looking and longing, *ib.*

And faith distinguished, xiii. 325 ; not a presumptuous conceit, but a foretaste of eternal life, 326 ; a means to discern our faith, 340.

Of christians, is a blessed hope, xvi. 188 ; in this hope there is an absence of all evil and the enjoyment of all good, *ib.*

'Set before us,' the, what it is, xvi. 339 ; why it is said to be set before us, 340.

Built upon the righteousness of faith, includes pardon and life, xviii. 219.

In God, the nature of this hope to which believers are invited, xxi. 453 ; reasons why they are to believe in God, 456 ; our hope and trust should be perpetual, 458.

Hopes, of everlasting life, sufficient to reduce us from temporal and flesh-pleasing vanities, iii. 154 ; to make us steadfast in the truth, and cheerful under sufferings, *ib.* ; to produce in us an increase of holiness, 155.

Good to oppose the glory of, against the abasement of sufferings, iv. 79 ; consider the glory of them, 80 ; and the truth of them, 81.

- Hospitality* not festivity and expensive entertainments, iv. 211.
- House*, the body of man so called, xii. 424; what kind of house it is, 425; it is an earthly-tabernacle house in regard of its composition, sustentation, and dissolution, *ib.*; the end and issue of this house, 426; the state of glory called a house, 428; this house described, *ib.*
- HOW OUGHT WE TO IMPROVE OUR BAPTISM, iv. 459.
- HOW WE MAY CURE DISTRACTIONS IN HOLY DUTIES, v. 441.
- Human* wisdom wholly to be distrusted, xv. 216; if we would acknowledge God, we must make him our oracle and counsellor, 218.
- Humanity*, real, of Christ, shown by his praying that the cup might pass from him, iii. 341.
- Humble* persons most gracious, and gracious most humble, iv. 356.
- Humiliation*, in every part of our Lord's, there is an emission of some beams of his Godhead, i. 267; humbled himself to purchase our mercies, but made a discovery of divine glory to assure our faith, *ib.*
- Of the Son of God was a hiding of his divine glory and majesty under the veil of our flesh, i. 432; and a lessening of his dignity, 433.
- Must be either active or passive, iv. 357; better that we should bring down our hearts before God, than that God should bring down our proud looks, *ib.*; voluntary, best and sweetest, 373.
- Throughout his, Christ had the glory of his person, x. 189; and the glory of his office, 190; but this glory was veiled and concealed, *ib.*
- Of Christ lieth chiefly in obscuring his Godhead, xviii. 125; and abatement of his dignity, *ib.*; made less than God, *ib.*; less than the angels, 126; in the human nature depressed beyond the ordinary condition of man, *ib.*; was his own voluntary act, 127; was for our sake, 128; as our mediator, *ib.*; as our pattern, 129; to teach us patience under all indignities we undergo for God's sake, 130; humility, 131; more exact obedience, *ib.*; self-denial, *ib.*; contempt of the world and its glory, *ib.*
- Humility*, exhortation to, ii. 326.
- Christ taught us, as in his meanness, so in his sufferings, iii. 254.
- A rich man's, is his glory, iv. 68.
- Of soul, the result of the true knowlege of God and ourselves, iv. 378; the true way to exaltation, 379.
- A humble heart can best trust in God, xxi. 406; reasons why, *ib.*
- humility in bad actions more pleasing to God than pride in good ones (Austin), 410.
- Humble souls do not exercise themselves in great matters, nor in things too high for them, xxi. 426; how many ways this may be done, *ib.*; this affecting of great things argueth pride, 428, 434.
- Husband* and wife should concur in the promotion of good, xiv. 421.
- Husbands*, in what respect heads of their wives, xix. 466; directions to, 467.
- Hypocrisy* and double dealing abhorrent to nature, iv. 298.
- And carnal pretences, the worst sort of lies, iv. 305.
- A practical blasphemy, v. 141.
- Hypocrite*, difference between him and the upright in seeking God, i. 67.
- Note of, to be scanty in moral duties and abundant in ceremonial observances, ii. 8.
- Hypocrites* may put themselves forth with vigour and warmth in public duties, but are slight and careless in private addresses to God, i. 16.
- Their guise, ii. 13; partial zeal, *ib.*; godliness and righteousness placed in outward observances or external discipline, 14; more in love with ceremonies than with substance, 15; strain greatly at a small thing,

ib. ; make conscience not only of externals instituted by God, but mostly of those devised by themselves, 17 ; have a conceit of their own righteousness, and a disdain of others, 18.

Hypocrites pretend to Christ, but live as if he were still in the grave, iii. 360.

Cannot always be hidden, iv. 102.

Come at length to deceive themselves, iv. 173.

Defection of, should not shake our belief of the doctrine of perseverance, x. 340.

The mortification of, external but not internal, xii. 57.

The groans of believers more than their pompous petitions, xii. 252.

Idleness and sin joined together, so idleness and destruction, iii. 199.

Idolatry, Christ's indignation against, i. 313.

Is a worshipping of a creature with divine worship, iii. 99 ; Papists guilty of, *ib.* ; worship angels, saints, the Virgin Mary, images, the cross, the bread in the sacrament, *ib.*

Of the heathens, turned the glory of God into the image of a man ; of christians, judges of God according to the model and size of their own minds and dispositions, iv. 43.

Is not only worship of false gods, but worship of the true God in a false manner, v. 252 ; the most plausible and seductive is idolatrous respect to the bodies and relics of dead saints, 253.

Idols must be renounced before our hearts can incline to God, ii. 104.

Ignorance, an obstacle to the reception of the gospel, iii. 198.

Is either necessary, through want of means, or through want of due means, iii. 428 ; or negligent, when men have means and do not use them, 429.

Set forth by the notions of darkness and blindness, xiii. 284.

From natural defect and imperfection, is no sin, xviii. 119.

How far it excuseth from sin, xix. 27.

Great danger of, to ourselves and others, xix. 384 ; pretences for remaining in, 385.

Illumination cometh from God only, ii. 75 ; given by degrees, *ib.*

By the Spirit accompanies the word, to make it effectual to us, to show us God as revealed in Christ, iii. 24.

Even common, is from the Spirit, iii. 211.

Divine, God's best servants think they can never enough beg, viii. 924.

Divine, a great gift, especially obliging to praise and thanksgiving, ix. 245 ; for every mercy we should praise God, *ib.* ; and most for the best gifts, 246 ; especially for spiritual benefits, *ib.* ; amongst these, divine illumination one of the best, 247 ; its worth appeareth in its author, 249 ; in the objects known, 250 ; in the use for which it serveth, 251 ; in the manner of knowing, 252.

Image of God in man and in Christ, difference between, i. 430.

Of God in man, iv. 295 ; his intellectual nature, *ib.* ; in the qualities of knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, *ib.* ; in his state, a happy confluence of all inward and outward blessings, 296 ; a dissuasive from evil-speaking and slandering, *ib.* ; images not to be worshipped, yet the image of God not to be bespattered with reproaches, 297.

Of God our primitive glory and excellency, xix. 172 ; its restoration the effect of our new creation, *ib.* ; its completion in heaven the object of our hope, 173 ; involved in our being his children, *ib.* ; and dear children, 174.

- Images*, Romish adoration of, idolatry of a foul kind, iii. 100.
- Imitation*, of Christ, in those acts which he did for satisfying his Father's justice or proving his deity, were high presumption, ii. 100 ; but in actions moral we are bound to imitate him, *ib.*
- An evidence of approbation, v. 169.
- Immortality*, a sense of, rooted in the minds of all nations, xii. 85 ; exemplified in the ancient Goths, the Egyptians, in Peru, and in Mexico, *ib.*
- Impatience* under crosses, feeders of, ix. 129 ; men think none suffer as they do, *ib.* ; that they could bear any cross but that which is now upon them, *ib.*
- Impatience* is partly natural, and partly voluntary, i. 143 ; lies in obstinacy, *ib.*
- And obstinacy in a course of sin is pride, vi. 195 ; and the greatest of pride, 196.
- IMPOTENCY, MAN'S, TO HELP HIMSELF OUT OF HIS MISERY**, v. 473.
- Impotency* of man to obey the law of God doth not dissolve his obligation to obey it, v. 480 ; is voluntary, 481 ; though unable to convert himself, must be pressed to the use of means, 482.
- Incarnation* of Christ, not for passion only, but for glorification, that therein he might be an instance and pattern to us, i. 357.
- Of Christ, xi. 423 ; his coming in the likeness of sinful flesh implieth that it was the nature of sinful men, but not a sinful nature, *ib.* ; he took not the human nature as it shall be in glory, *ib.* ; he was counted as a sinner, exposed to many afflictions, such as sinners endure, *ib.* ; came in the flesh that he might be under the law, 424 ; that he might suffer the penalty and curse of the law, which, as God, he could not, *ib.* ; that he might cross and counterwork Satan's design, *ib.* ; to give us a pledge of the tenderness of his love and compassion towards us, 425 ; to be a pattern to us of what shall be done both in us and by us, *ib.*
- Of Christ affordeth an ample foundation for faith against the improbability of the blessedness offered, xviii. 433 ; we may the better expect the exaltation of the creature when we consider the abasement of the Son of God, *ib.* ; an answer to the plea of unworthiness, 434 ; supports against the terribleness of God's majesty, *ib.* ; against the pollution of our nature, *ib.* ; against the unbelieving supposition of God's mindfulness of human affairs, *ib.* ; against the doubt of strangeness, *ib.* ; against fear of arrogancy in assuming the privilege of adoption, *ib.*
- Inclination* of the heart by God to his testimonies implies our natural obstinacy and disobedience to his law, vi. 370 ; and God's gracious and powerful acting upon the soul, *ib.* ; is by the word and Spirit, persuasion and power, 371.
- Inclinations*, sinful, Satan observeth, and we should observe, xi. 455 ; should be weakened and subdued, 456.
- Inconstancy* of christians, ix. 116 ; in faith, *ib.* ; in obedience, *ib.* ; in opinions and professions, *ib.*
- Increase*, diligence is the means, and God's blessing the prime cause, of all, xviii. 425 ; of grace is given by degrees, 427.
- Indwelling* of Christ in his people is not contiguity, but union, xi. 142 ; not a mere congregation or placing together, *ib.* ; not representation only, *ib.* ; not an objective union, as the thing seen may be said to be in the eye, or the thing thought of to be in the mind, 143 ; not merely a relation, *ib.* ; not only consent or agreement, *ib.* ; not a

- union of dependence merely, such as is between cause and effect, *ib.* ; not merely a communion in the same nature, *ib.* ; not a mixture, 144 ; not a personal union, *ib.* ; is a union of concretion and evolution, *ib.* ; difficulties regarding, stated, 145 ; should be our chief care, 147.
- Indwelling* of the Spirit, what is meant by, xxi. 227 ; why this is a sure evidence of God's dwelling in us, 229 ; the operations of the Spirit as a proof of our communion with God, 232.
- INDIFFERENT, THINGS, A PERSUASIVE TO UNITY IN, ii. 68.
- Infants*, salvation of, xiv. 81.
- Inferences*, immediate, from scripture, as valid as express words, iv. 348.
- Ingratitude*, danger of, i. 159.
- Iniquities*, to be turned from, a main blessing we have by Christ, ii. 203.
- Mystery of, what? iii. 50 ; opposed to the mystery of godliness, *ib.* ; the carnal life held in request and honour, 52 ; men turned from God to idols, *ib.* ; power usurped in Christ's name, 53 ; merits of Christ and his satisfaction lessened, *ib.* ; the new nature little thought of, *ib.* ; begun to work in the apostles' time, 54.
- Laid upon Christ by the Lord, abundant matter for faith to work on, iii. 318 ; because to the Lord belongeth forgiveness, 319 ; it is he whom we have wronged, *ib.* ; it is he whose will and word alone is to be looked to, 320 ; the Lord hath so great an interest in Christ that he can deny him nothing, 321.
- To do, is to continue in wilful disobedience, vi. 30 ; in God's account they do none, who are renewed by grace, and reconciled to God by Jesus Christ, *ib.* ; they make it their business to avoid all sin, 31.
- Injury*, plenty begetteth, and when all things are possible, men think all things lawful, iv. 415.
- Innocency*, oppressed, will get clear again, iii. 347.
- Best tried by iniquity, iv. 30.
- Giveth confidence in prayer, when we are molested and troubled without a cause, vii. 330.
- Innocent*, any concurrence to the destruction of the, brings us under the guilt of their blood, iv. 416.
- Should not be much troubled to be maligned and hated by those who contemn God's laws, vii. 390.
- Instances* both enliven and confirm faith, vii. 51.
- Institution*, what it consists in, xiii. 440 ; what it is to do a duty in respect of, 441.
- Institutions*, good to submit to God's, viii. 13.
- Intention*, good, does not make the action good, but its conformity to the rule, iii. 312.
- General good, not sufficient for a holy life, vi. 312.
- Intercession*, of Christ in heaven, is a pleading for the application of his merit, iii. 358.
- Christ's, for transgressors upon the cross, iii. 485 ; interceded as a holy, godly man, 486 ; and as a mediator, 487 ; the first for our imitation, *ib.* ; the second for our faith, 489.
- Of Christ, prevalence of, depends upon his person, x. 244 ; its dignity, *ib.* ; its dearness, *ib.* ; upon the value of his satisfaction, *ib.* ; the sublimity of his office, 245 ; the articles of the covenant, 246 ; is a part of his priestly office, *ib.* ; fruits and benefits of, 247 ; secures our justification and the pardon of our sins, *ib.* ; the acceptance of our persons, works, and services, *ib.* ; encourages us to come to the throne of grace with boldness, 248.

- Intercession*, Christ's, his prayer in John xvii., a copy, model, or counterpart of, x. 353.
- Is the work of the Holy Spirit, xii. 254; the persons for whom he maketh intercession, *ib.*; the nature of this intercession, 255; the manner of it, 256.
- Of Christ, coupled with his satisfaction, xix. 24; its nature, 25; its success, 26.
- Intercessor*, Christ the only, for poor sinners, iii. 492; none else would, *ib.*; none else could, 492; carried on partly in heaven, *ib.*; partly in the hearts of his people, 494.
- Intercessory* prayer commended by the example of Christ, x. 248.
- Interest*, God's, in his people, the ground of his care for their safety, vii. 449; secures his knowledge of them, *ib.*; his care over them, and his affection for them, *ib.*; his preserving them for accomplishing the purposes which he designs to serve by them, 450; his being willing to employ for their use all that is his, *ib.*
- The Father's, in his people, to be pleaded as an argument in prayer, x. 204.
- Intermediate* state, there are but two places of residence for the saints, either the place of exercise, that is, earth, or the place of reward and recompense, that is, heaven, xiv. 332.
- Interposition* of God in distresses, we have leave and encouragement to desire, viii. 251; from God's covenant, *ib.*; God's affection, *ib.*; our relation to him, 252; our very running to him, and committing ourselves into his hands, engages him, *ib.*; should desire only so as may be for good to us, 254; because then we pray according to God's undertaking, *ib.*; and according to the new nature, *ib.*
- Isaac*, the occasion of his first interview with Rebekah, xvii. 263.
- ISAIAH, PRACTICAL EXPOSITION OF THE FIFTY-THIRD CHAPTER OF, iii. 187.
- Isaiah*, his fifty-third chapter may rather be called his gospel than his prophecy, iii. 191.
- Israel* of God, who they are, xxi. 452.
- Invocation* of saints, a sottish error, iii. 89.
- Inventions* sought out by men, xix. 50; insufficient to make us happy, *ib.*; plunge us into further misery, 51; kinds of, 52; why many, 55.
- Jacob* an example of secret prayer, i. 13.
- Jacob's* ladder a type of Christ, i. 479.
- Worshipping leaning on his staff reconciled and explained, xiv. 401.
- JAMES, PRACTICAL COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLE OF, iv. 1.
- James*, divine authority of epistle of, iv. 9; some passages in Jerome and Eusebius seem to infringe its authority, *ib.*; denied by Cajetan, Erasmus, and Luther, 10; but Luther afterwards retracted his condemnation of it, 11; who the author was, 12; James the Less, son of Alpheus, called the Lord's brother, *ib.*; said to have been a husbandman, 13; to have died A.D. 63, *ib.*; time of writing not ascertainable, *ib.*; main object to refute those who held that a bare naked faith is sufficient to salvation, though good works be neglected, 14; why called catholic? *ib.*
- Jealousies* of God, his people ought not to entertain, as if he watched opportunities and advantages to punish them, xviii. 345.
- Jehu* an instance of partial zeal, ii. 12.
- Jericho*, why a curse was pronounced on the rebuilding of, xviii. 30.
- Jerusalem* still called the holy city in the time of our Lord, i. 277.

- Jesting*, not all, unlawful, xix. 206 ; a hard matter to keep within the bounds of lawful and allowed mirth, 207.
- Jesus Christ*, true God and true man in one person, i. 476 ; proved by testimonies of scripture, *ib.* ; by types, 479 ; by reasons taken from his office, 480.
- Jews*, in the time of our Lord, their different opinions concerning him, i. 364.
 Why the first offer of the gospel was made to, ii. 201.
 Stubbornness of their unbelief, iii. 194.
 Had more of the carnal and outward blessing of the covenant than believers under the gospel, iv. 236.
 Were wont to write Deut. vi. 5 on their phylacteries and door-posts, and read in their houses twice a day, xiii. 169.
 Abraham's seed after the flesh, not after the spirit, xiii. 225.
- Job* an example of loyalty, i. 78.
Job was often impatient, yet God only makes mention of his patience, iv. 430.
 His impatience forgotten, his patience commended, vi. 20.
 His deprecation, 'Do not condemn me' (Job x. 2), teaches that open and free dealing with God in trouble is better than smothering and stifling our griefs, or venting them in discontent on others, xxii. 63 ; the grievousness to a child of God to be condemned as a wicked man, 65 ; it is a good thing to inquire into the cause of our afflictions, 67.
- Joseph* of Arimathea the subject of prophecy (Isa. liii. 9), iii. 363.
- Joy*, a man's, distinguishes him, ii. 36 ; carnal, reproof of, 37 ; spiritual, is an act of love, 38 ; begotten in us by a sense of the love of Christ, *ib.* ; by it we delight in the grace of the Redeemer more than in all other things whatsoever, 41 ; may be without assurance, 42 ; but is more abundant when our sight is cleared, 43 ; profit of, *ib.* ; helps or means towards, 45.
 Carnal, to put away for godly sorrow, a good exchange, iv. 376.
 Of a child of God in God's word, vi. 224 ; is real, *ib.* ; cordial, *ib.* ; great, 225 ; pure, *ib.* ; ends well, *ib.* ; doth not pervert the heart, *ib.* ; overcomes the sense of affliction, 226 ; the word requires, *ib.* ; and ministers, *ib.*
 Spiritual, warning against security of, vi. 268.
 A christian's duty ; not his wages only, but his work also, vii. 4.
 Of the blessed, ix. 455 ; in the beatific vision, *ib.* ; their own glorified estate, *ib.* ; the company of the blessed, 456 ; called the joy of the Lord, either as provided by him, or as being such as he himself possesseth, *ib.*
 Great use of, in the spiritual life, to make us to do and to suffer, x. 355 ; to mar the taste of carnal pleasures, *ib.* ; is honourable to Christ, 356 ; is pleasing to him, *ib.* ; spiritual, ariseth more from hope than possession, *ib.* ; more felt in adversity than prosperity, *ib.* ; those have the highest feeling of, who have tasted the bitterness of sorrow, 357 ; feelings of, are up and down, yet when the feeling is gone, the sight remaineth, *ib.*
 In the Holy Ghost, the fruit of faith, xiii. 330.
 Spiritual, and temporal adversities, not incompatible, xviii. 373.
- Judas Iscariot*, parallel between him and the Papacy, iii. 32.
 Not declared to be one of the elect lost, but not to have been one of the elect, x. 336 ; parallel between Antichrist and, 342.
 His sin, x. 343 ; his covetousness, *ib.* ; his hypocrisy, *ib.* ; his treason, 344 ; his despair, *ib.* ; his punishment, 345 ; two ingredients wanting in his repentance, love to conversion and hope of mercy, 348.

Jude or Judas, called also Lebbæus and Thaddeus, all which names signify praise, v. 9 ; brother of James, therefore the Lord's cousin, 10.

JUDE, PRACTICAL COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLE OF, v. 1.

Judging the word, is done grossly by those who deny its divine authority, or accuse it, as the Papists do, as an uncertain rule, or examine the doctrines of it by their private rule, or the writings and precepts of men, iv. 383.

Judgment, day of, why called the day of redemption, i. 114.

At the day of, there shall be a congregation, iii. 11 ; a segregation, 12 ; an aggregation, *ib.*

A great help to our christian course to think of the day of, iv. 222.

In the day of, the least circumstances of our sinful actions shall be brought forth as arguments of conviction, iv. 405 ; matter of our sin shall in hell become matter of punishment, 406.

Day of, a great day, v. 211 ; because it is the consummate act of Christ's regal office, *ib.* ; because great things are then done, 212 ; great preparations for, *ib.* ; great transactions in, 213 ; great consequences of, 215 ; should be looked for, 217 ; longed for, *ib.* ; provided for, 218.

Day of, implied in the sentence pronounced in Eden, prophesied of by Enoch, and taught ever since, v. 291.

And justice, to do, a comely property in God's children, viii. 239 ; by it we are made like to God, *ib.* ; is acceptable and pleasing to God, 240 ; fitteth for communion with God, *ib.* ; is as suitable to the new nature as fruits to their own tree, 241 ; is lovely and venerable in the eyes of the world, *ib.* ; it conduceth much to the good of human society, 242 ; a comfortable property, *ib.* ; comfort of, from peace of conscience, 243 ; from the many promises of God, both as to the world to come and this present life, *ib.*

Day of, why delayed, ix. 447 ; not from any unreadiness in Christ, *ib.* ; on the part of the good, that the number of the elect may be gathered, *ib.* ; on the part of the wicked, that they may have a time of improvement, and be left without excuse, 448.

The last, delineations of, in scripture, are partly literal and partly parabolical, x. 14 ; Christ the fittest judge, 16 ; by reason of his understanding, 17 ; his justice and righteousness, 18 ; his power, 19 ; his authority, *ib.* ; his appearance as judge shall be glorious and full of majesty, 23 ; appears from considering the dignity of his person, *ib.* ; the quality of his office, *ib.* ; the greatness of his work, 24 ; some of his foregone appearances, 25 ; his great glory will take off the scandal of the cross, and recompense him for his humiliation, 26 ; will beget reverence and fear in the hearts of those who are to be judged, 27 ; will be a comfort to his people, *ib.* ; angels to attend him, partly for a train, partly that by their ministry the work may be more speedily and powerfully despatched, 28 ; scoffing objections answered, 31.

All who have lived in the world, from the beginning to the end of time, shall be present at, x. 33 ; grown persons and infants, 34 ; the dead, and those who shall be alive at the coming of Christ, 35 ; good and bad, *ib.* ; believers and unbelievers, 36 ; men of all conditions, 39 ; not some of all sorts, but every individual person, *ib.*

Of the last day shall be according to works, x. 60 ; to glorify God's holiness, 61 ; his remunerating justice, *ib.* ; his veracity and faithfulness, *ib.* ; good works are perfectional accomplishments, *ib.* ; they are qualifications to make them capable of his remunerating justice, *ib.* ;

they are signs and tokens of their being accepted with God, 62 ; they are measures according to the degrees of grace, *ib.*

Judgment, the great duty of a nation in danger of, is to give the Lord a compromise, or make up the breach between him and them, xvi. 26 ; what it is to give God a day of compromise, *ib.* ; the nature of the work, 28 ; the manner of it, 29 ; why this is the proper duty of a people in danger, 30 ; serious observations to awaken us out of security, 33.

To come, to be insisted upon in preaching, xviii. 362 ; makes access into the hearts and consciences of men more easy, because of its suitability to natural light, *ib.* ; doth most befriend the great discovery of the gospel, 363 ; doth best solve doubts about present providences, *ib.*

Future, demonstration of, from the sufferings of the godly, xx. 209.

Judgments, spiritual, the sorest of all, ii. 275.

God's internal, are chiefly blindness of mind and hardness of heart, iii. 86.

Of God on the wicked do exceedingly amplify his mercies towards us, iii. 109.

The way to escape, is to mourn for them before they come, iv. 401.

God's, under the gospel, more spiritual, but not less severe, than of old ; formerly he smote with death, now with deadness, v. 169 ; great, do usually follow great mercies, if great sins come between, 175.

Of righteousness, God's precepts are, and are accounted by his people, vi. 61 ; because they are the judicial sentence of God concerning our state and actions, *ib.* ; because of the suitable execution that is to follow, in this world and the next, 63.

Of God (*misliphatim*), are either laws enacted, or judgments executed according to those laws, vii. 47.

Of God upon the wicked compared to treading them down, viii. 209 ; implies a full punishment, 210 ; a disgraceful punishment, *ib.* ; certainty of, *ib.* ; he can, *ib.* ; he hath, *ib.* ; he will, 211 ; because of his invariable justice, *ib.* ; because of the suitability between judgment and sin, *ib.* ; for the undeceiving of the world, *ib.* ; to undeceive sinners themselves, *ib.* ; to check the insolency of those who abuse their power, 212.

God's, upon others should be observed, viii. 214 ; the observation must be to a good end, *ib.* ; must be sure that we do not make providence speak the language of our fancies, *ib.* ; we may reason from the provocation to the judgment, but must not infer special wickedness from affliction, *ib.* ; when there are remarkable circumstances in which the sin and the judgment meet, 215 ; when judgments fall upon them in the very act of their provocation, *ib.* ; when they are the authors of their own destruction, 216 ; when they are brought down wonderfully, suddenly, *ib.* ; when judgments are executed by unlikely means, *ib.* ; when such accidents bring a great deal of glory to God, *ib.* ; when God supplies the defects of men's justice, *ib.* ; when the word, in the express letter, is made good upon men, *ib.* ; observation of, a mighty cure to atheism, *ib.* ; a notable curb to keep us from sin, 217.

Of God in ancient times ought to be laid to heart by us, especially when like sins abound, viii. 232 ; that light upon other countries should be made use of, because usually they go in a circuit, 233 ; when executed before our eyes, must be the more considered, *ib.* ; though we be well at ease in our own persons, *ib.* ; though they pursue but a few, all

should fear, *ib.* ; though they light upon enemies to us and God, their fall is not to be insulted over, 234 ; much more should we tremble at his judgments upon his own people, *ib.*

Judgments, when God's, were abroad in the earth, the church had continual thoughts of God, and her endeavours were early and earnest, xii. 275.

Judiciousness, or soundness of mind, a great blessing, vii. 203 ; its office, to distinguish and judge rightly of things that differ, that we may not mistake error for truth and evil for good, *ib.* ; to determine and resolve, 204 ; to direct as well as decree, 205 ; a great defect in most christians, 206 ; mischief arising from this defect, *ib.* ; they are apt to be misled and deceived, *ib.* ; they are fickle and irresolute, both in the profession and practice of godliness, 207 ; they easily miscarry, and make religion a burden to themselves, or else a scorn to the world, *ib.* ; makes them troublesome to others, by preposterous carriage, rash censuring, needless intermeddling, 208 ; makes them troublers of the church of God, *ib.* ; must be sought of God, 209 ; must be sought in the word, 210 ; increased by long use and exercise, 211 ; by sense and experience, *ib.* ; hindrances, 212 ; a passionate or wild addictedness to any carnal things, *ib.* ; pride, *ib.*

Jurisdiction, God hath an absolute, over us, vi. 197.

Just man is a renewed man, xviii. 388 ; a man furnished with knowledge of the things that concern his duty, *ib.* ; a mortified man, *ib.* ; a man biassed with a love to God and Christ and heaven, 389 ; his tongue as choice silver, *ib.* ; for purity, *ib.* ; for profit, 391.

Justice, severity of God's, seen in the scattering of the twelve tribes, iv. 19.

Divine, impartiality of, v. 170. See *Righteousness*.

Much of, in all God's judgments, vii. 293 ; must be from God's nature, *ib.* ; judgment never without a cause, 294 ; judgment not immediately executed when there is a cause, 295 ; judgments inflicted always short of the cause, *ib.*

An attribute that belongs to God as a governor, xx. 216 ; is legislative or judiciary, 217 ; rewarding or punishing, *ib.* ; exercised more darkly in this world, more plainly hereafter, 218.

Justification, as opposed to crimination, is the work of an advocate ; to condemnation, of a judge, ii. 94.

Of sinners, privilege of the gospel to discover a way for, iii. 416 ; can be done by no other way, doctrine, or knowledge in the world, *ib.* ; in the gospel fully and amply done, 417. See *Gospel*.

Reconcilement of Paul and James regarding ; Paul speaketh of the justifying of a sinner from the curse of his natural condition, the accusations of the law, &c., and accepting him into the favour of God, which is of grace, and not of debt ; James, of the justifying and approbation of that faith by which we are thus accepted of God, iv. 245 ; in Paul, is opposite to the condemnation of a sinner in general ; in James, opposite to the condemnation of a hypocrite in particular (Diodati), 246 ; Papists say that Paul speaketh of the first qualification, and excludeth works done before baptism ; James, of the second justification, by which a justified man is made more just, and the works he speaketh of are performed in faith, and by the help of divine grace, 261 ; confutation of this, *ib.* ; Arminians and Socinians make new obedience the instrument of justification, and that the grace of God is seen only in the acceptance of our imperfect obedience, 262 ; confutation, *ib.* ; orthodox, though they differ somewhat in words and

- phrases ; agree that Paul speaketh of the office of faith, James of the quality of faith, 264.
- Justification*, free, by faith in Christ, tendeth greatly to promote holiness, xi. 153.
- Opposed to accusation and condemnation, xii. 349 ; as opposed to accusation, it is the part of an advocate ; as to condemnation, that of a judge, *ib.*
- Consisteth in two things, the pardon of our sins, and our acceptation as righteous in Christ, xii. 350 ; four ways doth God especially justify, by way of constitution, estimation, sentence, and execution, 351 ; how it standeth with the wisdom, justice, and holiness of God to justify a sinner, 352 ; several objections cleared, *ib.* ; reasons why no charge or accusation can lie against those whom God justifieth, 355.
- Requisite to eternal life, xii. 461.
- By faith and by works, the apostles James and Paul reconciled, xiii. 76.
- And sanctification, distinct privileges, but always go together, xiii. 274.
- How we are justified by faith, xiii. 477 ; reasons why faith is deputed to this service, 480 ; what kind of faith it is that justifies, 481.
- Works not the condition, but the evidence of, xiv. 5.
- A chief part of the life of faith, xv. 56 ; is the way to the life of sanctification, 57 ; we are incapable of, and cannot hope for, the life of glorification without it, *ib.* ; the work of faith with respect to it, 58 ; how we must set faith a-work, 61 ; the fruits of, 62.
- Must be distinguished, but not separated, from sanctification, xv. 65.
- JUSTIFIED, WISDOM IS, OF HER CHILDREN, ii. 93.
- Keeping* God's word notes an exact and tender respect, keeping it as a jewel, or a precious treasure, that it may not be hazarded, vii. 106.
- Christ's, of his people, extends to corporal safety, x. 339.
- God's, of his people, is by his Spirit and by his providence, x. 400 ; necessary to us, 401.
- Keys* of the kingdom of heaven are of knowledge or doctrine, and of order and discipline, i. 192 ; the former exercised about all sin as sin, the latter about sin only as it is scandalous and infectious, *ib.*
- Kindness*, merciful, of God, noteth his bounty, or his free inclination to do us good without our merit, and against our merit, vii. 302.
- Kingdom* of Christ has the nearest respect to the glory of God, i. 90 ; God's is twofold, universal, over all things, and special, *ib.* ; the latter has two branches, the kingdom of grace and the kingdom of glory, *ib.* ; of grace considered as externally administered, 91 ; and as internally received, *ib.* ; of glory is begun on our translation to heaven in the moment of death, *ib.* ; consummated at the resurrection and general judgment, 92 ; what is implied in the prayer 'Thy kingdom come,' *ib.*
- The gospel state, why so called, i. 93 ; in regard of the king, Jesus Christ, *ib.* ; in regard of the subjects and their privileges, 94 ; in regard of the laws and manner of administration, 95 ; in regard of punishments and rewards, *ib.* ; it is a spiritual kingdom, 96 ; how we must enter into it, 97.
- Of sin and Satan, Satan may be cast out in part, and yet retain a supreme interest in the heart, i. 101 ; difficulty of casting out Satan lieth partly in ourselves, and partly in the devil, *ib.* ; we can never be sure that Satan is wholly cast out until Christ dwell and rule in the heart, 102.

Kingdom of glory, when we pray for the coming of, we express our readiness for it, and our desire of it, i. 105.

Of grace, public visible administration of, i. 107.

Power, and glory, being God's, a ground of confidence in prayer, i. 246 ; directs and regulates prayer, 251.

Of Christ, not of pomp, but of patience, ii. 115.

Of glory, happy estate of the blessed expressed by the nature of, x. 50 ; partly with respect to Christ, whose glory they shall share, *ib.* ; a state of the highest dignity and dominion, the fullest joy and content, *ib.* ; partly with respect to our loss by the fall, *ib.* ; prepared for them, 51 ; by the Father's love, *ib.* ; the Son's merit and mediation, *ib.* ; the Spirit's work in preparing them for it, *ib.* ; prepared for them personally and determinatively, 52.

Of darkness, to destroy the, Christ's purpose after his ascension, xv. 21 ; this kingdom the state opposite to Christ's kingdom as mediator, *ib.* ; to demolish this corrupt estate we are all to be active in our several places, 22 ; our means in the eye of sense are very weak, whatever they are in the eye of faith, 23 ; our faith must be strong, for it is supported by the decree of God, the intercession of Christ, and the power of the Holy Ghost, 24 ; we must keep God's direction, and use only such means as he hath prescribed, 25 ; we must wait his leisure, and tarry for the season he hath appointed, 26.

Gospel, is a kingdom of light, life, love, xviii. 31 ; of Satan is ignorance and error, shows and dead ceremonies, and uncharitableness, *ib.*

Christ hath a spiritual, xviii. 105 ; the king is the Mediator, *ib.* ; the subjects are penitent believers, 106 ; the law is the gospel, *ib.* ; the sanctions are punishments and rewards, 107 ; in all reason, should be submitted to, *ib.* ; because of the right which Christ hath to govern, *ib.* ; subjection is comfortable and beneficial to us, 108 ; it is by his kingly office that all his benefits are applied to us, *ib.* ; our personal title to all the benefits intended to us is mainly evidenced by our subjection to his regal authority, *ib.* ; we shall be unwillingly subject to his kingdom of power, if we be not willingly subject to his kingdom of grace, 109 ; his government is a blessed government, *ib.* ; carnal men greatly dislike, 110.

Of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one true and only God ; besides this, there is the kingdom of Christ considered as mediator, xix. 213.

Christ's, the title or right to the privileges of, is by way of inheritance, xix. 214.

Kingly office of Christ requires that he be God and man, i. 482, 490.

Office of Christ little exercised on earth during his humiliation, x. 468.

Kings, princes, and magistrates, necessary for them to know God's testimonies, vi. 488 ; as men, *ib.* ; as rulers and potentates, *ib.* ; that they may understand their place and duty, *ib.* ; that they may be carried through their cares, and fears, and snares, 489 ; so they shall be a double blessing to the people, *ib.*

Christians are made, xix. 90 ; here spiritually, in proportion as they vanquish the devil, the world, and the flesh, *ib.* ; hereafter, visibly, gloriously, and eternally, *ib.*

Kinsman, great comfort that Christ is, by his incarnation, ii. 294 ; and by our regeneration, 295 ; as kinsman he is our redeemer, *ib.* ; pays the price and ransom of his captivated brethren, *ib.* ; revenges the quarrel of his slain kinsmen upon the murderer, 296.

Knowledge, the first radical act of faith, iii. 415. See *Faith*.

- Knowledge*, true, is considerate, iii. 425 ; convincing, *ib.* ; wise, prudent, and directive, 426 ; affective, *ib.* ; practical, 427 ; spiritual, 428.
- Of God in Christ, means of growth in, iii. 433 ; reading the word, hearing, prayer, meditation, laying aside prejudices, 434.
- Enables to bear trials, iv. 28.
- Of scripture, and delight in it, must be directed to practice, vi. 107.
- Of the things of God, degrees of, vi. 165 ; simple nescience, as in the heathen, *ib.* ; a grammatical knowledge, but not a spiritual, 166 ; dogmatical knowledge, *ib.* ; gracious illumination, *ib.*
- Reproof of those who desire, only to inform their judgments or satisfy their curiosity, vi. 347, 352.
- Sound saving, is such as doth establish the heart against all delusions, and keepeth us on truth's side, vi. 256 ; such as causeth the soul to lie under the dominion, life, and power of the truth, and aweth and commandeth the heart into obedience, *ib.* ; when it giveth us prudence how to practise, *ib.* ; excellency of, 257 ; vastness and latitude of, *ib.* ; profit that cometh by, 258.
- Man not led by, but by judgment, vii. 204.
- God's grace free in making a difference between man and man as to measures and degrees of, viii. 11 ; sovereignty of his distribution, 12 ; equity and proportion, *ib.* ; God giveth to whom he pleaseth, yet so that those who meditate most thrive most, *ib.*
- Saving, a benefit that must be asked of God, vii. 183 ; God is the proper author of it, *ib.* ; it is a singular favour to them on whom he bestoweth it, 184 ; prayer is the appointed means to obtain it, *ib.* ; cannot be too often, or sufficiently often, asked of God, 185.
- In the general, is man's excellency, ix. 30 ; divine, is better than all others, 31 ; of the knowledge of God, practical is better than speculative, *ib.* ; of practical, the best is transforming, regenerating, saving, 32 ; to be sought not only by beginners, but grown christians, *ib.* ; that we may escape the deceits of a subtle devil, 33 ; that we may serve a holy God with such exactness and diligence as doth become his excellency, *ib.* ; that we may be prepared for an everlasting estate by degrees, *ib.*
- Christ's, of his people, is as they fall under the purposes of his grace, ix. 405 ; as they are under the care of his special providence, 406 ; as they are the subjects of his rewarding grace, *ib.*
- Of God, the way to life eternal, or life eternal begun, and is the root and foundation, x. 140, 142.
- Means to grow in, x. 144 ; wait upon the preaching of the word, *ib.* ; read the word with diligence, *ib.* ; read with prayer, 145 ; study the creatures, 146 ; spiritualise every outward advantage, *ib.* ; purge your heart more and more from carnal affections, *ib.* ; beware of novelism, *ib.* ; directions, 147 ; progress in knowledge is rather in degrees than in parts, *ib.* ; fundamentals in the scripture are clear and certain, *ib.* ; these necessary doctrines must be entertained without doubt and hesitancy, *ib.* ; we must be zealous for lesser truths when we have received them upon certain grounds, 148 ; take up no practices nor principles but upon full conviction, *ib.* ; no other knowledge but that of God and Christ sufficient to life eternal, *ib.* ; this is sufficient, 149.
- Before faith, in faith, and after faith, x. 236.
- Of God, the only way to blessedness, xi. 118 ; because the foundation of the eternal state must be laid in this life, *ib.* ; there is no serving

or enjoying of God but by knowledge, 119 ; none without the knowledge of Christ as mediator, 120 ; because God will accept no honour from the creature but in and through Christ, *ib.* ; because God, out of Christ, is not comfortable, but terrible, *ib.*

Knowledge, God's, of his people, importeth his eternal election of them before all time, xviii. 140 ; his gracious conversion of them in time, *ib.* ; his particular notice of them in the course of his providence, 141 ; the intimate familiarity that is between God and them in holy ordinances, and the whole course of their conversation, *ib.* ; acknowledgment of them at the last day, 142.

'A form of,' what it is, xix. 381 ; a grammatical and memorative knowledge, *ib.* ; dogmatical and opinionative knowledge, *ib.* ; such as produces some touch upon the heart, but slender and transitory, *ib.*

Of Christ, even speculative, is a great privilege, xx. 21 ; saving, is such as is accompanied with faith, love, and obedience, *ib.* ; better than all others, 22 ; effect of, 24 ; necessity, pleasure, and profit of, 26.

Of Christ, experimental, benefits of, xx. 52 ; experience gives us a more intimate knowledge, *ib.* ; a greater confirmation of the truth, *ib.* ; greater incitement to the love of Christ and his ways, 53 ; doth more engage to zeal and diligence in the heavenly life, 54 ; motives to get, 55 ; means of getting, 57.

Labour without God cannot prosper, against God will surely miscarry, iv. 74.

Lactantius peremptorily said that the world would last but two hundred years after his time, iii. 18.

Lamb, Christ called, in scripture, for three reasons, iii. 338 ; as it is an emblem of innocence, meekness, and patience, *ib.* ; as it may import weakness and slenderness of appearance in the world, *ib.* ; it noteth the meekness and sweetness of Christ, willingly yielding to be a sacrifice for us, *ib.*

Of God, Christ the true, xviii. 475 ; resembles a lamb in innocency, *ib.* ; in liableness to injuries, *ib.* ; in meekness and patience, 476 ; the sacrificial lamb, *ib.* ; the paschal lamb, 477. See *Paschal lamb*.

LANGUISHING, ENGLAND'S SPIRITUAL, &c., v. 411.

Lapses and falls, for recovery from, is required particular and express repentance, ii. 199.

Latitudinarians, reproof of, vi. 309.

Law, a ceremony of the Levitical, must not hinder a necessary duty of the moral, ii. 5.

How the strength of sin, ii. 442 ; by discovering it, *ib.* ; by binding over the sinner to the curse and wrath of God, *ib.* ; augmenteth it by forbidding it, *ib.*

The natural man opposes both tables of the, iii. 310.

Obedience required by, must be full and entire, iii. 418 ; must be of the whole man, soul and body, 419 ; must be constant and universal, *ib.*

Christ the giver of, as well as of the gospel, iv. 207.

A crafty pretence when one part of it is pleaded to excuse obedience to another, iv. 211.

In the hands of Christ, a law of liberty, iv. 219 ; it is directive and imperative, *ib.* ; yet a law of liberty, *ib.* ; we are freed from the law as a covenant of works, *ib.* ; from the curse and condemnation, 220 ; from the irritation, *ib.* ; from bondage and terrors, *ib.*

- Law* presupposeth an innocent nature, and requires universal, perpetual, perfect obedience, v. 476 ; its penalty a universal and eternal curse, 477 ; either terrifieth or stupefieth the conscience, *ib.*
- Of God, the rule of life, vi. 9 ; to be consulted with on all occasions for information, that we may neither act short nor over, *ib.* ; and to awe us, 11 ; obedience to, must be sincere, *ib.* ; constant, 12 ; uniform and entire, *ib.* ; such obedience the way to true blessedness, *ib.*
- Not obscure, but men blind, vi. 164.
- Odious to the flesh, acceptable to a gracious heart, vi. 287 ; writing upon our hearts, an act of grace, 288.
- To keep God's, needeth a great deal of understanding, vi. 348 ; that we may know his way, and understand what God commandeth or forbiddeth, *ib.* ; to avoid the snares that are laid for us in the course of our duty to God, *ib.* ; that we may respect things according to their order, and places, and proportions, 349 ; that we may judge aright of time, and place, and manner of doing, 350 ; because our affections answer our understanding, 351.
- Of God, to forsake, is folly, vii. 57 ; is injury done to God, *ib.* ; is shameful ingratitude, 58 ; is a disowning his property in us, *ib.* ; is a contempt of his glorious majesty, *ib.* ; punishment of, 59 ; forfeiting all the promises of this world and the next, *ib.* ; endurance of eternal fire, 60.
- The moral obligation of, still lieth on God's servants that are taken into the covenant of grace, viii. 283.
- Made void, formally, when men deny the authority of God, viii. 297 ; interpretatively when they wilfully and consistently disobey it, *ib.*
- Of God is such a rule and direction as men would choose if they were at their own liberty, provided they were wise, and not brutified by inordinate passions, evil customs, and discomposure of soul, viii. 458.
- Is just and righteous, the violation of which men judge to be justly punished, viii. 459.
- Word of God hath the nature and force of, ix. 8 ; to man individually, *ib.* ; to the church, 9 ; agrees with the laws of man in that it is an act of power and sovereignty, by which a superior declareth his will to those that are subject to him, *ib.* ; in that there is not only direction given to us, but obligation laid upon us, *ib.* ; in that it hath a sanction of rewards and punishments, 10 ; in that this sanction is enforced by a judge, *ib.* ; differs from the laws of man, in that these only command, but God condescends to reason, and persuade, and entreat, *ib.* ; in that God's law binds the conscience and the immortal soul, the laws of man only the outward behaviour, 11 ; in that men may grant immunity from their laws, God granteth none from his, *ib.* ; in that man's laws propound only punishments, God's hath punishments and rewards, *ib.* ; God's, is truth, 12 ; the chief truth, the only truth, the pure truth, the whole truth, *ib.*
- Of God, it is the property of God's children not only to keep, but to love, ix. 201 ; they love God, and therefore his law, *ib.* ; they find such excellency in, that they must needs love, 202 ; there is no proper keeping, without loving, 204.
- We must not only obey, but love, ix. 233 ; we can never thoroughly and constantly keep, without love to it, *ib.* ; except we obey because we love, our obedience is not sincere and acceptable, *ib.* ; the next object to God fit for our love is his law, 234 ; want of love to, is the reason why so many miscarry in the way of godliness, *ib.* ; our love to, must be exceeding strong, 235.

- Law* discovereth the multitude and heinous nature of our offences, xi. 157 ; gives an awakening sense of the punishment due to sin, *ib.*
- Exemption from the rigours and curse of, abused to licentiousness, xi. 303 ; we are still under the law as a rule of obedience, *ib.*
- Of the spirit of life, and law of sin and death, mean the covenant of grace and the covenant of works, xi. 395.
- Can neither give justification nor sanctification, xi. 422.
- Of the cleansing the leper a type of the sacrifice and intercession of Christ and sanctification by the Spirit, xii. 73.
- Hath a twofold office, convincing of sin and threatening punishment, xii. 102.
- ‘And the prophets,’ an expression commonly used in apostolic times to denote all the scriptures then extant, xvii. 420.
- Of God, all mankind are under, xx. 490 ; man being God’s creature, is therefore his subject, *ib.* ; being God’s subject, hath a certain law given to him, *ib.* ; being under a law, should be very tender of breaking it, 491 ; reasons why, *ib.* ; the heinousness of sin is determined by its contrariety to this law, 493 ; how many ways this law may be transgressed, *ib.* ; those that live in any allowed breach of this law cannot look upon themselves as God’s children, 495 ; the dangerous condition of those who live in a course of sin, 497.
- Lawful* things must be disesteemed, discountenanced, and rejected, for Christ’s sake, xx. 14.
- Laws*, man’s, do more incline to punishments than rewards, but God’s poundeth rewards equal to the punishments, xi. 367.
- Lazarus*, not every, carried into Abraham’s bosom, iv. 61.
- Leaning* on God, what it is, xiv. 115.
- Legalism* confuted, x. 62 ; works not the moving cause to incline God to give us Christ, or the grace of faith, or conversion, 63 ; not the righteousness by which sin is expiated, *ib.* ; not the instrument by which we apply the merits of Christ to ourselves, *ib.*
- Legality*, partial in the regenerate, and in the carnal predominant, xii. 107.
- Levelling*, God’s providence contrary to, v. 308.
- Liberality* of God in his gifts, iv. 42.
- Liberius*, Bishop of Rome, an instance of inconstancy, iv. 35.
- Liberty*, carnal, is but thralldom, vi. 479 ; it hindereth and disableth man from prosecuting his great end, 480 ; disordereth the constitution of the soul, *ib.* ; sin a powerful tyrant, 481 ; the bondage increased by custom, *ib.* ; fear of death and damnation doggeth sin at the heels, 482 ; true, is in the ways of God, *ib.* ; we are directed how to attain our great end, *ib.* ; the noblest faculties are exercised in the noblest and most regular way of operation, *ib.*
- Holy and blessed, to be freed from the power of sin and the curse of the law, xi. 304 ; sinful, to be free from righteousness, *ib.*
- There is one kind of, which is the perfection of human nature, and another which is a defection from God, xi. 336.
- Christ procureth and purchaseth, both from the damning power of the law and the slavery of corruption, xi. 417 ; the new covenant offereth this grace to us, 418 ; and assures and establishes it, *ib.* ; the Spirit applyeth to us, both as to the effects and the sense, *ib.*
- Of God’s children in this world, what it is, xii. 170 ; such as becometh a creature in subjection to God, 171 ; such as will leave us in a capacity to pursue our chief good and last end, *ib.* ; such as will suit

with the dignity of a rational creature, 172 ; such as will bring us nearest to the state of innocency and the state of glory, *ib.* ; implies possession of the immunities and privileges of God's children, 173 ; their rights and prerogatives, 174 ; the glorious liberty of God's children in the world to come considered as to the soul and as to the body, 175 ; our liberty now and then contrasted, *ib.*

Lie, if one, would save the world, we must not tell it, i. 134.

Lies promissory, are worst of all, ii. 219.

Are assertory, vi. 278 ; or promissory, 279 ; to God, *ib.* ; to man, 280 ; the sporting lie, *ib.* ; the officious, 281 ; the pernicious, *ib.* ; scripture condemns all without restriction, *ib.* ; greatness of the sin, 282, remedies against, 285.

LIFE OF FAITH, A TREATISE ON THE, xv. 45.

Life not to be valued but as it yieldeth opportunities to glorify God, i. 81.

Of the Redeemer after his death, a visible demonstration of the truth of the gospel in general, and in particular of the article of eternal life, ii. 298 ; a token of the acceptation of his purchase, *ib.* ; implies his capacity to intercede for us, *ib.* ; it is the root and cause of our life, 299.

And death as the fruit of good and evil, ministers are to set before the people in a lively manner, ii. 358 ; conjunction dependent on the wisdom of God, 359 ; his justice, 360 ; and holiness, *ib.* ; both eternal, 361 ; certainty of, 362 ; shown by reason, *ib.* ; by conscience, 364 ; by scripture, *ib.*

Spiritual, foundation of, is the life of Christ, iii. 359 ; known by freeness, power, and likeness, 360.

A christian's, must be suitable to the purity and dignity of his calling v. 25.

Prolongation of, in itself a blessing, vi. 155 ; is of God's gift, 156 ; of the mere bounty and free grace of God, *ib.* ; scope of, God's service, 160.

A christian's, is a life of love and praise, a hymn to God, vii. 169.

Spiritual, what it is, viii. 194 ; of justification, 195 ; of sanctification, *ib.* ; of glory, *ib.* ; distinct from life natural, *ib.* ; excellency above natural, 196 ; vitality of, lies in faith and love, 197.

Natural, we do well to value, but not in competition with our duty and love to Christ, ix. 34 ; is better preserved in a way of obedience than by evil-doing, *ib.* ; spiritual, is twofold—of justification and of sanctification, 35 ; everlasting, is our blessed estate in heaven, *ib.*

The principal end for which a man should desire, is to praise and glorify God, ix. 293 ; may be desired for this end, 295.

Eternal, is Christ's gift, x. 133 ; not only bear subsistence for ever, but also tranquillity and happiness, *ib.* ; is begun and carried on by degrees, 135 ; the foundation laid in regeneration, *ib.* ; progress made presently after death, *ib.* ; consummation of all joy at the resurrection of the body, 136.

Newness of, xi. 173 ; its foundation is the new birth or regeneration, *ib.* ; consisting of mortification and vivification, *ib.* ; its rule is the infallible revelation of God, 174 ; its end is the pleasing, glorifying, and enjoying of God, *ib.* ; is a godly life, *ib.* ; a holy life, *ib.* ; a heavenly life, 175 ; Christ both the cause and the pattern of it, 227.

The only amiable, is that which is spent in God's service, xi. 353 ; because of the pleasure of it, *ib.* ; and the profit, 354 ; God will for-

- give their sins, *ib.* ; and assure them of his love, *ib.* ; conscience speaketh peace and comfort, 356 ; the title to the heavenly inheritance is more clear, *ib.* ; easier access to God, 357 ; work is more easy, because not done against the bent of the heart, *ib.* ; mercies and comforts are more sweet, because they come from God's love, and are used to his glory, 358 ; because of the honour of it, 359 ; holiness is the image of God upon the soul, *ib.* ; high and noble ends, 360 ; a noble course, *ib.* ; the approbation of God, 361 ; the excellency is intrinsic, *ib.* ; the honour is everlasting, 362.
- Life* eternal, what it is, xi. 363 ; life both in soul and body, 364 ; a good and happy state, 365 ; endless and everlasting, 366.
- Eternal, is the full fruition of eternal joys, without any possibility of losing them, xi. 377 ; is God's free and gracious gift to the sanctified, *ib.* ; the freest gift, 378 ; the richest gift, *ib.*
- Believers have, notwithstanding death, xii. 15 ; this to be understood of body and soul, *ib.* ; the righteousness of Christ the meritorious cause, 16.
- Everlasting, a benefit of the new covenant, xii. 120.
- But a passage to eternity, xiii. 5.
- The happy condition of the godly so called, xiii. 83 ; temporal and eternal compared, *ib.*
- Natural, what it is, xiii. 203.
- To come, proved from the righteousness of God, since else christians were of all men most miserable, xix. 133 ; argued from God's wisdom, 134 ; and holiness, *ib.* ; and justice, 135 ; and goodness, *ib.* ; from the nature, state, and condition of man, 137 ; as God's subjects, *ib.* ; as bound to be upright and sincere in God's service, 138 ; with respect to man's comfort and solace in his troubles, *ib.* ; with respect to the credit and esteem of God's servants in the world, 139 ; should support in sharp afflictions, *ib.* ; and in death, 140 ; nature saith it may be, faith saith it shall be, 141.
- The great end and business of a christian, should be to honour and glorify Christ, xx. 179 ; is from him and should be to him, 180 ; we are his by creation, *ib.* ; preservation, 182 ; redemption, 183 ; conquest, 184 ; actual possession, *ib.* ; resignation and voluntary consent, *ib.* ; only worth having when we can honour Christ by it, *ib.* ; directions, 185 ; motives, 186.
- Eternal, our present afflictions are as nothing in comparison of the hope of, xx. 372.
- Light* gotten by the word of God is *lux manifestans* ; it manifesteth itself and all things else, viii. 352 ; *lux dirigens*, *ib.* ; *lux vivificans*, *ib.* ; *lux exhilarans*, 353.
- Necessity of divine, before we can understand the things of God, x. 201.
- Of faith and light of prophecy, wherein they differ and wherein they agree, xiv. 400.
- In the Lord, how christians are, xix. 245 ; noteth not so much their perfection as the perfection of the dispensation they are under, *ib.* ; noteth some good measure and degree of participation, *ib.* ; noteth that they have received grace, not only for themselves, but for the good of others, 246.
- And darkness, children of, there should be a broad and sensible difference between, xix. 306 ; this difference discovered by those actions that are proper to either state, 307 ; this distinction to be kept up on the part of the godly, *ib.* ; the children of God are fitted and prepared

for this, 308 ; great inconveniences follow if the distinction be not maintained, *ib.*

Lights, God the father of, iv. 112 ; lessons from this title, 113.

Like for like, awarded even to God's children in this world, ii. 382.

Likeness of believers to Christ as the eternal son of God, xi. 55 ; as Mediator, *ib.*

To Christ, in what it consists, xx. 463 ; how it is the fruit of vision, 464.

Little children, christians of all ranks and ages are and should be as, xx. 381 ; the term implieth newness of birth, *ib.* ; and remission of sins, 382.

Living to God is making his glory the scope of our lives, vii. 441 ; walking so as God may own us with honour, *ib.*

To God, the duty and property of the spiritual life is to refer all our actions not to self, but to God, xiii. 210 ; self-denial required as our first lesson, 211 ; as soon as we are alive by grace, our affections, respects, and endeavours are turned into a new channel, *ib.* ; we cannot live to ourselves and God too, *ib.* ; living to God doth not note one single action, but the whole course and conduct of our lives, 213 ; love to God the great principle that draweth us off from self to God, *ib.* ; the great thing that breedeth and feedeth this love is Christ's death, 214 ; Christ's death considered as to the intention, the grace and help merited, and the obligation left on the creature to live not for themselves but unto God, *ib.* ; that we are not our own, but God's, proved by reasons, *ib.* ; the danger which will ensue if we live to ourselves and not to God, 216 ; motives to press us to this weighty duty of living to God and not to ourselves, 217 ; directions, 218.

By faith, what it is, xv. 48 ; how and why we are said to live by faith, *ib.*

Longing after holiness and subjection to God, motives to, vi. 431 ; these desires shall be granted, *ib.* ; the result of the granting of them will be only good, *ib.* ; how to awaken, 432 ; go to God, who giveth to will and to do, *ib.* ; cherish the sparks, and blow them up into a flame, *ib.* ; improve your tastes, *ib.* ; watch over other desires that would dull and blunt the edge of the spirit, 433 ; renew your desires every time you come to God, *ib.* ; consider your wants, *ib.* ; and the fulness that is in Christ, 434 ; and his readiness to give to you, *ib.*

Long-suffering, creation teacheth us a lesson in, xii. 181.

God's, an encouragement to repentance, xviii. 231 ; this forbearance showeth that he is gracious, merciful, willing to be reconciled, *ib.* ; so doth his continuance to us of forfeited mercies, *ib.* ; these mercies do not harden in their own nature, but merely by the sinner's abuse of them, 232 ; he hath provided a remedy for us by Jesus Christ, *ib.* ; affected scruples whether this be intended for us are a sin, and do not disoblige us from our duty, 233 ; he hath appointed means, *ib.* ; he warneth us against the abuse of mercies, *ib.* ; he defers punishment, *ib.*

LOOKING BACK ILL BECOMES THOSE WHO HAVE SET THEIR FACES HEAVENWARD, ii. 130.

Looking back, what it is, ii. 132 ; pretending to follow Christ, while the heart hankers after the world, 133 ; being discouraged in his service by trials and difficulties, *ib.* ; respects either mortification or vivification, *ib.* ; how ill it becometh those who have put their hand to the spiritual plough, 134 ; in respect of the covenant into which they enter, or the manner of entrance into it, *ib.* ; with respect to the duties of christianity, *ib.* ; in respect of the hurt that cometh both to themselves and to religion, 135 ; with respect to the disproportion

- between the things that tempt us to look back, and the things set before us, 136 ; instructions to avoid, 137.
- Looking*, God's, upon his people, implies his favour and providence, viii. 366 ; they apprehend it a great blessing, 367 ; because in our distresses the main thing to be desired is not the removal of the evil, but the renewed sense of God's love, 368 ; because that bringeth other things along with it, *ib.* ; his love and power are set a-work, *ib.* ; if we continue in our misery, his look will sweeten all, *ib.* ; when he looks upon the broken-hearted, the believer, the sincere, such as love his name, *ib.*
- 'For that blessed hope,' what this looking is, xvi. 173 ; what it is not, *ib.* ; in what it shows itself, 175 ; the influence it hath upon the spiritual life, 177 ; exhortation, 183.
- LORD, BLESSED ESTATE OF THEM WHO DIE IN THE,** iv. 455.
- Lord* and owner of persons and things, Christ Jesus is the great, ix. 424 ; his power as an owner and free lord to be distinguished from his power as a governor and ruler, 425 ; ownership accrueth to him by right of creation and redemption, *ib.* ; is entire and absolute, *ib.* ; inalienable, 426 ; set forth by a right of making or framing anything as he willeth, 427 ; a right of having and possessing things so made, *ib.* ; a right of using and disposing all things thus possessed, 428.
- Lord's day*, time of, to be parted into meditation, prayer, hearing, and conference, vi. 149.
- LORD'S PRAYER, PRACTICAL EXPOSITION OF,** i. 1.
- Lord's prayer*, connection of the first three petitions of, i. 120.
- Lord's supper*, a remembrance of God's goodness to us in Christ, vii. 245 ; to give us a more intimate and renewed taste of this goodness, *ib.* ; to stir up our love to God, *ib.* ; to lead us to desire more communion with him, *ib.*
- Preparation for, ix. 346 ; we come to meet the bridegroom in a way of grace, *ib.* ; there should be as serious preparation for, as for death or judgment, *ib.* ; we should come with oil, both in our lamps and in our vessels, 347.
- We come to, to remember Christ's death, and to interest ourselves in the fruit of it, xi. 15.
- What we are to do and what we are to expect in, xiii. 444.
- What we ought to do before coming to, xiv. 483 ; how we ought to come, 484 ; what we are to do in, 486 ; what we are to do after, 487.
- At the table of the Lord our graces should be exercised in a special lively manner, xv. 429 ; the general use which a sacrament has beyond other duties, 430 ; the special use and intent of this duty, 431 ; what graces are to be exercised, 432.
- Are we bound to have assurance of our sincerity before we come to the table of the Lord ? xv. 461.
- In approaching the table of the Lord, we should consider our aim and what we are going about, xv. 488 ; the benefits arising from this, 489 ; the ends of the Lord's supper, 490 ; the duties our profession bind us to in regard of it, 492.
- A commemoration of Christ's death, not as a tragical story, but as a mystery of godliness, xviii. 327 ; two affections most proper and seasonable, 328 ; mourning for sin, *ib.* ; rejoicing in Christ Jesus, 329 ; reflection on the cause, occasion, and benefits of the death of Christ, *ib.* ; the act is annunciative or showing forth, 332 ; to our-

- selves, *ib.* ; to others, *ib.* ; to God, 333 ; annunciation must be serious, 334 ; applicative, *ib.* ; practical, *ib.*
- Lordship*, Christ's, is a new right of propriety and government over all men and things, xx. 27 ; superadded to the dominion of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost as creator, *ib.* ; is derivative and subordinate, *ib.* ; is comfortable and beneficial to us, 28 ; accrues to him by his own purchase, and his Father's grant, *ib.* ; we come under, by voluntary submission, *ib.* ; privileges and duties of the subjects, 29.
- Loss*, converted men count those things to be, which before they counted gain, xx. 4.
- Lost*, in what sense we are said to be, xviii. 155 ; really and indeed, *ib.* ; in our own sense and apprehension, 156 ; Christ's seeking of, implieth his pity of us in our lost estate, 158 ; his diligence and pains to reduce us, *ib.* ; his saving of, is by merit and by power, 160.
- Lot's wife*, her sin, xv. 370 ; her judgment, 371 ; the profitableness of meditation on this instance, 373.
- Love feasts* not obligatory, but allowed, v. 274.
How far they are warranted in scripture, xv. 345.
- LOVE, MR CHRISTOPHER, SERMON AT HIS FUNERAL, ii. 439.
- Love* both acted and increased in prayer, i. 30.
By the world's maxim, should begin at home ; by Christ's direction it begins with God, i. 71.
In God, is twofold, of benevolence and of complacency, i. 385.
Of God and our neighbour, better exercised in the shop than in the cloister, ii. 97.
To God, its radical and internal acts are desire after him, ii. 236 ; and delight in him, 237 ; its external effects are doing and suffering his will, 238 ; its properties, 239 ; not speculative, but practical, *ib.* ; transcendental, *ib.* ; must be directed by God himself, 240 ; necessity of this for the unregenerate, 242 ; and the regenerate, 243 ; sanctifying Spirit given for this end, 245 ; ordinances appointed for this end, *ib.* ; providences tend to this end, 246.
At the bottom of all God's grace, should be at the bottom of all our duties, ii. 344.
Of God to sinners, manifested in our redemption by Christ, giveth great boldness and encouragement in prayer, iii. 148.
God's general, to a lost world, the devil seeketh to hide and obscure, iii. 150 ; special, when this grace is applied to us, *ib.*
The freeness of God's, doth not exclude the fulness of Christ's merit, iii. 269.
God's, greatness of, iii. 375 ; ancientness of, *ib.*
Is the effect of faith, and the ground of all duty, and so the best discovery of a spiritual estate, iv. 199.
A gracious and holy affection, v. 72 ; ariseth from the sense and apprehension of God's love in Christ, *ib.* ; its immediate cause the grace of God, 73 ; its object is God himself, *ib.* ; carried out to its object by desire and delight, *ib.* ; God hath commanded, 74 ; God hath deserved, 75 ; nature of, showeth that God is its proper object, 82 ; evidences of, 85 ; helps to, 86.
God's, to us, ancientness of, v. 75 ; freeness of, 76 ; frequency of the expressions of, *ib.* ; variety of the expressions of, 77 ; effects of, 78 ; creative, *ib.* ; preservative, 79 ; redemptive, 80.
Mutual, between christians, reasons for, v. 94 ; none can have better grounds to love one another, *ib.* ; none can have higher motives than

- the love of Christ, 95 ; none have a greater charge—Christ's new commandment, *ib.* ; directions, 96.
- Love*, of all graces, most needs keeping, v. 344 ; decay of, seen in a remission of the degrees, 345 ; or an intermission of the acts and exercises, *ib.* ; rules to prevent declining in, 346 ; to God, will put us upon looking for Christ's second coming, 347.
- Was made for God and all that is of God's side ; hatred, for sin, viii. 155.
- Of God to Christ as God, xi. 74 ; as mediator, *ib.* ; to the saints, 76 ; between these two there is a disparity, 77 ; yet a likeness, 78 ; like grounds, nearness and likeness, *ib.* ; like properties, 79 ; both are free, *ib.* ; tender and affectionate, *ib.* ; eternal, 80, 109 ; unchangeable, 80 ; fruits and effects, 81 ; communication of secrets, *ib.* ; spiritual gifts, *ib.* ; sustentation and gracious protection, *ib.* ; acceptance of service, 82 ; reward, *ib.* ; chiefly to be measured by his spiritual bounty, 83 ; importance of a sense and comfortable apprehension of, 85 ; means of ensuring this, *ib.* ; comfort to those who have the effects, but not the sense of, 86 ; evidences of concernment in, 87.
- God's, in Christ, is the ground of all other favours and graces whatsoever, xi. 136 ; all the goodness that is in us cometh from, *ib.* ; the love of God in us is from his love to us, 137 ; his love to us is in us in the effects, and in the sense and feeling, *ib.*
- To Christ, preferring a public good before our own personal eternal interest, an undoubted evidence of, xii. 2.
- Of God, nothing so worthy of our love, xii. 273 ; cannot reign where the love of the world reigneth, *ib.* ; the comfort by which we are supported in all our distresses, *ib.* ; there are two acts in this love, desire after and delight in God, 274.
- Of God, what it is in its object, act, and properties, xii. 276 ; in the object there is a double motive to excite us to love God, because he is good and doeth good, *ib.* ; and this goodness is threefold, essential, moral, and beneficial, *ib.* ; the act, what it is and what it implies, 278 ; the properties of this love, what they are and what they are not, 279 ; why love to God is made the evidence of our interest in the privileges of the sons of God, 281 ; love of God a sure and sensible note of effectual calling, 283 ; exhortation to love of God, 285.
- Is of invincible force, xii. 400 ; is accompanied by desire, hope, and delight, *ib.* ; this ariseth partly from the real worth of the privilege, and partly from their esteem and value of it, 414 ; nothing can separate us from the fruition of this love, *ib.* ; we ought to be firmly persuaded of this, 415 ; means whereby this persuasion is bred in us, *ib.* ; the advantage those christians have above others who make it their business to love God and count it their happiness to be loved by him, 418.
- Of Christ, the power which secures believers in their conflicts, and makes them triumph over all temptations, xii. 405 ; proof from scripture and the properties of Christ's love, 407 ; it is a transcendent, tender, and constant love, *ib.* ; it is an operative and effective love, 408.
- Of God in Christ, what it is, xii. 413 ; the people of God apprehend it a blessed and comfortable position when assured of this love, *ib.*
- Of Christ, the root and principle of all sincere desires after the glory of God, xiii. 122.
- The strongest arguments and the greatest terrors inoperative without, xiii. 139.

Love of God largely taken for the duties of the first table, xiii. 140 ; more particularly for our complacency and delight in him, *ib.*

Of Christ, what it is, xiii. 140 ; the love of God distinguished, *ib.* ; the general nature of it, 141 ; the special object of it, 142 ; its singular effects, *ib.* ; the influence it hath upon our duties and actions, 143 ; whence this love to Christ cometh to have such force upon us, or is wrought in us, 146 ; the worth of the object and the consequent benefits of it, 147 ; the manner how it is considered by and applied to us, 148 ; several degrees of, distinguished, 149 ; love to Christ for worldly advantages or carnal motives bewrays a sinful respect to the benefits and rewards of religion, 152.

What it is, xiii. 143, 174, 178.

Cases of conscience—(1.) Whether God is to be loved for his beneficial goodness only, and not for his essential and moral perfections? xiii. 149 ; (2.) As to the actual persuasion of God's love to us, 154 ; (3.) As to the intensity and degree of love in us, 156 ; (4.) As to the decay of love, 159 ; (5.) As to loving God with all the heart, 169 ; (6.) As to how we shall get or increase love, 175.

Several degrees of, distinguished, xiii. 149 ; a particular persuasion of God's love to us very comfortable, but not absolutely necessary, 154 ; God's love to us the reason of our love to God, *ib.* ; assurance the fruit of love, rather than love of assurance, 155 ; comparison the best way to discover love, 156 ; not to be measured so much by the lively act as the solid esteem and settled constitution, 157 ; the effects of solid esteem, 158 ; leaving our first love a disease not only incident to hypocrites, but God's children, 159 ; though the disease be common to both, there is a difference as to the event and issue, *ib.* ; decay of love a great and common evil, 162 ; many that are surprised with it are little sensible of it, 163 ; this decay is seen in two things, the remission of degrees and the intermission of acts, *ib.* ; the causes and remedy of this decay, 166 ; how loving God with *all* the heart is to be reconciled with love to husband, wife, children, friends, and relations, 169 ; considered as an exaction of the law and as a rule of the gospel, 170 ; how far we are obliged to love God with all our heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, if we would not forfeit our covenant claim of sincerity, 171 ; God doth not require that we should think of nothing but himself, but must have all the heart so far that nothing be loved against, above, or equally with him, 172 ; how we may know we have the love of God in us, 173 ; the standing evidence of love is obedience, or a universal resolution and care to please God in all things, 174 ; this obedience must be active, constant, and pleasant, *ib.* ; in the course of our obedience God ordereth special trials of the sincerity of our love to him, 175 ; what we must do to get or increase love to God, *ib.* ; though we pray, we must not neglect to use the means, 176 ; in what the means of exciting our love consist, *ib.* ; exhortation to the love of God, 177 ; the sad consequences of not having this love, 178 ; the advantages we have by it, 179.

Of the world, a main hindrance to love of God, xiii. 177.

To our neighbour, a means to preserve our respects to God, xv. 287 ; the engagements to this love, 288 ; how far this love to our neighbour is to extend, 289.

Of the world, diverts the heart from and sets it against, Christ, xvii. 18 ; disposeth the soul to all evil, 19 ; destroys the principle of obedience, *ib.* ; hinders the receiving of good, 21.

- Love* to God, taken largely for all the duties of the first table, xviii. 137 ; or strictly for that particular grace which is distinct from faith and hope, 138 ; desiring, *ib.* ; complacential, 139 ; returning, *ib.*
- God's, to question, because of affliction, is folly, xix. 15.
- Of Christ, greater than we can think or express, xix. 17.
- Christ's, is the ground of man's redemption, xix. 83 ; the property that shined forth most conspicuously in the work of redemption, 84 ; a free love, 85 ; a real love, *ib.* ; eminent and transcendent love, *ib.* ; full love, 86.
- To walk in, signifieth not one act or two, but the perpetual tenor of our lives, xix. 183 ; love must be at the bottom of all our actions and duties, 184 ; love must dwell, and bear rule, and have dominion in our hearts, 185 ; showing love to others must be the business of our lives, *ib.* ; Christ's love to us hath a motive, 186 ; and a pattern, 187.
- Of God, in adopting us into his family and acknowledging us for his children, is such an act of grace as cannot be sufficiently considered and admired, xx. 440 ; that there is such a relation between the parties proved, *ib.* ; that this is a blessed and glorious privilege, 441 ; the cause and fountain of this mercy and grace was love, 442 ; the benefits depending from it, *ib.* ; with respect to the present state, 444 ; with respect to the life to come, 445 ; believers ought to excite themselves to earnest consideration of this great love, 446.
- To others, one great duty of believers, xxi. 87 ; what it is to love one another, *ib.* ; the acts and fruits of this love, 88 ; what it is to love all men, 91 ; reasons why we should love all men, 92 ; how God hath recommended this duty of love to others to our obedience, 93.
- Of the brethren a sure note of passing from death to life, xxi. 114 ; what it is to pass from death to life, *ib.* ; what love of the brethren is to be understood, 117 ; why so much is ascribed to this love, 119.
- To the brethren, in what it consists, xxi. 215 ; how it is conjoined with faith in Christ, 216.
- Loving-kindness* of God noteth his disposition to do good upon his own motives, or his self-inclination to do good to his creatures, especially his people, ix. 90 ; is general, to all his creatures, especially mankind, *ib.* ; or special, towards believers in Christ, *ib.* ; proofs and demonstrations of, 91 ; exercised for his own glory, 92.
- Lust*, as a power, noteth that habitual, primitive, and radical indisposition to good, and disposition to evil, that is in all the faculties, iv. 94 ; as an act, is nothing else but the risings and motions of the fleshly nature in us, *ib.* ; ensnares the soul either by force or flattery, 96 ; violence of, 97 ; how to be stopped, 104.
- Noteth properly the earnest motion of the soul after sin ; pleasure the contentment it findeth in sin, iv. 325.
- Walking after, v. 312 ; a willing subjection to lust as a law and master, *ib.* ; customary practice and observance, *ib.* ; fond indulgence, 313 ; is a note of unregeneracy, *ib.* ; dissuasives from, 314.
- 'Of the flesh,' in what it consists, xvi. 93, 94, 110.
- 'Of the eyes,' in what it consists, xvi. 93, 95, 113.
- Lusts* war in the heart even of a godly man, iv. 330 ; otherwise than in that of a wicked man, 331.
- Though they dispute every inch with grace, do easily give way to succeeding corruptions, iv. 412.

- Lusts* must be prevented by mortification, and suppressed by watchfulness, and kept by resolution from execution, v. 316.
- The more they are mortified, the more sincerely will we seek after the glory of God, xiii. 136.
- Foolish, xviii. 192; hurtful, *ib.*; destroying our peace, *ib.*; injurious to grace, 193; their tendency is ruin in this world, *ib.*; perdition or eternal damnation, *ib.*
- Luxury*, a sin very natural to us, iv. 412; chiefly incident to the rich, *ib.*; their abundance doth not excuse it, *ib.*
- Lying*, the way of, either means generally the way of sin, vi. 276; or particularly the sin of falsehood, 277; men strongly inclined to, 278; most inconsistent with the temper and sincerity of a child of God, *ib.*
- In the ordinary acceptation of it, is speaking that which is false, with an intention to deceive, ix. 187; or concealing the truth which ought to be confessed, 188; or when our practices do not correspond with our profession, *ib.*; to be hated and abhorred.
- To God, argueth not only falsity and hypocrisy, but mischief or evil thoughts of God, xix. 279; to men, is assertory or promissory, 280; different kinds of, *ib.*; the sporting lie, *ib.*; the officious lie, 281; the pernicious lie, *ib.*; in ordinary commerce, 282; in courts of justice, *ib.*
- A sin most contrary to the nature of God, who is truth itself, xix. 283; Jesus Christ was eminent for sincerity and truth, *ib.*; nothing maketh us more like the devil, *ib.*; a sin most contrary to the new nature wrought in the saints, 284; a sin most contrary to human society, *ib.*; a sin very hateful to God, 285; a sin shameful and odious in the eyes of men, *ib.*
- Magistrate*, his official duty regarding religion, v. 237.
- Magistrates*, their duty to suppress error, v. 120.
- Are under Christ as Mediator, x. 131.
- Must not be obeyed in things contrary to the word of God, xiv. 424; have not always been the best friends to Christ, 425.
- Majesty* of God, great and glorious, i. 403; in the present state we are not able to bear any extraordinary manifestation of, 406.
- And composure of the scriptures, viii. 335.
- Malice* and ill-will lead to detraction, ii. 276.
- Of the Jews, acts of, ascribed to the ordination of God, iii. 369.
- Of the wicked against the children of God ariseth from envy at their interests, their esteem and respect in the world, viii. 129; from hatred of their holiness, *ib.*
- Man*, his natural condition as set forth in scripture, i. 139; born in sin, *ib.*; greedy of sin, 140; sin the constant frame of his heart, *ib.*; his inability to reclaim himself, *ib.*
- Christ called the Son of, not to deny his Godhead, but to express the verity of his human nature, xviii. 155.
- Manifestation* of God's name by Christ to his people is by outward revelation and inward illumination, x. 198.
- Of the saints, how the saints will be manifested, xii. 155; the circumstances attending their manifestation, *ib.*; that this manifestation ought to be earnestly desired and expected by us, 156.
- Mankind* universally gone astray from God and the way of true happiness, iii. 296; all sinners by nature, 297; all that come to the use of rea-

- son have actually sinned against God, 299 ; this departing from God fitly represented by the straying of sheep, 301. See *Departing*.
- Man of sin*, the name given by the Jews to Antiochus, iii. 31 ; applicable to the Papacy, 32.
- MAN'S IMPOTENCY TO HELP HIMSELF OUT OF HIS MISERY, v. 473.
- MANTON'S, DR, FUNERAL SERMON, xxii. 125.
- Marriage*, in its purity, may stand with the strictest rules of holiness, ii. 100. Holily entered into when the parties take one another out of God's hands, ii. 163 ; when the directions of God's word are observed as to the choice of parties, *ib.* ; as to consent of parents, 164 ; as to gaining one another by warrantable, yea, religious ways, *ib.* ; as to clearing up our right and title by Christ, *ib.* ; as to the end, 165 ; God's providence to be owned in, *ib.* ; to enter into, holily, a necessary duty, 166 ; in entering on, we are to ask his leave, 169 ; his direction, 170 ; his blessing, *ib.* ; advice to persons entering into, *ib.* ; that God be no loser, *ib.* ; that he be a gainer, 171.
- The apostle Paul's comparison of the law to, xii. 104.
- Mary*, the Virgin, Romanists pray more to, than to God, iii. 99.
- Masters*, the choice of, is the great business which belongeth to our duty, xi. 309 ; in the choice we are guided by considerations of right and interest, 310 ; the two, are sinful self and holy God, *ib.* ; no man can serve both, 311 ; by nature all of us are servants of sin, grace maketh us servants of God, 312 ; both sorts of servants receive wages suitable and proportionable to the work they have done, 314 ; considerations to choose God's service, *ib.* ; and to continue therein, 315.
- Two, divide the world between them, sin and God, xii. 248 ; both services are entered into by consent, *ib.* ; sin a usurper, and our enemy as well as God's, 249 ; hence our duty to yield up ourselves to the Lord, *ib.* ; with hearty and full consent of will, 250 ; out of a deep sense of his love and mercy, *ib.* ; with grief and shame that his right hath been so long detained from him, *ib.* ; the resolution must be full and entire, *ib.* ; to submit ourselves both to his disposing and commanding will, 251.
- Matches*, three must be made ere the conscience can have solid rest and quiet, iv. 123 ; God and man must be brought together, *ib.* ; justice and mercy must be brought together, 124 ; comfort and duty must be brought together, 126.
- Matheo Langi*, Archbishop of Salzburg, on the reformation of the Catholic church, xiii. 221.
- Mean* condition, they that fear God may be reduced to, viii. 490 ; that they may know their happiness is not in this world, *ib.* ; to cut off the visions of the flesh and the fuel of their lust, 491 ; that they may be sensible of God's displeasure against their sins, *ib.* ; that they may learn to live upon the promises, and exercise suffering graces, 492 ; that God may convince his enemies that there is a people who serve him disinterestedly, *ib.* ; that his glory may be more seen in their deliverance, *ib.*
- Meanness* and want of outward pomp and splendour, the great prejudice against the entertainment of Christ and the things of his kingdom, iii. 223 ; yet is by the special appointment of God, 228 ; willingly taken up by him in his birth, and life, and manner of appearing among men, 229 ; his meanness a great mercy to mankind, 231.
- Means*, none can avail without God's blessing, i. 276.

Means, God worketh by, both in naturals and spirituals, ii. 318.

Obligation to use, reconcilable with man's impotency, v. 482.

The Lord both sendeth and blesseth, vii. 210.

Whether moral or ritual, no further effectual than they are accompanied by faith, iv. 454.

MEAT OUT OF THE EATER, v. 377.

Meditation, occasional, an act by which the soul spiritualiseth every object about which it is conversant, vi. 139 ; set and solemn, 140 ; reflective, a solemn parley between a man and his own heart, *ib.* ; direct, when we exercise our minds in the word of God, and the matters contained therein, *ib.*

A duty, vi. 141 ; a necessary duty, *ib.* ; a profitable duty, 142.

And study necessary in order to obedience, vii. 18 ; to know the mind of God, and understand our duty, 19 ; to keep up a fresh remembrance of our duty, *ib.* ; to inkindle our affections, *ib.* ; to show our love, *ib.*

On God's precepts, necessity of, vii. 333 ; truths lie hid in the heart, without any efficacy, till improved by deep, serious, and pressing thoughts, *ib.* ; God will not be served by-the-bye and at haphazard, 334 ; to divert our thoughts from other things, *ib.* ; to keep our principles in view and memory, *ib.*

On the word of God proceeds from love of it, vii. 478 ; and increases this love, 479 ; exhortation to, 481.

Three sorts of, viii. 12 ; of observation, when a man compares the word and providence, *ib.* ; of study and search, inquiring into the word of God to find out his mind, *ib.* ; of consideration, when we consider that which we read and hear, how it may be fit for use and practice, and of what moment it is for our eternal weal or woe, 13 ; private, must be joined with public hearing, *ib.* ; a great help towards gracious improvement, 14.

A necessary duty, ix. 78 ; a great help to our natural faculties, 79 ; to our graces, *ib.* ; to our duties, 80 ; exhortation to, *ib.*

The fuel of faith, xiii. 376.

The fruits of, xiii. 406.

(*לְשׁוֹן הַדְּבָרִים*, ἀδολεσχῆσαι), meaning of the word, xvii. 264 ; what it is, 267 ; the necessity and profit of it, 274 ; rules to guide us in this holy work, 277 ; lets or hindrances, 281 ; helps and remedies, *ib.* ; the meditation proper to the sacrament, 288 ; the time for meditation, 298 ; the persons who are to meditate, 299 ; rules as to the choice of object, 300 ; the method and manner, 303 ; particular objects of meditation : the chief end of man, 306 ; the sinfulness of sin, 314 ; the excellency of the gospel, 331 ; providence, 339.

Mediator, Christ's office as, required that he should be God and man, i. 480.

Owning and worshipping God by Jesus Christ as, is the sum of the christian religion, xviii. 260 ; necessity of, on account of our distance from God, 261 ; and our disagreements with him, *ib.* ; none but Christ fit for this office, 262 ; comforts and duties resulting from his mediatorship, 264 ; who receive the benefit of his mediation, 266 ; those who take upon them the profession of being his servants and obedient subjects to Christ, *ib.* ; those who really enter into the evangelic estate, 267.

Meekness inviteth injury, but always to its own cost, iv. 417.

Meetness, God frameth his people unto that happy estate to which he hath appointed them, xii. 478 ; what this meetness implies, *ib.*

Melchisedek a type of Christ, i. 479.

Memory, a bad, one great defect that the people of God are troubled with, v. 307.

Sanctified, the Holy Ghost makes use of, bringing scriptures to our remembrance as we have need, vi. 104.

Men, Christ useth the ministry of, in the work of salvation, and that not out of indigence, but indulgence, x. 196 ; it is most for the glory of God, *ib.* ; it trieth our obedience, *ib.* ; it is the most rational way, *ib.* ; the surest way, 197 ; a comfortable way, *ib.*

Merchants very liable to thoughts and discourses savouring of carnal presumption and confidence, iv. 388.

Mercies, common, God gives us possession of, i. 150 ; he gives a right and title to them, 151 ; he gives the continuance of them, 152 ; he gives us leave to use them, *ib.* ; he gives us ability to use them, 153 ; he gives us a sanctified use of them, *ib.* ; he gives the natural blessing on their holy use, 154 ; he gives us contentment with them, *ib.*

Common, a kind of election and reprobation in giving to some and withholding from others, i. 162.

Common, the Lord's goodness to be acknowledged in, vi. 157.

Of God (plural), notes the plenty and perfection of this attribute in God, vi. 441 ; the frequency of it, 442 ; the variety of our necessities, *ib.* ; the many favours to be bestowed on us, 443.

Bestowed upon some of God's children, should be, and are, an occasion of joy and comfort to all the rest, vii. 281 ; they are all members of one body, 282 ; it is for the honour and glory of God, 283 ; it is for the profit and comfort of all, *ib.* ; joy is communicative, 284.

God's saving, not enough that we have of ; we must beg that we may have experience of them in our own souls, vii. 313 ; sense or participation of, is to believers the life of their lives, and the want of it as a kind of death to them, 314 ; better than life natural, the vitality of life spiritual, the beginning and pledge of life eternal, *ib.*

Great and tender, are in the Lord Jehovah, ix. 159.

Spiritual, the chief subject of thanksgiving, xi. 325 ; they are discriminating, *ib.* ; they concern the better part, *ib.* ; they are purchased at a dear rate, *ib.* ; they have a near connection with heaven, *ib.* ; they incline and fit the heart for praise and thanksgiving to God, *ib.* ; they are never given in anger, as outward mercies may be, *ib.* ; they render us acceptable to God, *ib.* ; we need acknowledge them, that God may have the sole glory of them, *ib.*

Received, call for answerable returns, xvii. 386 ; what it is to render according to what we have received, *ib.* ; it is a sign we are unthankful under mercies when the heart is lifted up upon the enjoyment of them, 390 ; cautions against the pride of self-dependence, 393.

Old, especially national, should not be forgotten, xviii. 41.

All swim to the believer in Christ's blood, xx. 186.

Mercy and truth, the two pillars of the covenant, i. 67.

God no loser by acts of, i. 68.

All God's gifts are of, i. 155.

By a kind of pardoning, we subsist every moment, i. 157.

Value of, ii. 20 ; better than sacrifice, *ib.* ; preferred before the external observance of the sabbath, 21 ; more than gospel externals of worship, *ib.* ; more excellent than all the gifts of the gospel, *ib.* ; without it, faith and love to God are not genuine, *ib.* ; the qualification of finding mercy, *ib.*

- Mercy*, why men not more affected with, ii. 343; stupid carelessness, *ib.*; unbelief, *ib.*; inconsideration, *ib.*; want of the Spirit's light, *ib.*
- Never obtained but in the use of means, iv. 9.
- One, from God, is but a step to another, iv. 44.
- 'Rejoiceth over judgment,' different explanations of, iv. 225.
- God exerciseth acts of, with delight, iv. 231; in us, a sign of our interest in God's, *ib.*
- Shown either to those that offend, or to those that want, iv. 320.
- The rise and cause of all the good we have from God, v. 56; the aim of the whole scripture to represent God merciful, 57; represented as his delight and pleasure, *ib.*; scripture representeth God as exercising, though with some present disadvantage to his glory, *ib.*; speaketh much of his readiness to receive returning sinners, 58; God not only admits them to come, but of his own accord inviteth them that are slack and backward, *ib.*; they that refuse the offers of his grace long borne with, 59; the aim, not only of the word, but of providence, and of all the dispensations of God to the creature, to represent him merciful, *ib.*; represented to us in many notions, 60.
- Of the Lord Jesus Christ, looking for, implies patience, v. 349; but chiefly hope, *ib.*; bewrayeth itself by frequent and serious thoughts, 350; by hearty groans, and sighs, and longings, 351; by lively tastes and feelings, *ib.*; sets us a-work to purge out sin, *ib.*; withdraweth our hearts from present things, *ib.*; maketh us upright and sincere, *ib.*; supporteth us under difficulties and afflictions, 352.
- Natural to God, vi. 446; pleasing to him, 447; plentiful in him, *ib.*; is the great wonder of the divine nature, *ib.*; he is communicative of, *ib.*
- The fountain of all that we expect from God, vii. 124.
- Of God, all men's minds possessed with an apprehension of, vii. 187; every creature a monument and witness of, *ib.*
- Noteth a propension and inclination to commiserate the afflicted, and the actual exhibition of help and relief to the miserable, vii. 301; its object is mercy, 302; scripture full of, 303.
- Of God, is more to his people than to others, vii. 303.
- God's best servants have no other and better plea than that God would deal with them in, viii. 274; because since the fall there is no claiming but by the covenant of grace and mere mercy, *ib.*; as there is no merit in the best saints, so there is much demerit, 275; from the humility of the saints, 276.
- God's, the cause of all his favour to us, or gracious dealing with us, viii. 369; because there was nothing in us to move him to be gracious to us, 370; much to the contrary, both before and after conversion, *ib.*
- A form of the divine goodness, ix. 160; implies the ready inclination that is in God to relieve our misery, notwithstanding sin, *ib.*; is either general, special, or peculiar, 161; peculiar is to God's elect in Christ, and is seen in the first grace in pardoning all their sins, *ib.*; and in all the subsequent graces that they stand in need of, *ib.*; tenderness of, shown by the compassion of Christ, who is the image of his father, in the days of his flesh, 162; in his readiness to hear and help his people in their afflictions, *ib.*; in the motives that induce him to show mercy, the bare sight of our misery, 163; greatness of, *ib.*; shown by the multitudes to whom God hath done good, *ib.*; the multitude of benefits he bestoweth on every one, 164; the greatness of these effects, the sending of his Son and the gift of the Spirit, *ib.*

- Mercy* and charity, works of, rather than of piety, assigned as the reason of the sentence of absolution, x. 58 ; the special is put for the general, *ib.* ; works of mercy are singled out, because the Jews were more negligent of these than of acts of worship, 59 ; these are most evident and sensible, *ib.* ; the excellency of charity is represented, and commended to the covetous world, *ib.*
- God maketh one, to be the pledge of another, xi. 135.
- God's, not wholly made void to his people, notwithstanding their many sins and failings, xviii. 46.
- And grace, distinction between, xx. 342.
- Merit*, the intervention of Christ's, doth not hinder the freedom of forgiveness, i. 196.
- Of Christ, not the first cause of God's love, but the manifestation, fruit, and effect of it, ii. 341.
- Messiah* promised in the Old Testament, to be God, i. 447.
- The Jews' erroneous opinion of, a reason of their rejection of Christ, iii. 196.
- Michael*, the archangel, not Christ, as some suppose, v. 243.
- Midnight*, rising at, to give thanks, can neither be enforced as a duty, nor yet can be condemned, vi. 170.
- Mind*, corruption of, and sensuality of heart, go together, v. 266.
- Minding* of the flesh is the influence of the flesh upon all the faculties, the understanding, will, and affections, as also upon our practice and conversation, xi. 459.
- Minds*, operations of, are either λογισμοι, discourses and reasonings, xviii. 400 ; *θυμησεις*, musings, 401 ; or *νοηματα*, contrivances and counsels, *ib.*
- Ministers*, three things make—prayer, meditation, and temptation (Luther), i. 215.
- Peculiarly exposed to vainglory, iii. 305.
- Are remembrancers from the people to God, and from God to the people, v. 171.
- Exhortation to, to endeavour after unity, v. 400.
- Should pray for their charge, x. 248.
- Of the gospel persuaded to a greater concord and amity in the joint discharge of their work, x. 332.
- Are not only to study new things, but to inculcate those that are of a common use, x. 406 ; with these cautions, that it be in matters mainly necessary, and that it be with variety of enforcement, to avoid tediousness, *ib.*
- And people, their duty to one another, x. 479, 488.
- Are in esteem when men lie under distress of conscience, xxi. 254.
- Ministry*, work of, to shake and batter the empire of the devil, i. 99.
- Evangelical, exceedeth the prophetical, both as to excellency and necessity, ii. 131.
- And office about God, the lowest honourable, iv. 15.
- Work of, not to contend with ghosts and antiquated opinions, but the errors and sins of the present time, iv. 436.
- Holiness a good preparation for, x. 417 ; they who are designed to serve God in a special manner must look after special purity, *ib.*
- Necessity of a call to, x. 472 ; is extraordinary or ordinary, *ib.* ; ordinary is both inward, *ib.* ; and outward, 473 ; election is the people's right, 474 ; ordination is the right of the elders, 475 ; confirmation, of the magistrate, *ib.* ; is an office, 477 ; a standing office, 478 ; excellency and dignity of, 484 ; duty of, 485.

- Ministry* of reconciliation, ministers are 'ambassadors for Christ' to reconcile us to God, xiii. 290; the nature of their office explained, *ib.*; the value and authority of it, 291; the credit and respect due to their message, *ib.*; the manner how their office is to be executed, 293; with love and sweetness, meekness and patience, *ib.*; the matter or message about which they are sent, reconciliation to God through Christ, *ib.*; exhortation to sinners to become reconciled to God, 295; the necessity of it, *ib.*; God's condescension in it, 301; the value and worth of the privilege, 302; the benefits depending on it, 303; the great dishonour done to God in refusing it, *ib.*; exhortation to christians to become yet more reconciled to God, 304; persuasives to, *ib.*
- Miracles* done in one age for confirmation of the true religion should suffice for after ages, i. 298; why not necessary now, 299.
- Popish, reasons for rejecting, iii. 67.
- Are extraordinary works, iii. 71; their author God, either immediately or mediately, *ib.*; their end to confirm some truth, *ib.*; Christ's, necessary to confirm his person and office, 72; and sufficient, *ib.*; ceased when the faith of Christ was sufficiently confirmed, 73; suspicion attaches to those who pretend to revive, *ib.*; in attestation of false doctrines, are lying wonders, 74; such are those of Popery, *ib.*; seven points in Popery sought to be confirmed by, *ib.*; pilgrimages, prayers for the dead, purgatory, invocation of saints, adoration of images, of the host, the primacy of the Pope, 75.
- Wrought in Christ's name, were wrought by power, but ended in mercy, iv. 453.
- Are a solemn confirmation, or letters-patent brought from heaven, to authorise any person or doctrine, x. 441; not necessary now, because the same doctrine and rule is continued to us without change, 442; are sufficiently attested to us, 443.
- Mirth*, the christian's, should be thanksgiving, xix. 209.
- Miscarriages*, real or supposed, of christians, the shame of, redounds to God and religion itself, vi. 413.
- Of some members, the whole body not to be condemned for, x. 349.
- Miseries* sweet or bitter according as we reckon them, iv. 22; not to be judged by sense, *ib.*; but by supernatural light, *ib.*; and on supernatural grounds, *ib.*
- MISERY, MAN'S IMPOTENCY TO HELP HIMSELF OUT OF, v. 473.
- Misery*, the common burden of the sons of Adam, xix. 126; virtuous good men more miserable than others from their temper and the state of the world, *ib.*; of all good men, christians most, *ib.*; to induce men to lead a godly life, motives are necessary which are greater than the temptations of the world, 127; Christ hath promised a happiness that will countervail all these afflictions, *ib.*; this happiness is at the general resurrection, or Christ's coming to judgment, 128; christians of all men most miserable, not in respect of their inward enjoyments, but their outward estate, 131.
- Mission* of Christ is by the Father, x. 462; includes the designation of the person, 463; his qualification for the work, *ib.*; his authority and power, 467; end of, *ib.*
- Missionaries* to the heathen, may they, without tempting God, ask of him the gift of miracles? i. 299.
- Mockers* and scoffers, their prevalence in the last days, v. 323; usually the worst of sinners, *ib.*
- Monasteries*, &c., Popish, so many sties of filthiness, v. 275.

- Morality*, partial, is injurious to the law and opposite to the gospel, ii. 54.
- MORALS BEFORE RITUALS**, ii. 5.
- Morality*, the best human, defective, vi. 85.
- More*, *Sir Thomas*, his prayer, i. 294.
- Morning* our golden time for prayer, and should not be neglected from sluggishness, whatever dispensation there be for weakness, ix. 70; shown by the example of Christ and his saints, *ib.*; because whenever we have strong affections to anything, we make it our morning work, be it good or bad, *ib.*; it is the choicest time of the day, and therefore should be allotted to the most serious and necessary employment, 71; it is profitable to begin the day with God, *ib.*; it will be some recompense for the time lost in sleeping, 72.
- Mortal*, what sins the Papists reckon, iv. 103; none but such as are not mortified, 104.
- Mortification* consists not in a bare abstinence and retreat from temptations, but in a spirit fortified against them, ii. 98.
- A fruit of faith, ii. 149; concerneth our lusts, as self-denial our interests, *ib.*
- Impatience of the doctrine of, ii. 230; arises from sottish atheism and unbelief, *ib.*; from libertinism, 231; from the passionateness of carnal affections, 232.
- Must go before quickening, vi. 389.
- And vivification inseparable, xi. 231.
- Of sin, what it is not, xii. 56; pagan mortification, *ib.*; Popish and superstitious mortification, *ib.*; mortification of the hypocrite, 57; what mortification is, 58; passive, *ib.*; active, 59; general and particular, *ib.*; privative and positive, 60; ordinary and extraordinary, *ib.*; why christians must mortify the deeds of the body, 61; with respect to Christ, *ib.*; with respect to sin, 62; in regard of grace received, 63; enforcements to the exercise of this duty, 65.
- Of sin, we and the Spirit must concur in, xii. 72; the manner of this co-operation, *ib.*; the Spirit the principal agent in this work, *ib.*; yet we must charge ourselves with the duty, 73; we must use the means which tend to, *ib.*; in mortification the Spirit worketh in us as a spirit of light, life, and love, 74; the necessity of the Spirit's concurrence and operation in us, 76; from the state of the sinner, *ib.*; the honour of our Redeemer requireth it, 77; the necessity of our co-operation, 78; that God may apply himself to us in our way, *ib.*; that we may meet with God in his way, *ib.*; exhortation to mortification of the deeds of the body, 79; means whereby we may attain it, 90.
- The guard of sincerity, xiii. 136.
- The influence of faith upon, xv. 72.
- Mortifying* of sin, motives to, xi. 180.
- Moses* and *Elias* really present at the transfiguration, i. 358; why these two, *ib.*; appeared in their own bodies, 360.
- 'Prophet like unto,' could only be Christ, i. 365.
- Dispute about his body, v. 241; different explanations of, 242.
- Mourning* a necessary duty, iv. 374; befiteth this life rather than rejoicing, 375; some special seasons and occasions of, *ib.*; God looketh not after the outward expressions of, but the humble heart, 377.
- Bitterly, even for other men's sins, the duty and property of a godly man, viii. 421; a matter of duty lying upon all christians, 422; though it lies upon all, it chiefly concerns public persons, *ib.*; tears not absolutely necessary for the expression of this grief and tender-

ness, 423 ; the greatest sinners, when they are once converted to God, have afterwards the greatest compassion towards other sinners, 424 ; there must be not only a constant disposition to mourn over the sins of others, but on special occasions it must be exercised and set a-work, 425 ; in times of abundance of flagrant sin, *ib.* ; and when judgments are felt or feared, 426 ; God has laid it upon his people as a duty, that it may be an alloy to zeal, *ib.* ; to engage them to seek redress and reformation, 427 ; to keep their hearts more tender and upright, 428 ; it is their disposition as well as their duty, *ib.* ; from the tenderness of God's glory, *ib.* ; from their compassion, and pity, and love to men, 429 ; from their antipathy and zealous displeasure against sin, *ib.* ; from the sagacity of faith, and serious foresight of the effects of sin, 430 ; from their public spirit and tender respect to the common good, *ib.*

Murmuring at providence taxes God, instead of adoring him, i. 81.

A great sin, v. 299 ; against men, *ib.* ; against God, 300 ; his decrees, *ib.* ; his laws, *ib.* ; his providence, 301 ; its causes, 302 ; pride and self-love, *ib.* ; impatience, *ib.* ; presumption of merit, 303 ; carnal affection, *ib.* ; unbelief and distrust, *ib.* ; injurious to God, *ib.* ; to others, 304 ; to ourselves, *ib.* ; at the times, 305 ; is not godly sorrow, complaining to God, and bewailing the corruptions of the times, *ib.* ; nor zeal in public reproof, *ib.* ; nor holy dislike and singularity, standing aloof from public corruptions, 306 ; but such a fond and unthankful admiration of former times, that we have not a good word for the present, *ib.* ; passing over the good, and looking only on the evil, 307 ; charging our guilt on the times, *ib.* ; remedies, *ib.* ; private, 309 ; under wants, losses, pains, 310.

And repining thoughts against God's providence, reproof of, vii. 297.

Murmurings and taxings of God's providence, caution against, vii. 257.

Musings, a class of vain thoughts, viii. 158 ; vanity appears in the slipperiness and inconstancy of them, *ib.* ; the unprofitableness and folly of them, 159 ; the carnality and fleshliness, *ib.* ; the impiety and apparent filthiness, *ib.*

Mystery, every article of faith in the gospel is, vi. 171.

Depth of, contained in the scriptures, viii. 336.

Nakedness a type of sin and shame, xii. 462 ; our great business is to get the garments of salvation to cover our nakedness, 463.

Name of God, means either God himself, i. 82 ; or anything whereby he is made known to us, 83 ; is hallowed or sanctified when it is used with that reverence and respect which is not given to anything else, *ib.* ; is hallowed by God himself, 84 ; by us, *ib.* ; and by others, *ib.* ; is sanctified upon us and by us, 86.

Of God, study of, the best remembrance of him, vii. 83 ; of his essence, *ib.* ; his attributes, 84 ; see *Attributes* ; increaseth love, faith, fear, 89.

In what sense believers are kept through God's (John xvii. 11), x. 310 ; put for his attributes, because by them he is known, as a man by his name, *ib.* ; so by his truth, in opposition to their fickleness and falsehood, *ib.* ; his mercy in opposition to their unworthiness, 311 ; his power against their weakness, *ib.* ; his holiness against their sinfulness, *ib.* ; nothing else could keep them but God's, *ib.* ; it is meet that none else should, 312.

Of Christ, a holy God will accept nothing but as tendered in, xi. 63.

- Name* and title of God hath been made known by degrees, xi. 132 ; fully in the gospel, *ib.* ; none but Christ can discover, 133.
- Of Christ, how it is glorified in us by suffering, xx. 327.
- Narrowness* of the way engageth believers to the exercise of care, iii. 307 ; to a great deal of pains and sorrow, *ib.* ; to a great deal of self-denial, *ib.*
- Nathan*, his innocent and pious mistake, xviii. 62.
- Natural* light chiefly reacheth to duties of the second table, i. 26.
- Men bound to pray and perform duties, vi. 241.
- Nature*, divine, of which christians are partakers, not the essence of God, but his communicable excellencies, ii. 214 ; considered as begun, increased, and perfected, 217.
- Can discover a God, and a reason that he should be worshipped, but not such a worship as is proper to him, ii. 371.
- Light of, antecedently to any external revelation, will sufficiently convince of the being of God, and our dependence on him, iii. 22.
- Whatever is good in, is from God, iii. 174.
- Our, horrid defilment and depravation of, iv. 117.
- They that plead for the power of, shut out the use of prayer, vi. 370.
- Makes us sensible of the evil of trouble ; grace, of the evil of sin, viii. 368.
- New, is the product of the Holy Ghost, xi. 405 ; is a spirit of love and power, and a sound mind, *ib.* ; answering to the nature of God, whom we apprehend under the notions of wisdom and goodness and power, 406 ; it belongeth to Christ to give, 408 ; given by the gospel, 409.
- Light of, sufficient for the condemnation of those who have not the gospel, xx. 246.
- A kind of election within the sphere of, xx. 291.
- Nearness* of God to his people, ix. 102 ; not in regard of his essence, for so he is everywhere present, *ib.* ; nor in regard of his general providence and common sustentation, 103 ; but his friendly and gracious presence, *ib.* ; his visible presence in his ordinances, *ib.* ; distinction between a state of, and acts of, 104 ; grounds of, 106 ; his covenant with them, *ib.* ; our union with Christ, *ib.* ; the inhabitation of the Spirit, 107 ; the mutual love between God and them, *ib.* ; result of God's readiness to hear our prayers, *ib.* ; our converse with God in holy duties, 108 ; and in a course of holiness, 109 ; brought about by Christ's merit, *ib.* ; and by our change of heart, 110.
- Necessaries* of life, daily bread, daily pardon, daily strength, i. 230.
- Necessities* of christians, Satan takes advantage of, for temptations, i. 273 ; tempteth to unlawful means to supply our wants, *ib.* ; to question our adoption, 274 ; to distrust God's providence, *ib.*
- Lead us to the promises, the promises to Christ, Christ to God, vi. 449.
- Necessity* a time for duty, v. 102.
- Of mankind, the deep, xi. 420 ; met by Christ's incarnation, 423 ; and his passion, 427.
- Negatives* not to be rested in, vi. 37.
- Neglect*, voluntary and allowed, of any portion of the law, makes us guilty of the violation of the whole law, iv. 215.
- Of God will keep us out of heaven not less than profaneness, viii. 186.

Neighbour, scripture requires us to love, as ourselves, iv. 207 ; who ? 208 ; every one to whom we may be helpful *ib.* ; more especially those who dwell by us, and first our wife, then our children, &c., *ib.* ; spiritual, *ib.* ; what love ? 209 ; as ourselves in manner, not in measure, *ib.* ; to mind the good of others, *ib.* ; as truly, though not as much, as our own, 210.

New creature, orderliness of, ii. 241 ; is the wisest creature on this side heaven, 263.

What it is to be, xiii. 232 ; implies such a change wrought in us that we are other men and women than we were before, as if another soul came to dwell in our body, *ib.* ; this change must amount to a new creation, *ib.* ; some changes which do not go so far, *ib.* ; no change amounteth to the new creation which does not introduce the life and likeness of God, 234 ; why called a new creation, 235 ; how we are united to Christ in the new creation, 236 ; how the new creation floweth from our union with Christ, *ib.* ; the necessity of it, 237 ; how ill they can make out their interest in Christ that are not sensible of any change wrought in them, 239 ; the new creation the work of God and the effect of the Spirit, 241 ; this appeareth from the state of the person renewed, *ib.* ; the nature of the work, 242 ; its connection with reconciliation, 243 ; and the effect of it, 244 ; all things belonging to the new creation are ascribed by scripture to God, 245 ; the difference between the natural man and the new creature, 247 ; cautions against abuse of this doctrine, 248 ; it is not in vain to press people to become new creatures, 249 ; the true use to be made of the doctrine, 250 ; God the author of, as reconciled to us in Christ, xiii. 251.

New Testament testimonies to the divinity and humanity of Christ, i. 478.

Night a special occasion for meditation on holy things, ix. 82 ; on account of its solitude and silence, *ib.*

Niobe, the christian, xvii. 217.

NO EXCUSE AGAINST A SPEEDY OBEYING CHRIST'S CALL, ii. 121.

NOT TO BE OFFENDED IN CHRIST THE READY WAY TO BLESSEDNESS, ii. 79.

Nullifidians, the doctrine of the, disproved, xvii. 428.

Oath, to bind ourselves by, to God and the duty we owe to him, concerns us sometimes, viii. 81 ; lawfulness of, appears from God's injunction, *ib.* ; and from the practice of the saints, *ib.* ; convenient to answer God's love and condescension to us in the covenant, 82 ; to testify our affection to his service, *ib.* ; very profitable because of our backwardness, *ib.* ; our fickleness and inconstancy, 83 ; our laziness, 84 ; should be used in a matter lawful, *ib.* ; and in a matter weighty, necessary, and acceptable to God, 85 ; must be religiously performed and observed, 86 ; the same motives which inclined us to make, should persuade us to keep, 87 ; our oath a further aggravation of our sin, *ib.* ; God hath ever been a severe avenger of breach of covenants, *ib.* ; should be often revived and renewed, 88 ; because we are apt to forget, and have not a lively sense of a thing long since done, *ib.* ; this forgetfulness an occasion of many and great troubles, 89 ; when to be renewed ; *ib.* ; when we stand in need of some special favour from God, *ib.* ; after some special mercy, *ib.* ; when the state of religion is collapsed, either around us or within us, *ib.* ; when we are to draw nigh to God in the use of the seals of the new covenant, *ib.* See *Covenanting*.

- Oaths* in themselves are lawful, if taken without fraud, in a lawful matter, and upon a weighty occasion, iv. 436 ; by the creatures unlawful, 437 ; rash and false, will bring a sure judgment, 439.
- Obedience*, active, hath respect to God's commands ; passive, to his providence, i. 121.
- To God requires not only the *quid*, but the *quomodo*, i. 125 ; though it may not be like that of the angels in measure, it must be in manner, 126.
- Evangelical, new life the principle of, ii. 27.
- New, required of the pardoned, ii. 198.
- Christ's, to his Father chiefly tried by his sufferings, iii. 253.
- Partial, an argument of insincerity, iv. 215.
- Serious purposes of, are accepted for, iv. 251 ; so of sin, *ib.*
- A full, to gain the heart to, it is good to consider the authority of God in his word, vi. 39 ; because there the heart would not be so loose, off and on in point of duty, 41 ; we cannot be so bold and venturesome in sinning when we remember how the authority of God stands in the way, *ib.* ; a sense of God's authority and command doth fortify the heart against discouragements, *ib.* ; in duties that are not evident by natural light, the heart is most bound to them by a command, 42 ; obedience is never right but when it is done out of a conscience of God's authority, *ib.*
- Obligation to, does not arise from our own purpose and promise, but from God's command, vi. 71.
- Necessity of constancy and perseverance in, vi. 471 ; the law of, God binds universally, *ib.* ; grace in the heart should be always working, 472 ; God's eye is always upon us, *ib.* ; God is always at work for us, 473 ; all our actions concern eternity, *ib.* ; to be off and on with God will cost us much sorrow, *ib.* ; by every intermission we lose ground, *ib.* See *Defection*.
- Ready, a good evidence of a sound impression of grace left upon the heart, vii. 135.
- Purposes and promises of, should not be lightly made, but with the greatest advertency and seriousness of mind, ix. 60 ; because we are usually too slight in devoting ourselves to God, *ib.* ; because it is a work of greatest moment, and so must be done with the greatest deliberation, *ib.* ; because of the danger in regard of sin and judgment if we do it not aright, 61.
- Exhortations to, xii. 34.
- The kind of, that is required of a christian, xv. 135 ; the necessity of faith to, 137 ; the work of faith in order to, 140 ; what we must do that faith may exercise influence upon our obedience, 143.
- To God, every man that hath a tender conscience would be accurate and exact in, xix. 379 ; we have no sure rule to walk by but the will of God, *ib.* ; this will is revealed to us in his word, 380 ; this word we need thoroughly to understand, else we shall not know our duty, *ib.* ; this understanding must not be idle, but reduced to use and practice, *ib.* ; this reducing to practice what we know is wisdom, *ib.* ; this wisdom is both a gift and a duty, 381.
- To Christ, the best impression or stamp of our religion upon us, xix. 462 ; sometimes taken largely, as comprehending faith and repentance, sometimes strictly, as distinct from these, 463.
- Christ stands upon, if we would obtain his promises, xx. 17 ; Christ deserves, at our hands for what he is, 18 ; and what he hath done for us, *ib.*

OBEYING CHRIST'S CALL, NO EXCUSE AGAINST A SPEEDY, ii. 121.

Objects, common, how to be improved to a heavenly purpose, iv. 421; in an argumentative and representative way, *ib.*

Obligation to obedience does not cease with power to obey, i. 143.

Offence, in church, is either with contempt or discouragement, ii. 86; of ignorance and weakness, or of malice and opposition, 87; total or partial, *ib.*; those who escape, are in the ready way to salvation, 88; who are in danger of, 90; heinousness of, *ib.*; means to avoid, 91.

Offerings, spiritual, all God's people have their, viii. 107; are made priests to God, *ib.*; their sacrifices not sin-offerings, but thank-offerings, *ib.*; their thank-offerings are spiritual, 108; the two great, are prayer and praise, *ib.*; whatever was figured in the old sacrifices must be spiritually performed in the duty of prayer and praise, 109; must be free-will offerings, 112; are accepted of God, 114; this gracious acceptance must be sought and valued as a great blessing, *ib.*

Offer of Christ, general, iii. 330; nothing hindereth the acceptance but unbelief, 332; not thy nation, *ib.*; nor thy condition, *ib.*; nor thy sins, *ib.*; not that Christ was not intended for thee, 333.

Offices of Christ as mediator, threefold, of king, priest, and prophet, i. 333; as a priest, he is the way; as a prophet, the truth; as a king, the life, *ib.*; as a prophet, he is made unto us wisdom; as a priest, righteousness and sanctification; as a king, redemption, *ib.*

Of Christ, their character, human and divine, xx. 306; the privileges offered by Christ in the covenant of grace, 308; means of attainment, 309.

Oil in the lamp and the vessel is repentance, mortifying our inward lusts, and faith working by love, ix. 336.

Old and New Testament dispensations contrasted, xii. 105.

Old Testament testimonies to the true divinity and true humanity of Christ, i. 476.

Omission, sins of, arise from not reviving the belief of God's commandments, vii. 220.

Sins of, may be great sins, x. 11; there is in them the general nature of all sin, breach of the law and contempt of God's authority, *ib.*; their general cause is corrupt nature, 12; through them gifts and graces languish for want of employment, *ib.*; they bring on many temporal judgments, *ib.*; they are threatened with eternal punishment, *ib.*; some are greater than others, 13; in many cases may be more heinous and damning than sins of commission, *ib.*

Sins of, wicked are described by, x. 102; may be great sins, *ib.*; some greater than others, 103; in many cases may be more heinous and damning than sins of commission, *ib.*

Omissions make way for commissions, i. 17.

Of necessary duties necessarily draw sins of commission along with them, ix. 157.

Omnipotency of God proved from scripture and reason, xvii. 82; this power of God explained, 86; application, 87.

Opinion, a man's, so changed by conversion, that what things were gain are accounted loss, xx. 3.

Opinions, men's, are no ground of faith, iii. 101.

Oppression a crying sin, especially of poor servants, iv. 409.

Of wicked men, to be left under, a grievous calamity, and earnestly to be deprecated, viii. 247.

- Oppression*, a very grievous evil, often deprecated by the people of God, viii. 259; is an abuse of power to unjust and uncharitable actions, *ib.*; the oppressors are the proud, mighty, rich, great men, at least by comparison with those whom they oppress, *ib.*; a grievous evil in itself, *ib.*; odious to God, as being a perversion of the ends of his providence, *ib.*; offensive to his people, and burdensome to them, 260; is both theft and murder, *ib.*; aggravated when God's servants are oppressed for religion, *ib.*; most of all when power and advantage is fetched from any ordinance of God to commit it, *ib.*; dissuasion from, 261.
- Deliverance from, a blessing to be sought from God in prayer, viii. 399; we have liberty to ask temporal things, *ib.*; our spiritual welfare is concerned in such temporal deliverances, that we may serve God without impediment, 400; the glory of God is concerned, *ib.*; prayer engageth us to constancy, 401; seeking deliverance at the hands of God doth ease the heart of a great deal of trouble, *ib.*; not to be asked in the first place, as our main blessing, 403; must be asked with submission, *ib.*; with the end that God may be glorified, 404; in faith, that God can deliver, and will in due time, when it is good for us, *ib.*; deliverance should quicken and encourage us in God's service, 406.
- Ordinances*, their purity an honour to God, of great profit to the church, and a rejoicing to God's people, i. 109.
- Merit of Christ doth reach, that by them grace may be conveyed, and sin mortified and subdued in us, ii. 209.
- Their end to stir up love to God, ii. 245.
- Simple plainness of, an obstacle to men's believing, iii. 224; administered by weak men, *ib.*
- They who deny that they are useful to believers are ignorant of the nature of grace, which always, after a taste, longeth for more, iv. 129; are ignorant of the intent and end of the word, which is not only to beget us, but to make the saints perfect, *ib.*; are ignorant of the state of their own hearts, 130.
- They that would have grace must have recourse to, ix. 391.
- God's people have a great value and esteem of, xviii. 147; by a spiritual instinct, *ib.*; from experience, 148; from necessity, 149; from utility and profit, *ib.*; esteem them above all other things, 150.
- Others*, to do to, as we would have them do to us, a sure and a full rule, ii. 370; Severus had it written in his palace, and engraved in golden letters in the courts of justice, *ib.*; considered negatively, 371; positively, 374; objections answered, 377; ground and equity of, 378; in what sense the law and the prophets, 379.
- Our*, force of, in 'Our Father,' i. 54; to comfort us in the sense of our interest in God, *ib.*; to mind us of the common interest of all the saints in the same God, 55.
- Pains*, Christ not only bore, for our sakes, but those that we should have endured, or at least equivalent to what we should have borne, if we had suffered for sin, iii. 261.
- Papacy*, its wickedness marks it out as the man of sin, iii. 31.
- Why not immediately destroyed, iii. 60; God hath uses for it, *ib.*; to scourge his people for their sins, *ib.*; to try his people, *ib.*; to cure our divisions, 61; to keep up a remembrance of his mercies, *ib.*; its pomp and height about A.D. 1500, *ib.*

- Papists*, their idolatry condemned, i. 320 ; their distinction between δουλεια and λατρευσις inept, 321.
- Their shameless usurpation in calling the Pope the head of the church, i. 462.
- Their distinction between precepts of necessary duty and counsels of perfection, ii. 59.
- So living and dying, great difficulty, if not impossibility of their salvation, iii. 78 ; distinction to be made of those who know no better, *ib.*
- Their fault in regard to traditions, iii. 133.
- Their derogatory doctrine that Christ made full satisfaction only for sins committed before baptism, iii. 277.
- And Socinians, their account of the justification of Abraham, iv. 256.
- Their error about unwritten traditions, v. 497 ; set them far above scriptures, 498.
- Afraid of the scriptures, as a thief of a candle, viii. 356.
- By a pageantry of ridiculous ceremonies make religion contemptible, xiii. 118.
- Their plea as to apostolic succession a knowledge after the flesh and not after the Spirit, xiii. 221.
- Their error as to the merit of works, xvi. 41.
- Parables* are either argumentative or representative, ix. 319.
- Paradise*, the opinions of Augustine, Tertullian, and others upon, xiv. 36.
- Pardon*, grounds of assurance of, i. 193 ; grounds of seeking and hoping for, 194.
- Full, yet not always the sense of it, i. 196.
- Of sin, necessity of seeking, ii. 178 ; since a reasonable nature implies a conscience, a conscience implies a law, 179 ; a law implies a sanction, or a confirmation by penalties and rewards, *ib.* ; a sanction implies a judge, 180 ; a judge implies a judgment-day, *ib.* ; this certainly infers a condemnation to a fallen creature, unless God set up another court for his relief, 181 ; this has been done conveniently to God's honour, and we must sue out our pardon, 183 ; our misery without, 184 ; benefits consequent on, 185.
- Without, there is no blessing, ii. 190 ; nothing less than, will serve the turn, *ib.* ; blessing of, showed by consideration of the evils we are freed from, 191 ; and the good depending on it, *ib.* ; what to be done in order to obtain, 192 ; for the glory of God that there should be stated terms of obtaining, 193 ; and for our comfort, *ib.* ; the terms are faith and repentance, 194.
- Absolute, without satisfaction, might have exposed God's laws to contempt, ii. 259.
- And confession, a connection between, iv. 456.
- Freeness and readiness of, abused to licentiousness, xi. 302 ; offered to penitent sinners on purpose that they may forsake their sins, *ib.* ; belongeth only to the penitent, *ib.* ; they are expressly excluded that securely go on in sin, 303.
- A benefit of the new covenant, xii. 120.
- And life, the gospel teaches how we may be made partakers of, xviii. 242 ; by telling us what Christ hath done, 243 ; and what we are to do, *ib.*
- Cannot be had without acceptance, but the acceptance may be doubtful while it is real, xx. 32.
- Of sin, what Christ doth and hath done in order to, xxi. 271 ; why

- no other but Christ can procure this benefit, 274 ; the necessity of faith that it may be applied to us, 277 ; the use of baptism in respect of, 180.
- Pardoning* mercy the ground and foundation of all our hope and comfort in our restoration after distresses, xv. 438 ; reasons of this, *ib.* ; is the chief glory of God, 441 ; the excellency of the christian religion above all others in this respect, 445 ; the effect this should have on us, 446.
- Parents* should seek blessings for their children, xiv. 391 ; are guilty of more sin than they are aware of in depriving their children of the privilege of baptism, 393 ; should strive to keep up religion in their families by the education of their children, 394.
- Their duty lieth greatly in providing meet callings for their children, xiv. 423.
- Exhorted to bring up their children for God, xviii. 93.
- Parliament* exhorted to endeavour after unity, v. 404.
- Paschal lamb* prefigured the person of Christ, xviii. 477 ; his death on the cross, *ib.* ; the fruits and benefits of his sacrifice, 480.
- Passing* from death to life, what it is, xxi. 114 ; love of the brethren a sure sign of, 119.
- Passions*, great and excessive inconvenience of, i. 373.
- Patience*, threefold, ii. 248 ; hearing, *ib.* ; waiting, *ib.* ; working, 249 ; its influence upon religion, 252.
- In running the race set before us, needed because of the length of the race, ii. 420 ; the impediments, *ib.* ; the discouragements from the spectators, 421.
- Of Christ under oppression, iii. 337.
- A grace of excellent use and value, iv. 33.
- Christian, is a submission of the whole soul to the will of God, iv. 419 ; the judgment subscribeth, then the will accepteth, then the affections are restrained, and anger and sorrow brought under the restraint of the word, *ib.* ; progress of, *ib.* ; the soul seeth God in the suffering, God acting with sovereignty, sovereignty modified and mitigated in the dispensation of it with justice, mercy, and faithfulness, *ib.*
- Persuaded by the example of the saints, iv. 426.
- Of God, in not taking a full revenge of his creatures till the last day, x. 86.
- Creation teacheth us a lesson in, xii. 181.
- The fruit of hope, as hope is of faith, xii. 222 ; is of a threefold character—bearing, waiting, and working, *ib.*
- And comfort of the scriptures, a higher thing than what is learnt by the institutions of philosophy, xix. 12.
- A contrasted endurance of painful evils, xx. 203 ; under trials, is a manifestation of faith, 204.
- And constancy under troubles, the honour done to Christ by, xx. 327.
- Patriarchs* had the same kind of faith that we have, xiii. 374.
- Paul*, commending himself to the Corinthians, furnishes an occasion of offence to the vainglorious, xiii. 100 ; his answer and defence, *ib.*
- Valued the glory of God above that personal contentment and happiness that should come to him by his own salvation, xiii. 137.
- Though an eminent christian, groaned under the relics of corruption, xiii. 172.

Paul's thorn in the flesh, what it was, xvii. 402.

Apology against the accusation of Tertullus (Acts xxiv.), xvii. 419.

Contempt of worldly and external privileges, xx. 13; universality of this contempt, *ib.*

PEACE AND HOLINESS, DISCOURSES TENDING TO PROMOTE, ii. 1.

Peace purchased by the sufferings of Christ that reconciliation and amity wrought out between God and a sinner, iii. 279; Christ by his death hath slain all hatred, 280; the just wrath of God, and sin in us in its guilt and power, *ib.*; he hath taken away all show of hatred, by abolishing the ceremonial law, *ib.*; hath procured us favour, 281. False, grounds of, iii. 282; ignorance of our condition, *ib.*; carelessness, *ib.*; avoiding whatever may put us in mind of our misery, *ib.*; distraction, 283.

And healing must go together, iii. 294.

With God, and peace of conscience, different, iv. 247.

The purchase of Christ, the work of the Spirit, iv. 313; true christians will strive to keep, 314; and to make, 315; may be broken in truth's quarrel, 316; for sake of, truth must never be violated, *ib.*

Without righteousness is but a sordid compliance; righteousness without peace but a rough austerity, iv. 324.

By itself the Old Testament benediction; in the New Testament, grace conjoined, v. 53.

Is a tranquillity of mind arising from a sense of a sure estate with God, v. 67; man by nature at enmity with God, and upon ill terms with him, *ib.*; man being at enmity with God, all God's creatures are at enmity with him, 68; being in this estate, we can only be reconciled by Jesus Christ, *ib.*; God being reconciled in Christ, all things else are at peace with us, 69; yet some troubles are left for our exercise, but not for our hurt or destruction, 70; in heaven perfect, *ib.*

Of the church, a call to the more strictness and holiness, vi. 220; when not called to suffer for Christ, our active obedience should be the more strictly performed, *ib.*

Is external in the house, city, country, society in which we live, ix. 199; internal, arising either from justification or sanctification, 200; eternal in heaven, *ib.*

They that love God's law have great, ix. 206; because the God of peace is their God, 207; Jesus Christ, the prince of peace, is their Saviour, *ib.*; the Spirit worketh it in us as a sanctifier and as a comforter, *ib.*; great as to the nature of it, 208; and the degree, *ib.*; doth not exclude troubles in the world, *ib.*; keeps from sin, 215.

With God, the fruit of justification, xv. 62.

Sound, cannot be enjoyed till sin be forgiven, xviii. 223; is more and more settled in the heart by waiting on the duties of the gospel, *ib.*

With God, those who have found, may best invite others to the same course, xxi. 450.

People, God hath a special, in the world, whom he will own for his, vii. 442; trial of, belonging to, 443; when did you solemnly dedicate yourself to him? *ib.*; what have you that is peculiar? *ib.*; doth your resignation appear in your living and acting for God? 444.

Their duty to endeavour after unity, v. 393.

Perdition, son of, name given to Judas, iii. 32; and to Antichrist, *ib.*; the Pope the successor, not of Peter, but Judas, *ib.*

'*Perfect*' (Phil. iii. 12), an agonistical word, xx. 75.

PERFECTION, WHAT KIND OF, IS ATTAINABLE IN THIS LIFE, ii. 56.

Perfection, a kind of, attainable in this life, ii. 57; not of the reward which the saints shall have in heaven, *ib.*; but of grace and holiness, *ib.*; and that not legal, but evangelical, 58; not absolute, but comparative, 59; not in degrees, but in parts, 61; reasons for seeking after absolute, 62; we have a perfect God, a perfect rule, a perfect Redeemer, a perfect reward, *ib.*; means of attaining, 64; notes of perfection, 65.

Enjoined on christians is either sincerity, or constancy and perseverance, or the perfection of parts, iv. 34.

Christians must aim at, and press on to, iv. 36.

Of holiness probably attained in the moment of expiring, v. 27.

It is a Popish error that some men endowed with special grace may keep the law perfectly, xvi. 426.

All christians must press forward to, xx. 83; reasons, *ib.*; by this our title is assured, *ib.*; our hearts are more prepared in this life for happiness, *ib.*; our glory and blessedness are increased, 84; means of, a strong faith, a fervent love, a lively hope, 85; a great encouragement to strive after, that Christ apprehended us for this end and scope, that we should attain, *ib.*

Perfections, all earthly, have their bounds and limits as to use and service, vii. 452; cannot give any solid peace of conscience and rest to our souls, 453; cannot make us acceptable to God, *ib.*; cannot stand us in the greatest and deepest necessities, as trouble of conscience and the hour of death, *ib.*; are of no use in the world to come, 454; in this world, will not prevent or remove a sickness, *ib.*; all perish in the using, 455.

Persecution, faith the grace chiefly tried in, iv. 31.

Of his people by princes, God suffers, to show that he can carry on his work though authority be against him, vi. 216; that the patience of his people may be put to the utmost probation, *ib.*; that his people may be weaned from fleshly dependence, *ib.*; that their testimony and witness-bearing to God's truth may be the more public and authentic in the view of the world, 217; on the part of the persecutors, the causes are ignorance and blind zeal, *ib.*; prejudice lightly taken up against the people of God, 218; their erroneous principle in civil polity, *ib.*

Has been in every age, viii. 120; more, greater, and longer in the New Testament than in the Old, 121; from pseudo-christians hot and violent, *ib.*; if we do not suffer from, we ought to bless God for the mercy, 122; be so much the more in active obedience, *ib.*; bear lesser troubles with more patience; *ib.*; if it befall us, we must not shrink, 123.

One of the ordinary trials of God's children; as God chasteneth them because they are no better, so the world persecuteth them because they are so good, ix. 166.

Persecutions which the godly suffer from the wicked a plain demonstration of judgment to come, xx. 207.

Persecutors, the iniquity of, some matter of confidence to the oppressed, ix. 100; because God and we are engaged in a common cause, *ib.*; they are the more ripe for judgment, 101.

Perseverance, doctrine of, stated, v. 43; seeming grace may be lost, *ib.*; initial or preparative grace may fail, *ib.*; true grace may suffer a shrewd decay, but not an utter loss, 44; such grace as serveth to our well-being in Christ may be taken away, joy, peace, cheerfulness, &c., *ib.*;

the operations of grace may be obstructed for a great while, *ib.*; grace, if left to us, would soon be lost, *ib.*; perseverance God's gift, not man's art, *ib.*; not an encouragement to neglect of means, *ib.*; or of wariness and self-jealousy, 45; or of prayer, *ib.*; grounds of certainty of, 46; the Father's everlasting love and all-sufficient power, *ib.*; Christ's everlasting merit, the close union between him and us, and his constant intercession, 47; the Spirit's continued influence, *ib.*

Perseverance is by the grace of God, yet requires a concurrence of our care and diligence, v. 341; because of our proneness to revolt, 342; continual temptations, *ib.*; aptness to security and negligence, as if danger were over, *ib.*; encouragements to, 343.

In the way of God, necessity of, vi. 315; we have the same reason to continue that we had to begin, *ib.*; danger and mischievous effects of apostasy and falling of, *ib.*

In order to, must be fortified against what may shake from without, vi. 317; especially errors, *ib.*; persecutions, 318; scandals, *ib.*; be fortified within by taking heed to the causes of apostasy, *ib.*; ungrounded assents, 319; want of solid rooting in grace, *ib.*; unmortified lusts, *ib.*; faulty easiness, *ib.*; self-confidence, 320; itch of novelty, *ib.*; take heed of the first decays, *ib.*; often review your first grounds, and compare them with your after experiences, *ib.*

In some cases more difficult than conversion, viii. 192; sustaining grace necessary to, 193.

Of the saints, or their conservation in the state of grace, is sure and certain, x. 300; seeming grace may be lost, 301; initial or preparative grace may fail, *ib.*; true grace may suffer a shrewd decay, but not an utter loss, 302; such grace as serves to our well-being in Christ may be taken away, *ib.*; certainty of, consistent with the necessity of the use of means, *ib.*; and watchfulness, 303; and prayer, *ib.*; is not discontinued, but constant, *ib.*

Grounds of, x. 304; the Father's everlasting love and all-sufficient power, *ib.*; Christ's everlasting merit, *ib.*; and constant intercession, *ib.*; the Spirit's continual influence, 305.

Doctrine of, abused to undue presumptuous security, xi. 305.

PERSON, DIGNITY OF CHRIST'S, i. 413.

Persons of the Godhead all engaged in the sanctification of believers, v. 39.

Of the Godhead do all concur to the happiness and salvation of believers, xix. 157; the Father by love, *ib.*; the Son by his grace, 158; the Holy Ghost by his communion, *ib.*; all imply riches of goodness, bounty, and liberality, 159; make way one for another, and work into each other's hand, *ib.*; why they concur, 160; that we may have the higher esteem of the work, *ib.*; that we may give equal glory to all the persons, *ib.*; that we may with more confidence expect the beginning, progress, and consummation of our salvation, 161; that the whole glory may redound to God alone, 162.

Personal application of Christ may be dark and received, or clear and open, xx. 32; the one necessary, the other comfortable, 33; reasons, 34; because things that nearly concern us do most affect us, *ib.*; because general grace must be made particular, else it cannot profit us, *ib.*; the scripture insisteth much upon a personal entering into covenant with God, *ib.*; our interest in him is the ground of our comfort and confidence, 35.

PERSUASIVE TO UNITY IN THINGS INDIFFERENT, ii. 68.

Peter, his proposal to make three tabernacles had something that was good in it, i. 372 ; and something that was evil, 373 ; an instance of great and excessive passions, 374.

Peter Martyr's discourse at Naples, and its effect, xiii. 113.

Petitions in Lord's prayer, why fourth and fifth connected by 'and,' i. 167 ; because without pardon all the good things of this life will do us no good, *ib.* ; to show us our unworthiness, 168 ; because sin is the great obstacle and hindrance of all the blessings which we expect from God, *ib.*

Pharaoh cried, Take away this curse ; the sincere penitent, Take away this sin, ii. 206.

A notable instance of hardness of heart, xvii. 221.

Pharisaism very natural in the best, i. 7

Pharisees' hypocrisy in giving alms, i. 4 ; and in prayers, *ib.* ; prayed rather to men than to God, 8.

Submitted to John's baptism though they hated Christ, because it was then in esteem, xiii. 201.

Philip, injured by Paul as a persecutor, easily reconciled to Paul as a convert, ii. 327.

Philosophy inferior to christianity, vii. 426

Piety, a great fruit and token of, is provision for the afflicted, iv. 176.

More instances of, in the married state than in monasteries and cloisters, xii. 57.

Pilgrimage, the godly count this world, and their whole estate therein, a house of, vii. 66 ; here is no fixed abode, *ib.* ; they have no rest, *ib.* ; they believe and look for a better estate after this life, *ib.* ; they not only look for it, but seek after it, 67 ; they are dealt with as strangers, *ib.*

Pilgrims, the great thing they should seek after is the straightest way to heaven, vi. 183.

Find in God's word matter of rejoicing during their exile and absence from God, and all the inconveniences that attend it, vii. 71 ; in the word they have the discovery of eternal life, 72 ; and sure directions how they may obtain this blessedness promised, *ib.* ; the examples of their countrymen, *ib.* ; many seasonable cordials against fainting by the way, *ib.*

Pillar of cloud and fire, a type of Christ, i. 480.

Plant, tender, comparison of Christ to, refers to the meanness and poverty of his condition, iii. 220.

Pleasing of God is, negatively, not pleasing the flesh, xi. 482 ; not pleasing men, 483 ; positively, is our great duty and business in the world, *ib.*

Of God should be our great end and scope, xix. 290 ; his favour is our happiness, his wrath our misery, *ib.* ; as we are creatures, 291 ; as we are new creatures, *ib.* ; we cannot be sincere unless this be our aim and scope, 292 ; maketh us serious and watchful, *ib.* ; solaceth under the difficulties of obedience, *ib.* ; is by doing what he hath required of us in his word, *ib.* ; in order to know his mind we must make search and trial, 295.

Pleasure of God in Christ as mediator, i. 386 ; as to the design, *ib.* ; as to the terms, 387 ; as to the execution and management of it by Christ, 388 ; propounded as the foundation on which God will build his church, 389.

Christ hath forbidden none but what may be a sin or a snare to us, ii. 34.

Pleasure of God, which prospers in the hand of Christ, is the whole decree of God about the good of the creatures, iii. 398; more general, in the evangelising of the world, 399; more special, in the reconciliation of sinners to God, *ib.*

All sins rooted in love of, iv. 98.

And outward comforts, much caution should be exercised in the use of, v. 77.

Being enjoyed, do not satisfy, vi. 7; being inordinately loved, defile, 8; being lost, increase our trouble and sorrow, *ib.*

Bodily, God forbiddeth none, but as it hindereth our greater pleasure, xviii. 373; where the heart is mortified and subdued to God, there is no such pleasure as the contempt of bodily, *ib.*

Of God's goodness, when it is fulfilled in us, xx. 317; when grace is operative and vigorous, *ib.*; when the Spirit dwelleth within us to keep grace a-work, 318; when internal and external acts of faith concur, *ib.*; advantages of this, *ib.*; objective and subjective grace, 320; practice gives experience of the comfort of religion, *ib.*

Pleasures, eternal, excel temporal, as holiness doth sin, xx. 17.

Plots against the interests of God and his people in the world, an ancient practice, vii. 382; to foment divisions among themselves, *ib.*; to divide between them and their rulers, 383; to divide between them and God, *ib.*; to discourage and suppress religion, 384; to introduce persecution, 385; against private persons, *ib.*; usually begin in pride, 386; God can protect his people against, 387; by his wisdom, *ib.*; the care and vigilancy of his providence, 388; he doth protect them, *ib.*; God's law forbiddeth all, 389.

And snares for the mischief and ruin of others, especially of God's people, the work of the wicked, viii. 131; it is a deliberate, voluntary sin, *ib.*; it is a sign that evil is connatural to them, *ib.*; they are of the devil's trade, 132; it is a sin contrary to the love of God and man, *ib.*; contrary to the gentleness and simplicity of the christian religion, *ib.*

Policy, carnal, caution against, viii. 7

Politicians, carnal, their opposition to the gospel, ii. 105.

Poor and rich, grace maketh, alike before God, iv. 66.

Of this world often chosen by God, iv. 193; may be spiritually rich, 195; the Lord loveth only the godly, *ib.*

Despising, is a sin not only against the word and written will of God, but against his mind and intent in his works and dispensations, iv. 201; against his mind in their creation, *ib.*; against his common providence, *ib.*; against his special providence, *ib.*

Oppressed, the Lord their avenger, iv. 411.

To do good to, as poor, is a work of natural mercy; to do good to one, as to one of Christ's brethren, of christian charity, x. 72.

Three sorts of, x. 74; the devil's, the world's, Christ's, *ib.*; reasons of charity to Christ's, 75; the near union between Christ and his people, *ib.*; Christ hath commended them to us as his proxies and deputies, *ib.*; it is a great honour put upon us to be instruments of divine providence and preservation of others, *ib.*; profit of this duty, 76; the way to preserve an estate, *ib.*; to increase it, *ib.*; to cleanse it, *ib.*; to possess it with a good conscience, *ib.*; motives, 77.

Pope and his adherents, in them the most odious pride set forth that ever the world saw, iii. 38; twenty kings and emperors trampled under foot by, 39; usurpeth the authority due to Christ, 40.

- Pope*, his universal bishopric impossible as to matter of fact, sacrilegious as to matter of right, vi. 308.
- Popedom*, its rise, i. 462.
- Popery*, to be detested, as of the devil, iii. 70.
Cause to fear a return of, iii. 84.
Absurdity of its errors, iii. 89; adoration of images, *ib.*; invocation of saints, *ib.*; works of supererogation, *ib.*; obstinacy with which they cleave to them, 90; given over to believe a lie, 91; why so many learned men continue in, 92.
Its ways and errors damnable, iii. 97; they live in wilful disobedience to God, *ib.*; deprive the people of the means of salvation, 98.
- Popish* and heathen idolatry little different, v. 254.
- Portion*, God alone is the godly man's, vii. 107; a good portion, *ib.*; one that he has an interest in and a title to, 109; a proper and suitable good, 110; sufficient, 111; satisfying, 112; and delightful, 113.
- Poverty* and meanness of condition not disgraceful, iii. 231; should not be irksome to us, 232.
- Power*, omnipotent, can save to the utmost, infinite love can pardon to the utmost, if we can believe, iv. 54.
God's, the great trouble of the soul ariseth from unbelief of, v. 363.
God's, is his liberty and sufficiency to do whatever he may will, vii. 414.
That goes along with the word, viii. 340; to humble and terrify, *ib.*; to convert and transform, 341; to comfort, 342; to confirm and strengthen, *ib.*
Christ's, over all flesh, x. 130; is by grant and donation, *ib.*; if not God, he would not have been capable of such power, *ib.*; given to him as mediator, 131; not confined to the elect, *ib.*; not confined to the church and things merely spiritual, *ib.*
One of God's greatest perfections, xiii. 434; in creation no attribute so eminent, *ib.*
Of God necessary to bring us into a state of grace, xx. 286; to keep and maintain us in a state of grace, 287; sufficiency of, 288.
- PRACTICAL COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLE OF JAMES, iv. 1.
- PRACTICAL COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLE OF JUDE, v. i.
- PRACTICAL EXPOSITION OF THE FIFTY-THIRD CHAPTER OF ISAIAH, iii. 187.
- Practice*, how much it exceeds speculation, viii. 24.
Pleasure of, greater than of contemplation, xviii. 370; because practice giveth a more experimental knowledge, 371; the taste of things is kept up on our hearts by serious practice, *ib.*; every holy action is rewarded by peace of conscience, *ib.*; our title to the heavenly inheritance more clearly made out, *ib.*; our will is conformed to the will and law of God, *ib.*
- Praise*, christians more backward to, than to prayer, i. 76.
Real (not merely verbal), is what God seeks, i. 78.
And blessing God, distinction between, i. 244.
The most effectual spiritual oratory or way of praying, i. 844; the noblest part of worship, 245,
Every mercy received should lead us to, vi. 67; respecteth God's excellencies, as blessing or thanksgiving his benefits, *ib.*; to be with an upright heart, 69.
Ought continually, frequently, and on all occasions, to be offered to God, viii. 111; a nobler duty than prayer, *ib.*

Praise, blessing God and giving thanks sometimes used promiscuously, but strictly blessing and thanks relateth to benefits received, praise to God's excellencies, ix. 191; faith and love must be at the bottom of, *ib.*; is an acknowledgment, by some outward expression, of the divine virtues, benefits, and perfections, *ib.*; the fruit of, is holiness, 192; is good and profitable, *ib.*; pleasant and delightful, *ib.*; comely and honourable, 193; should never cease, in respect of the preparation of the heart, *ib.*; should be for his word, 194; for the dispensation of his providence, fulfilling his promises to the faithful, and executing his threatenings on the wicked, 195; for favours, *ib.*; for afflictions, *ib.*; causes of backwardness to, 197; little love to God, *ib.*; neglect of observation, *ib.*

PRAYER, THE LORD'S, A PRACTICAL EXPOSITION OF, i. 1.

Prayer, the Lord's, analysis of, i. 3.

Public, efficacy of, i. 8; private, encouragements to, from God's sight and God's reward, 9; how he openly rewards secret prayer, *ib.*

Closet, a duty very necessary, i. 10; appears from God's precept, *ib.*; from Christ's example, *ib.*; from God's end in pouring out the Holy Ghost, 11; from the practice of the saints, 12; from our private necessities, *ib.*; very profitable, 13; conduceth much to enlargement of heart, *ib.*; makes way for secret manifestations of love on God's part, *ib.*; is a mighty solace and support in affliction, *ib.*; is a great trial of sincerity, faith, love, and obedience, 14; because of the great promises made to it, *ib.*

Neglect of secret, a sin of omission, i. 14; omission of a duty which is very natural to the saints, 15; secret should in some respects be more prized than other prayer, 16; mischief which follows neglect of, 17.

Private, excuses for neglecting, i. 19; want of time, *ib.*; want of a place, *ib.*; want of parts, *ib.*; exhortation to frequency in, 20; its seriousness, cautions, and warnings, 21.

Ought to be simple and plain, i. 28; vocal, useful to bound our thoughts, warm our affections, and strengthen our faith, *ib.*

Increases faith, love, and hope, i. 30; five abuses in, 31; idle and foolish loquacity, *ib.*; frothy eloquence and affected language, *ib.*; heartless speaking, *ib.*; mere outward vehemency and loud speech, 32; Popish repetition, and loose shreds of prayer often repeated, *ib.*; directions in, *ib.*; about our words, *ib.*; thoughts, 33; affections, 37.

Affections proper in, i. 37; fervency, *ib.*; reverence, 38; confidence, *ib.*

The Lord's, to be highly esteemed by christians, i. 39; though we are not tied to it as a form, yet it may be humbly used, *ib.*; preface to, 40.

Incumbent as a duty on natural men, and yet they cannot discharge it, i. 49; duty with reference to, of those who do not know their adoption, 50.

An act of the heart, not of the lips, i. 60.

Lord's, contains four petitions for the bestowal of good, two for the removal of evil, i. 66.

Is both an expression of a desire, and an implicit vow or solemn obligation that we take upon ourselves to prosecute what we ask, i. 66, 75.

To be in love as well as in faith, i. 108.

Is oftener from our memories than our consciences, and oftener from our consciences than our affections, i. 126.

- Prayer*, the Lord's, the glory of God the beginning and ending of, i. 245.
 Secret, usually most ardent, i. 339.
 Its use is not to inform the judgment, but to raise the affections, i. 347 ; the nearest approach to God while we are in the flesh, 349.
 Agents in, the human spirit, the new nature, and the Holy Spirit, i. 350 ; must be daily and constant, but also special on extraordinary occasions, 351 ; why no life in, 352.
 Often answered while it is being offered, i. 353.
 Secret, every christian should work conscious of, ii. 28.
 Spiritual blessings to be mainly sought in, ii. 210.
 A gracious soul delights in ; a hypocrite is incapable of, ii. 238.
 Must be made to God alone, iii. 137 ; Jesus Christ invoked together with the Father as an author of grace, 138.
 God's love giveth great boldness in, iii. 148 ; not a cold ineffectual, but an operative, active love, *ib.* ; such infinite love to give Christ to die for us as may raise our wonder and astonishment, *ib.* ; gift of Christ a gift in order to other things, and therefore he will complete that gift, *ib.* ; the giving of Christ showeth how freely God will give all things to us, 149 ; in prayer, God to be conceived of as one that loveth us, *ib.*
 What is won by, usually worn with thanks, iv. 41.
 God always satisfies, though not carnal desires, iv. 45 ; we desire a knife, he giveth us bread, *ib.* ; encouragement in, to consider that not only is there bounty in God, but bounty engaged by promise, 46 ; trial of true, is by the faith of it, 47 ; requires an actual reliance on the grace and merits of Christ, *ib.* ; none must be put up but what can be put up in faith, 48 ; soul must magnify God's attributes in, *ib.* ; when we have a certain promise, we must have no doubt of his will, *ib.* ; when we have no certain assurance of his will, faith must glorify and apply his power, *ib.* ; and his love, 49 ; some that have more near communion with God may have a particular faith of some particular occurrence, 50.
 Fruit of, received from the hand of Christ, iv. 54.
 Not for God's information, but the creature's submission, iv. 338.
 The best remedy for sorrows, iv. 441.
 Should be nothing else but faith exercised, iv. 455.
 Intercessory, must be for the whole community of saints, every member of Christ's body, iv. 461 ; those especially to whom we are more nearly related, *ib.* ; for magistrates and officers of the church, *ib.* ; the weak for the strong, and the strong for the weak, *ib.*
 True, must be earnest, fervent, iv. 463 ; must use much diligence to work our hearts to the duty, *ib.* ; not only by the qualification of the duty, but of the person, to be regarded, 464 ; infirmities do not hinder the success of, when the heart is upright, 469.
 A cure for murmuring, v. 311.
 The last refuge when things are otherwise irremediable, v. 394.
 Accepting and granting, great difference between, vi. 249.
 Without the heart is babbling, vii. 123 ; with half heart when it is a fruit of memory and invention, *ib.* ; when it is rather with the conscience than the affections, *ib.* ; when the affections are devoted to carnal things, and the comfortable part of spiritual things, *ib.*
 Should be earnest, vii. 250 ; confident, *ib.* ; evangelically confident, *ib.* ; its impelling principle a strong bent to please God, 251 ; a desire to enjoy him, *ib.*

Affliction should put us on, viii. 99 ; it is with God we have to do, *ib.* ; he alone can help and relieve us, either by removing the trouble or supporting us under it, *ib.* ; should seek that we may know his mind in all his providences, 100 ; that we may have strength to bear it, *ib.* ; wisdom to improve our chastisements, *ib.* ; deliverances and freedom from the trouble, *ib.* ; must not give over, though afflictions be ever so great and many, 101 ; nothing too hard for God, *ib.*

Prayer and praise, the two great sacrifices required of us, viii. 108.

A duty very kindly to the saints, viii. 111 ; as soon as they are converted to God, they will fall a-praying, *ib.*

A holy vehemency and fervour required in, ix. 37 ; we may cry, *ib.* ; we must cry, *ib.* ; the Spirit of grace given us for this end, *ib.* ; the saints have all done so, *ib.* ; their cries are heard and answered, *ib.* ; other prayers are not comely *ib.* ; this crying consisteth in the earnestness of the affection, not in the loudness of the voice, 38 ; not the earnestness of the carnal affections, *ib.* ; not a mere natural fervency, *ib.* ; defects in, 39 ; children of God conscious to themselves of much deadness in, *ib.* ; causes, *ib.* ; want of sense, *ib.* ; sin and carnal liberty, 40 ; want of spiritual desire, *ib.* ; want of reverence to God, *ib.* ; want of faith, *ib.* ; signs of holy fervency in, 41 ; when the heart worketh, *ib.* ; when we follow the suit, and will not give over praying, *ib.* ; when deaf to disappointments and discouragements, *ib.* ; when we are argumentative, and plead with God, *ib.* ; way to get fervency, 42 ; sincerity in, noteth seriousness, *ib.* ; a hearty desire, 43 ; the prevalency of these affections, *ib.* ; a universal care to please God in all things, *ib.* ; persuasion to pray with our whole heart, *ib.* ; directions, 44.

For deliverance, should be accompanied with serious purposes of obedience, ix. 65 ; because this is the best expression of gratitude and thankfulness, *ib.* ; it is a sign the rod hath done its work, *ib.* ; it shows a true notion of deliverance as an engaging mercy, *ib.* ; a gracious heart desires deliverance for this very end, that he may be in a better condition to keep God's commandments, *ib.*

Secret, arguments for, ix. 68 ; all the precepts of prayer include closet prayer, *ib.* ; God's end in pouring out the Spirit, that we may pray apart and mourn apart (Zech. xii. 10-14), 69 ; the practice of the saints, *ib.* ; our own private necessities, which cannot be so feelingly spoken to by others, *ib.*

Is oftener from our memories than our consciences, and oftener from our consciences enlightened than hearts renewed by grace, ix. 187.

A great stay in afflictions, xii. 225 ; the appointed means of comfort in distress, safety in danger, relief in want, and strength in weakness, *ib.* ; we know not what to pray for as we ought without the Spirit's enlightenment and direction, 226 ; the manner of this help and assistance, *ib.* ; the virtue of true prayer doth not consist in the number and artifice of words, *ib.*

A special means by which the Holy Ghost helpeth us in trouble and affliction, xii. 231 ; troubles are sent for this end, *ib.* ; a special means to ease the heart of burdensome cares and fears, *ib.* ; of acknowledging God as the fountain of our strength and the author of our blessings, *ib.* ; exhortation to prayer, 232 ; the prayers of the godly come from the Spirit of God, *ib.* ; the Spirit's gracious operations are specially manifested in prayer, *ib.* ; three

things concur in prayer—the spirit of a man, the new nature, and the Spirit of God, *ib.*; the manner in which the Spirit concurreth in the prayers of the faithful, 233; the necessity of this help and assistance, 235: the order and economy of the divine persons requireth it, *ib.*; that prayer may be proportionable with our other duties, *ib.*; because of our impotency, *ib.*; and with respect to acceptance, 236; cautions against abuses and mistakes in prayer, *ib.*; not to be understood as if the matter and words of prayer were to be immediately inspired, *ib.*; nor that we should never pray till the Spirit moveth us, *ib.*; want of freedom of utterance no evidence of absence of spirit, 237; all that pray graciously have not the spirit in like measure, nor the same persons always in the same measure, *ib.*; gifts more necessary when we join with others, but the spirit of most use when we are alone, 238; the kind of helps we have from the Spirit of God in prayer, *ib.*; it is his office to quicken our affections and desires, 239; the motions of the Spirit a help, but not the rule or reason of prayer, *ib.*; cautions to be observed, 240; what kind of prayers come from the Spirit, 241; exhortations to the spirit of prayer and supplication, 242.

Prayer, reasons why, when made according to the will of God, must be acceptable to him, xii. 257.

How to interpret, xii. 266.

Direction in, to avoid customariness, irreverence, and deadness, and to beget confidence, xiv. 142; how we may keep our hearts in, under a sense of God's being, so as to conceive of him aright, 144; must renew and revive our faith in God's essence and presence, *ib.*; there must be no carnal conceit and representation of God in our minds, 145; must conceive of him according to his praises in his word, 147; must have such thoughts of him as may increase our reverence, not weaken our delight, *ib.*; considerations to keep the spirit awful, 148; considerations to keep the heart cheerful, 149; rules to be observed in forming fit notions of the Trinity, 151.

To God, must be reverent both as to the frame of the soul and the gesture of the body, xiv. 402.

The kind of faith required in, xv. 146; what it is to ask according to the will of God, 148; the necessity of praying in faith, 150; reproof of those that pray with little or no faith, 151; exhortation to faith in prayer, 152; how we may know that we pray in faith, 153.

The ends for which this duty was appointed, xv. 298; causes why men neglect it, 302.

The nature of, xvii. 491; the kinds of, distinguished, 492; what it is to pray without ceasing, 492; reasons why constant and frequent prayer is a duty incumbent on all true christians, 496; reproof of those who are infrequent in prayer, 500; wherein lieth a prayerful temper of heart, 502.

The birthplace or proper rise of, is in the heart, xviii. 63; inducements to, 64; a sense of our wants, *ib.*; esteem and value of the blessings asked, *ib.*; desire, 65; habitual inclination of the mind towards God, *ib.*; encouragements to, 66; God's merciful nature, *ib.*; his great love, *ib.*; his bountiful providence, *ib.*; his promises, 67.

The terms in which God invites and encourages us to prayer, xxi. 193; how we should ask in order to ensure success, 194; success in prayer distinguished, 197; several ways of receiving answers to

prayer, 198; answers to prayer notable confirmations to faith, excitements to love and obedience, and encouragements to pray again, 200.

Prayers, failing of the pharisees in their, i. 4.

Long, not forbidden; i. 25; yet, in the general, prayer should be short, *ib.*; affectation of prolixity is naught, *ib.*

Should all be mingled with a thankful sense and acknowledgment of God's mercies, vii. 165; thanksgiving is the kindly way of petitioning, 166.

Of Christ, why he prayed, x. 113; this was the agreement between God and him, that he should first establish a right, and then sue it out in court, *ib.*; that we might have a copy of his intercession, *ib.*; that his prayers might be a constant fountain and foundation of spiritual blessings, *ib.*; to commend the duty of prayer, 114; that our prayers might be effectual, *ib.*

Christ's, all believers, and they only, are interested in, xi. 17.

To be directed to Christ with confidence, xi. 129; and with earnestness, 130.

Praying, manner of, should be with reverence, self-abhorrence, and submission, i. 252.

In the Holy Ghost, what it is, v. 337; the right manner of, is with affection, 339; with confidence, 340; with reverence, *ib.*

For grace yet sinning against it, is like those that sacrificed to Esculapius, praying for health, but kept up their riotous feasts, xiii. 464.

Preachers, all christians not called to be, but all are on meet occasions to declare the judgments of God's mouth, vi. 121; in their own families, *ib.*; in their converses, 122; reasons, *ib.*; the lips and tongue are God's, and must be used for him, *ib.*; it is the glory of the tongue to serve God in this kind, 123; every creature has a voice peculiar to itself, and so should the new creature have, *ib.*; good is communicative, 124; it discovereth knowledge and good esteem of the word, *ib.*; it is for our benefit to be talking of good things to others, 125.

Preacher's best commendation is the hearer's life, iv. 153.

Who are strict in doctrine and loose in practice, reproof of, vii. 17.

Preaching of the word, men not to adventure upon, till they have a good spiritual furniture, or are stored with a sufficiency of gifts, iv. 133.

Should be suited to the wants and circumstances of the hearers, v. 103.

Precepts, show not what man will do, but what he ought to do; are not measures of strength, iv. 369.

Should be turned into prayers, vi. 47.

Meditation on God's, and walking in God's ways, connection between, vi. 138.

Keeping of God's, is legal or evangelical, vii. 96; benefit of keeping, 97; peace of conscience, 98; joy in the Holy Ghost, 99; increase of grace, *ib.*; gracious experiences and manifestations of God vouchsafed to us in the way of obedience, 100; protection in our work, 101; preservation in public and common judgments, *ib.*; so much of sanctified prosperity as is good for us, 102; these benefits should be seen and observed, *ib.*; to increase our esteem for God's grace, *ib.*; to justify God against the reproaches of carnal

men, 103 ; to check our murmurings, *ib.* ; to encourage us in well-doing, *ib.*

Precepts of God, esteem of, presupposeth knowledge and a right discerning, viii. 323 ; advertency or application, 324 ; is such an approbation as doth engage affection, such an affection as doth engage practice, *ib.* ; not a simple, but comparative approbation, 325 ; not only a judgment of general esteem, but of particular application, *ib.* ; not slight and superficial, but deep and solid, *ib.* ; such as hath a lively and effectual influence upon our hearts and ways, 326 ; universal, not partial, 327.

Choosing of God's, implies deliberation, ix. 265 ; esteem or preference, *ib.* ; voluntary inclination, 266 ; firm and immutable purpose, *ib.* ; contentment and complacency in that which we have chosen, 267 ; reasons for choosing, *ib.* ; from the necessity of it, *ib.* ; the congruity and convenience of it, both to the honour of God and the nature of man, 268 ; the utility and benefit of it, 269.

Predestination, God's eternal purpose, will, or decree is the first rise of all things, xii. 310 ; what God so willeth and purposeth doth infallibly come to pass, 312 ; whatever so cometh to pass is brought about in the most convenient order, *ib.* ; God doth not find this order in causes, but maketh it, 313 ; this order of causes is so settled and joined together that none can separate them, 314 ; effectual calling is the fruit of predestination, *ib.* ; predestination is free, not depending on foreseen works and faith, 316 ; but does not exclude the means by which it is brought about, *ib.* ; the effects of predestination, 318.

PREFERENCE OF DUTIES, ii. 5.

Preparation, redemption needeth none, but conversion doth, v. 21.

For the coming of Christ is either habitual, ix. 400 ; in the state of the person, *ib.* ; the frame of the heart, *ib.* ; the course of the conversation, *ib.* ; or actual, *ib.* ; this should be made clear, 401 ; when God summons us by his providence to make up our accounts, *ib.*

'Of the gospel of peace,' what it is, xii. 378.

PREPARATIVE SERMON FOR RECEIVING THE SACRAMENT, xv. 329.

Present things, the wicked enjoy, more than the righteous, viii. 221.

With the Lord, our happiness in the world to come lieth in being, xiii. 23 ; reasons why, *ib.* ; the excellency of this blessed estate, 26 ; that we are in the immediate presence of the Lord as soon as the soul flitteth from the body proved, *ib.* ; presence with the Lord should be earnestly desired by christians, 31.

Presentation by Christ of his people to God, v. 364 ; as an account of his charge, *ib.* ; as an act of delight and rejoicing in his own success, 365 ; as an act of his love and recompense to the faithful, *ib.*

Threefold spoken of in scripture, by believers themselves, by ministers, by Christ, xix. 488.

Preservation a daily renewal of creation, xx. 182.

Presumers are either ignorant or inconsiderate, iv. 243.

Presumptuous sins, their nature, xxi. 338 ; sins of infirmity and sins of presumption distinguished, 339 ; the heinousness of these, 343 ; the danger of them, 344 ; reproof of those that live in known sins, 346 ; dissuasives, 347 ; things men usually presume upon, 348 ; the danger of the regenerate in presumptuous sinning, 352 ; of such as persuade themselves their sins are but infirmities, 356.

- Pretences*, vain, by which sinners usually harden their hearts, xix. 222; that God will not call them to account, or punish them for their sins, *ib.*; that God will not be severe against his creatures, 223; that they are christians, 224; that none is perfect, *ib.*; that they depend on the righteousness of Christ, 225; that they hope to repent at last, *ib.*; that they make amends for a course of sin in one kind by abounding in other duties, *ib.*
- ‘*Pricked* in heart’ (Acts ii. 37), considered as the fruit of sin and the beginning of grace, xxi. 242; what it is, 244; God’s course to bring home sinners to himself, 245; reasons why, *ib.*
- Pride* gave us the first merit of death, and envy the first instance of it, iv. 309.
- Two sorts of, one in the mind, the other in the affections, iv. 354; nothing causeth madness so much as, 355.
- Good to shame, with consideration of God’s power and our own baseness, iv. 386.
- Dissuasives from, v. 244.
- Is moral or spiritual, vi. 195.
- In mind, self-conceit; in affections, vainglory, vi. 414, 415.
- Puts wicked men upon being troublesome and injurious to the people of God, vii. 322.
- Acts of, vii. 325; wittingly and willingly opposing any command of God, *ib.*; entertaining crosses with anger and blessings with disdain, *ib.*; despising any of Christ’s little ones, *ib.*; a lofty conceit of ourselves, with contempt of others, 326; disdain of inferiors, *ib.*; contention with equals, *ib.*; undutifulness to superiors, 327; impatience of admonitions and reproofs, *ib.*; building too securely upon earthly enjoyments, 328; remedies against, *ib.*
- Of life, in what it consists, xvi. 94, 95, 116.
- Why God is an enemy of, xxi. 411; what it is, 415; how it shows itself, *ib.*; why it begins with the heart, 418; means to avoid, 421.
- Priesthood* which we have by Christ concerneth our ministration in the heavenly temple, xix. 93; because a christian is conformed to Christ, and made like him in all things, *ib.*; this suiteth with the other privilege, that of being kings, 95; thus we are qualified and prepared, *ib.*; till then we have not the full privilege of priests, intimacy, full communion, nearness of access to God, and ministration before him, 96; heaven is often represented as a temple, and therefore there must be priests, 98; the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving remaineth to be everlastingly offered by us, *ib.*; the scriptures plainly express that our service is not ended with our lives, *ib.*; our estate in heaven hath the notion of a day or time in which our priesthood is to be exercised, 99.
- Priestly* office of Christ requires that he be God and man, i. 489.
- Office of Christ, two acts of, oblation and intercession, x. 246.
- Principles*, rank of, viii. 488; some false and rotten, as carnal example and custom, *ib.*; some more tolerable, as the hope of temporal mercies, *ib.*; some very good and sound, yet do not argue grace, as when duties are done out of the urgings of an enlightened conscience, *ib.*; pure and excellent when we act with respect to God, 489.
- Carnal and spiritual, men draw opposite conclusions from the same, xx. 212.
- Prison* and judgment, Christ taken from, many interpretations of, iii. 344; taken and assumed into glory from the prison of the grave, 345.

Private spirit, evil of, vii. 285.

Privilege and duty of the godly, it is their privilege that they have a God to go to, their duty to make him their guardian and saviour in all their distress, ix. 64.

Privileges, inward, the best and most honourable; spiritual kin to be preferred before carnal, iv. 17.

Offered in God's word are everlasting, ix. 7.

Privy council of a child of God, God's testimonies, vi. 224; books the best counsellors; and of all books God's testimonies have the pre-eminence, *ib.*

Prize of eternal glory set before those whom God hath effectually called in Christ, xx. 94; all christians deeply engaged to pursue after, 97.

Profession showeth to what party we addict ourselves; holiness, that we addict ourselves to God, iv. 246.

Naked, in respect of true faith, is but as a dead body and carcase, iv. 270; noisome as a rotten carcase; useless as to all the purposes of faith, *ib.*

Of Christ not enough, v. 165; without answerable practice, maketh us in worse case than the heathen, *ib.*; accompanied with some rash and fond affection to Christ not enough, 166; means to discover false, 167.

Necessity of, a matter intricate and perplexed, vi. 462; of great truths must be open and public, else Christ would not have a visible people in the world, 463; in the smallest matters we must do nothing to contradict the truth, *ib.*; in lesser truths when they become testing questions, *ib.*; when our non-profession would be interpreted as a denial, *ib.*; when others are scandalised by our non-profession, *ib.*; when an account of our faith is demanded, especially by magistrates, *ib.*; when great opportunities are offered in God's providence, 464; to be forborne till you be fully persuaded of the truth you are to profess, *ib.*; when the profession of a lesser truth proves an offence to the weak, *ib.*; when the unseasonable venting of things will do more hurt than good, *ib.*; how to made, *ib.*

Not to be neglected, ix. 332; though never so glorious, should not be rested in without a saving work of grace upon the heart to maintain it, 333; will not serve for the present, *ib.*; must fail for the future, *ib.*

External, obligeth us to die unto sin, xii. 62.

Without conviction, but a knowing Christ after the flesh, xiii. 224.

The making an open confession of the truth a necessary duty, xiv. 325; whether we are bound always to make this confession, *ib.*; reasons why christians should more plainly discover the profession of their hopes, 326; how they should do so, *ib.*; reproof of those that are Nicodemites, 327.

A man may go far, and fall away at last, xvii. 14; reasons why, *ib.*; trials a means of discovery of our profession, 17; carnal men will renounce Christ rather than the world when it comes to a trial, 18; yet be very sorrowful when they cannot win heaven in their own way, 22; worldliness a disease very incident to great men and persons of quality, 23.

Progress in christian life is in three things—conquest over the enemies of God and our souls, devotion of ourselves to God, and hope of the coming of Christ and our everlasting glory, ii. 104.

They who have made furthest progress in christianity are usually most sensible of their own imperfections, xx. 89; because as grace

increaseth, light increaseth, *ib.* ; as grace increaseth, their love to God increaseth, and so they hate sin more, *ib.* ; experience maketh them wise and provident, 90 ; they know more of the vanity of the world, *ib.* ; they are more acquainted with themselves, *ib.* ; by frequent communion with God they know more of God, and so more of themselves, 91 ; their work is now to look to the degree, *ib.*

Prolegomena to the commentary on James, iv. 8.

Promise, that it be immutable, three things necessary, iii. 152 ; that it be seriously and heartily made, *ib.* ; that the promiser continue in his purpose without change of mind, 153 ; that he is able to perform it, *ib.*

The accomplishment of one, confirms another, vi. 399.

Of mercy usually goeth before the bestowal of it, vii. 21 ; usually some time of delay between the promise and the fulfilment, *ib.* ; to try our faith, 22 ; our patience, *ib.* ; our love, 23 ; to enlarge our desires, *ib.*

Three things necessary that it may be certain and firm—that it be made seriously and heartily, with a purpose to perform it ; that the promiser continue in his purpose ; that he has the power to fulfil it, vii. 364 ; these concur in the promises of God, 365, 401.

Three things required in, viii. 263 ; *veritas*, sincerity, or truth in making, *ib.* ; *fidelitas*, faithfulness in keeping, 264 ; *justitia*, righteousness in giving to him to whom the promise is made what the promise has made his, *ib.* See *Righteousness*, God's promise, &c.

Promises, God's, their sufficiency and stability, i. 312.

How they make us partakers of a divine nature, ii. 216 ; from their drift, 220 ; their matter, *ib.* ; their conditions or terms, 221 ; the power which accompanies them, *ib.*

Particular application of general, is necessary, vi. 404.

There are in the word of God, that we may believe, and others because we do believe ; to faith and for faith, vii. 23.

Of scripture, comforting in affliction, vii. 34 ; particularly of pardon of sin, *ib.* ; of eternal life, *ib.* ; concerning our temporal estate, 35.

To be made much of, vii. 202.

The children of God make more of, than others do, because they value the blessings promised, and believe that they shall be fulfilled, vii. 361.

God may suspend the fulfilment of, not because he is unwilling to give, but because he will have us better prepared to receive, vii. 365 ; to awaken fervency of prayer, and that the blessing may be more earnestly desired and more highly valued, 366 ; to prove and exercise our faith, *ib.* ; that patience may have its perfect work, *ib.* ; because the frame of his providence requires it, *ib.*

Some have been made to one generation and fulfilled to another, vii. 408 ; the same common, have been fulfilled to the faithful in all ages, *ib.*

God's, motives to take, for our heritage, viii. 144 ; every man hath some heritage, a chief good, *ib.* ; this is a portion which will go along with us wherever we go, *ib.* ; all other things will never satisfy, 145 ; this heritage sanctifies all our heritages, *ib.* ; it is a good sign of adoption, *ib.* ; this is a peculiar heritage, and always goes along with the favour of God, *ib.* ; they that refuse this heritage, the Lord's vengeance will seize upon them, *ib.*

- Promises*, God's, to believe, and have the spirit of his saints, is enough for us, viii. 222.
- Meditation of, very seasonable, when the answer of our prayers is denied, ix. 83.
- Of God are good, ix. 283 ; and sure, *ib.* ; as promises, *ib.* ; as the promises of God, *ib.*
- Concern either this life or that which is to come, xii. 197.
- What they are, xiii. 328.
- From what inconsiderable beginnings they have their fulfilment illustrated in the case of Abraham, xiv. 250 ; not always made good in kind, *ib.* ; usually made good to the posterity of the faithful, 251.
- Are the overflowings of God's love, xiv. 293 ; the rule and warrant of faith, 294 ; a pledge of the thing promised, and must be held till performance come, *ib.*
- How we must believe, xiv. 410 ; helps to belief in, *ib.*
- The work of faith as to the, xv. 71, 58, 108.
- Of assistance, acceptance, and reward, the work of faith, xv. 141.
- Though made upon particular occasions to some of God's people, yet are of general use, xviii. 444.
- General, may be sought to be, applied to particular persons, rightly qualified, xx. 279.
- Property*, should all, be in common? xvi. 146 ; have wicked men a right in, or may they be spoiled as the Canaanites? *ib.*
- Prophecy*, or preaching, an old ordinance, at least as old as Enoch, v. 291.
- Light of, and the light of faith compared, xiii. 364.
- Prophecies* of scripture evince the truth of it, v. 322.
- Prophet*, Christ the great, i. 393 ; his qualifications for this office, 394 ; absolute supreme authority, *ib.* ; all manner of sufficiency, and the power of God to execute the office, *ib.* ; power to make his doctrine effectual, 395.
- Prophetical* office of Christ requires that he be God and man, i. 481 ; what he taught, 488 ; how he taught, *ib.* ; by what arguments he confirmed his doctrine, 489 ; how he received this doctrine from the Father, *ib.*
- Prophets* got some knowledge by ordinary means, and some by immediate revelation, vi. 340 ; the latter as prophets, the former as believers, *ib.*
- Proselytes* of the covenant and of the gate, distinction of, xviii. 406.
- Prosperity* and adversity have each their snares ; the former the more dangerous, i. 237.
- And adversity, subject to, in outward things, viii. 191 ; each has its own snares and temptations, *ib.* ; some that have held well in one condition have failed in the other, *ib.* ; to have these conditions succeed one another makes the temptation the greater, *ib.*
- Of the wicked, no cause of dismay, viii. 213 ; not to be envied, 222 ; they are of the earth, *ib.* ; the uncertainty of their condition, 223.
- Προσωπον, of the Jew, was his knowledge of the law ; of the christian, his profession of respect and esteem to Christ, xiii. 227.
- Protection*, divine, set forth under the notions of a hiding-place and a shield, viii. 166 ; extends to the soul, which is in danger of Satan and his temptations, 167 ; and the body, *ib.* ; a hiding-place to keep us from danger, a shield to keep us in danger, 168 ; arguments to depend upon, 174 ; every one must have a hiding-place, *ib.* ; our hearts will not be kept in safety unless we make God our strong defence, *ib.* ; it is a thing we owe to God by virtue of the

- fundamental article of the covenant, *ib.* ; this trust ever succeedeth well, 175 ; no hurt can come to us without God's leave, *ib.* ; God hath expressed his singular affection, and his care and providence over his people, *ib.* ; many arguments to work us to this trust, 176.
- Protestantism* the way of truth, vi. 299 ; compared with Popery, 300.
- Proud*, God professeth open defiance and hostility against, iv. 353 ; judgments upon, very shameful, *ib.* ; reasons, 354.
- Creatures, the worst sort of, are those who err from God's commandments, vi. 194.
- Wicked men and persecutors frequently so called, vii. 322 ; because they shake off the yoke of God, and will not be subject to their maker, *ib.* ; because they are drunk with worldly felicity, and never think of changes, *ib.* ; they affect a life of pomp, sense, and carnal greatness, and despise the afflictions and meanness and simplicity of the people of God, 323 ; because of their insolent carriage towards the Lord's people, 324.
- Providence*, the success and event of all endeavours depends on, ii. 319.
- Doctrine and leading of, to be observed in dubious cases, ii. 332.
- God's, all things come within the guidance of, ii. 332 ; to be submitted to, 333.
- God meant to copy out all dispensations of, in the life of Christ, iii. 365.
- A vain thing to promise ourselves great things without leave of, iv. 389 ; principal ways of doing so, *ib.* ; undertaking things without prayer, *ib.* ; being too confident of future contingencies and events, *ib.* ; setting man's endeavours in God's stead, promising a time to repent hereafter, *ib.*
- Rebukes of God's, upon impenitent sinners, of great use to the saints, vi. 203 ; arguments of his displeasure against the proud and impenitent, *ib.* ; a proof and document how tender God is of his word, *ib.*
- God's, establisheth the authority of his law, vii. 51.
- God's, cannot be understood till his work be done, vii. 258.
- Of God, observation of, will lead a gracious heart to love the word of God more than before, viii. 228.
- Excepting against, from the evils in the world, is vain and frivolous, xii. 266 ; cautions against misconstruction and non-improvement of, 267.
- Faith a key to the mysteries of, xiii. 357.
- How far we are to submit to the will of God in, xv. 249 ; the grounds of our submission, 254 ; helps to it, 256.
- As a subject for meditation, xvii. 339.
- Providences* are blessed to christians through the merit of Christ, ii. 210.
- Of God, all as fuel to keep up the fire of love, ii. 246.
- God's, a comment on the scriptures, vi. 119.
- The day of the church's conflict is mixed, and yieldeth great variety of, xv. 415 ; the reasons of this, 416.
- Use and benefit of observing God's, xix. 240 ; to cure atheism, 241 ; to make us more cautious of sin, *ib.* ; to make us more earnest in deprecating the wrath of God, and suing out our pardon in Christ, 242 ; to make us thankful for our mercies and deliverances by Christ, *ib.* ; cautions regarding the observance of, *ib.*
- Prudence* of God. See *Wisdom*.
- The queen of graces, v. 358.

- Prudence* and wisdom required to know how to converse profitably and christianly with all we have to do with, vii. 205.
- Psalms* cxix., dependence of the verses in, neither to be neglected nor too curiously sought after, vii. 95.
- Psalms*, singing of, an ordinance of God's worship under the gospel, xix. 408; needs the help of the Spirit, 409; other songs, if grave and godly, may be sung in the church, 411; singing a clear and unquestionable duty, 414; a delectable ordinance, 415; a profitable ordinance, *ib.*
- PUBLIC THANKSGIVING, SERMON PREACHED ON A DAY OF, xviii. 383.
- Punishment* of the wicked may be a comfort to the godly, not as it importeth the calamity of any, but because the snare and allurements to sin is taken away, vii. 55; their derision and mockage of godliness ceaseth, *ib.*; the impediments of worshipping God are taken away, *ib.*; way is made for the enlarging of Christ's kingdom, *ib.*; God's justice is manifested, *ib.*
- Of the wicked a just recompense for their disobedience to God, and for their opposition to them that would obey God, xx. 220.
- Punishments* and rewards, how far they may be reflected on as incentives in duties of religion, xiii. 459.
- Punon*, in Idumea, the place where the brazen serpent was lifted up, xvii. 459; Sylvanus and thirty-nine others martyred there, *ib.*
- Purgatory* unknown to Paul, i. 495.
- Purification*, the necessity of, in several respects, xvi. 260; the manner of it, 262; those that are purified are reckoned God's treasure and peculiar people, 265; meaning of *λαος περιούσιος*, *ib.*; reasons why they are so esteemed, 266; exhortation to carnal men to look after purification, 269; to the people of God to walk as his peculiar ones, 272.
- Purity* and perfection of the scriptures, viii. 337.
- They who hate, can never love God and his ways, till their hearts be changed, viii. 487.
- And cleanness of heart becometh christians, xix. 195; they are consecrated to the service of a holy God, *ib.*; they profess the most holy faith, 196.
- Of life, the hope of a blessed estate hereafter should put us upon a serious endeavour after, xx. 471; with respect to God, 481; with respect to the ordinances, 483; with respect to graces, 484; directions as to the nature of the purity we should seek after, 485; means and helps, 487.
- And charity true notes of a believer, xxi. 82.
- Quakers* by their practices bring religion into contempt, xiii. 118.
- Qualifications*, gracious and good, wrought in us, we may mention, vi. 94; not by way of boasting, 95; nor pleading of merit, *ib.*; but for God's glory, *ib.*; for our comfort, *ib.*; our vindication, *ib.*; as an argument in prayer to obtain further grace, *ib.*
- Quenching* of the Spirit, when men do not stir up the grace that is in them, iii. 217; when they return to their old ways, 218.
- Questioning* of conscience, good for humiliation, faith, and obedience, iv. 190.
- Quickening* noteth the renewing of comfort, vi. 239; the actuation of grace, *ib.*; God's children need, 240; by reason of their constant weakness, *ib.*; and their frequent indispositions and distempers of soul, *ib.*

Quickening is put for regeneration or infusion of grace, vi. 395 ; and for the renewed excitation of grace, *ib.* ; in the latter sense it includes comfort in afflictions, and is opposed to fainting, *ib.* ; and enlivening in duty, 396 ; necessity of, *ib.*

Is used in scripture for regeneration, or the first infusion of the life of grace, vi. 435 ; and for the vitality and vigour of grace, when the spiritual life is in good plight, *ib.* ; this vitality depends on the degree and measure of our faith, *ib.* ; and of our love, 436 ; they who long after God's precepts see a need of, *ib.* ; because of the diseases incident to the renewed state, *ib.* ; because, without quickening grace, they cannot serve God cheerfully, or do anything to purpose in the heavenly life, 437 ; because it is both uncomfortable to themselves to act without quickening grace, and very hateful to God, *ib.* ; hindrances to, *ib.* ; heinous sin, *ib.* ; immoderate liberty, or vanities of the world, or pleasures of the flesh, *ib.* ; slothfulness and negligence in the spiritual life, 438 ; vain and dead-hearted company and converse, *ib.*

Twofold, when from dead we are made living, or when from cold, and sad, and heavy, we are made lively, vii. 429 ; the word the only means of, 431 ; it contains the most quickening considerations, 432 ; the quickening Spirit delights to work by this means, 433 ; though the word be the means, the benefit comes from God, *ib.*

Put for regeneration, or the first infusion of the life of grace, viii. 103 ; or for quickening in duties, *ib.* ; or for quickening in afflictions, 104.

Is either restitution to happiness, or the renewing and increasing the vigour of spiritual life, ix. 84 ; we should be sensible of the temper of our hearts, and see whether they want quickening or no, *ib.* ; when they want it, we must ask it of God, *ib.* ; ask it earnestly, *ib.* ; expect it in and through Jesus Christ, who came from heaven for this end, *ib.* ; consider how God worketh it in us, by the Spirit acting, the habit of grace or new nature acted on, and the word and sacraments the instrument and means, 85 ; consider how willing God is to grant, *ib.* ; know when you have received, *ib.* ; signs of, 86 ; more sense of indwelling sin as a heavy burden, *ib.* ; appetite after Christ, his graces and comforts, *ib.* ; activity in duties, *ib.* ; why the children of God see a need to ask so often and so earnestly, *ib.* ; they know that God will be served in a lively manner, *ib.* ; they know the need of it, because of the instability of their hearts, *ib.* ; and the constant opposition of the flesh, 87 ; and the change wrought in us by our outward condition, *ib.* ; because we sin away our life and strength, 88 ; because God giveth out by degrees, and would keep us in constant dependence, *ib.*

Rahab, the harlot, her justification, iv. 265 ; much faith in her actings in the matter of the spies, 267.

Raising up of Jesus refers not to his resurrection, but his exaltation, ii. 23.

Ransom paid by Christ, not to Satan, but to God, i. 420 ; why necessary, *ib.*

Rational creatures, God works on us as, ii. 240.

Reading and meditation, scarce an instance of any converted by, that neglected prophesying when it was to be had, v. 22.

Reason showeth certainly that there is eternal life and death, or torment and bliss, after this life, ii. 362.

Reason, carnal, faith's worst enemy, iv. 51.

Its place in ascertaining the way of truth, vi. 310.

Tells us of the existence of God, but faith doth more assure the soul of it, and impresseth the dread and awe of God upon our souls, vii. 214.

A middle faculty, that standeth between things above and things below, and may either be debased by sense or elevated by faith, xi. 218.

Its place in regard to revelation, xiii. 354.

The wonders of creation not understood by, but by faith, xiii. 409 ; not the judge of controversies in religion, 412.

Not to be heard against scripture, xv. 214.

Rebellion, total, not simply, and in itself, better than formal profession, iv. 213.

Rebuking for sin must be faithful, compassionate, and prudent, xix. 111.

Receiver should remember, giver forget, iv. 39.

Receiving, in the gospel, God is always on the giving and never on the receiving hand, x. 237.

Recognition of the Lord's will in ordinary speech, iv. 392 ; good to accustom the tongue to holy forms of speech, *ib.* ; children of God use them frequently, *ib.* ; the very heathens wont to use them with some religion, *ib.* ; when used, the heart must go along with the tongue, otherwise they are profanations, *ib.* ; not necessary always to express, though there must be always implicitly or expressly a submission to the will of God, *ib.*

Reconciliation with God, what it is, i. 495 ; how obtained, 496 ; the assurance we have that it has been obtained, 498 ; how and on what terms applied to us, 501 ; exhortations to enter into, 502.

With God, one of the prime benefits of the gospel, ii. 156 ; consists in pardon and sanctification, 157.

By Christ the sum and substance of the gospel, xiii. 252 ; what it is, *ib.* ; sometimes ascribed to God, sometimes to Christ, and sometimes to believers themselves, 254 ; the nature of the foregoing breach, 255 ; the nature of the reconciliation, 257 ; the many blessings we derive from it, *ib.* ; our right to this privilege begins as soon as we believe in Christ, 259 ; how far Christ is concerned in it, and why, 260 ; exhortation to admiration of the love and mercy of God in reconciling the world to himself through Christ, 260.

Implieth in its nature a pardon of sin, xiii. 271 ; pardon of sin very necessary to the end of reconciliation, 273 ; the end of reconciliation is walking in a course of holiness, 274 ; this holiness carried on in a state of love and friendship with God, 275 ; pardoning mercy in Christ the great argument which breedeth and feedeth this love, *ib.* ; is that which is most expressly, directly, and formally in view in the death of Christ, *ib.* ; this was the great difficulty, how sin might be remitted, 276 ; the privilege of the covenant of grace, and the difference between it and the law, 276 ; the necessity of obtaining this benefit, 277 ; the readiness of God to bestow it, 278 ; the excellency of the privilege, 279.

How the benefit of, is applied to us, xiii. 282 ; God would not do us good without our knowledge, therefore would give us notice, *ib.* ; as not without our knowledge, so not against our will and consent, 283 ; not by force, but persuasion, *ib.* ; to gain our consent the word an accommodate instrument, 284 ; it is not enough that the word be written, but it must be preached, 285 ; reasons of this, *ib.* ; to preach

the word to us God hath appointed men of the same mould as ourselves, to whom he hath intrusted the ministry of reconciliation, 286; the love and wisdom of God herein, 287.

Recreation, a christian showeth himself to be a christian in, as well as in his business, vi. 150.

Redeemer, great comfort that there is a, ii. 294; that he is ours, 296; that he liveth, 297; that there is a certainty of persuasion of all this, 299; this comfort applicable in all afflictions, 300.

The person of our, a point of great concernment, to be often thought upon, xviii. 212; his relation to God, *ib.*; and to the universal church, *ib.*

'*Redeeming the time*,' what it means, xix. 359.

REDEMPTION BY CHRIST, i. 417.

Redemption supposeth captivity or bondage, i. 419; this bondage was to sin, Satan, and the wrath of God, 420; a price was paid by way of ransom to God, *ib.*; none fit to give this ransom but Jesus Christ, who was God-man, 421; nothing done by Christ could be a sufficient ransom, unless he had crowned all by laying down his life, and undergoing a bloody and violent death, 422; from this ransom and act of obedience there is a liberty resulting to us, *ib.*; we are not partakers of this liberty till we are in him, and united to him by faith, 423; remission of sins a part, and a principal part, of redemption, *ib.*

A visible effect and demonstration of God's love to us, iii. 147; an ample representation and commendation of the greatness of his love to sinners, *ib.*

Completeness of, x. 172.

Of our bodies, what is meant by, xii. 188; why it is applied to the body, *ib.*

The nature of, explained, xvi. 251; how we are redeemed from the guilt of sin, 254; how from the power of sin, 256; does not exclude mortification, 258.

Final end of, is that we may be presented at the last day glorious in purity and holiness, xix. 487.

Red Sea, the passage of, by the Israelites, a notable pattern of providence, speaking comfort to believers in distress, xv. 4; a type of baptism, 5; showeth the true nature of faith, and commends the excellency of it, 6.

Reformation, neither unjust nor unnecessary, vi. 302; not made rashly and lightly, without trying all good means, and offering to have complaints debated in a free council, 303; separation from Rome still continued on good grounds, 304.

Refreshments should be sanctified, ii. 95.

Refuge, Christ the believer's, xvi. 334; what it implies, 337.

Regenerate, dignity and prerogative of the, iv. 115.

Men may sleep in sin, and need the call to awake to righteousness, xix.

343; the flesh inclines to sleep, *ib.*; their circumstances may cause drowsiness, *ib.*; conversing with spiritual sluggards, *ib.*; dead worship, *ib.*; slumber leads to sleep, *ib.*; not keeping graces in lively and constant exercise, 344; grieving the Spirit, *ib.*; immoderate liberty in worldly things, whether cares or pleasures, *ib.*; evil of, *ib.*; their sleep different from that of the unregenerate, 345.

Regeneration, necessity of, i. 466; excellency of, 467; the fruit of reconciling grace, *ib.*; applied by the almighty power of the Spirit, *ib.*

Cometh from the virtue and influence of Christ's resurrection, iii. 353.

- Regeneration*, God engaged to the work of, merely by his own good pleasure, iv. 116.
 Honourable relation with which it invests us, iv. 118 ; gospel the ordinary means of, 119.
 The habits of all grace brought into the heart by, v. 28.
 Figured by baptism, xi. 185.
 Goeth before pardon, xix. 227.
 What it is, xxi. 301, 315 ; the necessity of it, 303 ; exhortation, 304 ; is the work of God and the effect of the Spirit, 308 ; reasons why exhortation to, is not in vain, 309 ; how we may discover that such a work hath been wrought in us, 320 ; how the word concurrereth to regeneration, 326 ; why the word is used as a means and instrument, 329 ; why the word preached, 332.
- Reign*, personal, of Christ, before his coming to judgment, a fond dream, i. 111.
- Rejoicing* in Christ Jesus the great work of a christian, ii. 30 ; implies an apprehension of the good and benefit which we have by him, *ib.* ; due affections of contentment, joy, love, exultation of heart, following thereupon, 31 ; expression of these affections by open profession of his name, in word and deed, at whatever cost, *ib.* ; absence of, argues that we are not duly sensible of our misery without him, 35 ; nor affected with his great love, and the benefits accruing thereby, 36.
 A christian's reason for, x. 361 ; remembrance of his past estate, *ib.* ; his future hopes, *ib.* ; maintained by graces, faith, hope, obedience, 362 ; by ordinances, the word, prayer, sacraments, meditation, *ib.*
 In God, in what it consists, xvii. 469 ; how this rejoicing must be constant and perpetual, 472 ; reasons why we should be oftener rejoicing in God than usually we do, 476 ; prejudices and objections removed, 479 ; the necessity and utility of this rejoicing, 483 ; directions how to perform this great and necessary duty, 486.
- Relapses* into sin are so frequent because the will is not thoroughly bent against sin, ix. 185 ; our purposes, strivings, and prayers do not come from a heart thoroughly set against sin, *ib.*
- Relation*, God better known by the predicament of, than by his natural properties (Luther), i. 54.
- Religion* dieth by degrees, i. 17.
 One half of, is dying to the world, the other living to God, ii. 65.
 Two things keep alive in the soul—love of God and hearty intent upon the coming of Christ, ii. 235 ; all in effect love, 245.
 In the choice of, we must follow the light of nature and of scripture, iii. 22.
 Christian, foundation of, matter of fact, itself matter of faith, iii. 127.
 None but the gospel, supplies a ground for trust in God, either for common or for saving mercy, iv. 123.
 Glory of, is its purity, iv. 175.
 Whether arms may ever be resorted to in defence of, iv. 330.
 Four notions the ground of, v. 135 ; that God is, and is one ; that God is none of those things which are seen, but something more excellent ; that God hath a care of human affairs, and judgeth with equity ; that the same God is maker of all things without himself, *ib.* ; to these notions are suited the four precepts of the first table of the law, *ib.*
 The repairing of, the best way to safety, v. 421 ; because without God man can do us no good, *ib.* ; with God man can do us no harm, 422 ; having God, we have man too, 423.

Religion, like the pure vestal flame, which, if it went out, was to be kindled only by a sunbeam, v. 435.

Verity of, not to be measured by the greatness of those who are for or against it, vi. 218.

True, is but one, and all other ways false, noxious, and pestilent, vi. 291.

None is fit to be chosen upon sound evidence but the christian, vi. 296 ; it alone revealed by God, *ib.* ; it notably performs all that a man would expect in a religion, and so suits the necessities of man as well as the honour of God, 297 ; draws off the mind from things temporal and earthly, to things celestial and eternal, *ib.* ; establisheth purity of heart and life, 298 ; provideth for peace of conscience, and freedom from perplexing fears, *ib.*

Without self-denial, is christianity of our own making, not of Christ's, vii. 155.

True, the peaceablest and meekest thing that can be, vii. 390.

Confutation of those who say that every man shall be saved in his own, x. 151.

There is no salvation out of the true, x. 425.

The sum of the christian religion is, that ' God hath chosen us to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, whereunto he hath called you by our gospel, to the obtaining the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ ' (2 Thes. ii. 13, 14), xii. 442.

Sinful respect to the benefits and rewards of religion beyrayeth itself in four things—when Christ is loved for worldly advantages, xiii. 152 ; when we have a carnal notion of the true rewards of godliness, *ib.* ; when our respects to benefits are not in the frame wherein God hath set them, 153 ; when we rest in the lowest acts of love, and do not go on to perfection, *ib.*

Not illiterate, xiii. 414.

A friend to human societies, xix. 278.

Must be our recreation, in opposition to tediousness and weariness, our business in opposition to slightness, xx. 105 ; to be regarded as a race or passage from earth to heaven, 107 ; correspondencies, *ib.*

Folly of taking up, on a carnal design of honour, ease, and plenty in the world, xx. 201.

Remembering God supposeth some knowledge of God, vii. 77 ; some faith, 78 ; expresseth a reviving of these thoughts, *ib.* ; is notional and speculative, or affective and practical, *ib.* ; the latter is either constant, *ib.* ; occasional, 79 ; or set and solemn, *ib.* ; is a notable help to godliness, 80 ; doth encourage us, and quicken us to diligence in our work, 81 ; thoughts of God bridle and restrain the madness of our nature, *ib.* ; comfort and revive us in our faintings and discouragements because of the evils of the present world, *ib.* ; exhortation to, *ib.*

Remembrance of God's dealings with his people, and with their enemies, in all ages, a great relief in distress, vii. 48 ; a righteous God governeth the world, *ib.* ; he governs by a law, 49 ; from the beginning of the world the observance of this law bringeth blessings, and the violation of it judgments, *ib.* ; examples of his justice, power, and goodness should comfort us, though we do not perfectly feel the effects of his righteous government, *ib.* ; why his judgments of old are a comfort to us, 50.

Remission, conversion, renovation, or repentance must precede, i. 423.

Renouncing the world, God's children do not contemn the world out of necessity, but choice, xiv. 333.

When we have renounced the world and sin, we must take heed of hankering after these things again, xiv. 335; it is not enough to despise this world, but we must have our hearts carried forth after better things, *ib.*; how we are to renounce the world, 336; how we are to look after better things, 337; those that renounce the world will be no losers, 339.

Renunciation of evil the first thing taught us by grace, xvi. 71.

Repentance, Christ both requires and gives, i. 104.

God's great pleasure in, i. 133.

No merit in, i. 196; God both requireth and giveth, *ib.*

A tormenting but a curing sorrow, ii. 34.

And remission of sin cannot be separated, ii. 204.

Late, is seldom sound, vii. 141.

And humiliation, creation teacheth us a lesson of, xii. 182.

What it is, xiii. 119; must be our main work, 120.

The Jewish rabbi's answer to his disciple as to the fittest time for, xiv. 66.

What it is, xvi. 361; what is offered in scripture to persuade us to, 364; how we may improve the scriptures in this work, 370.

What it is, xvi. 405; what the gospel doth to promote it, *ib.*; the necessity of it, 406.

Is a turning of the whole heart from sin and Satan to serve God in newness of life, or a turning from sin, because God hath forbidden it, to that which is good, because God hath commanded it, xviii. 7; is general, *ib.*; or occasional, *ib.*; is the way of our recovery in order to the enjoyment of the privileges of the new covenant, 8; suitability of the qualification, 9; it is much for the honour of God, *ib.*; the duty of the creature is secured when he is so firmly bound to future obedience, *ib.*; it is most for the comfort of the creature that a stated certain cause or remedy should be appointed for our peace, which may leave the greatest evidence upon our consciences, 10; motives to, *ib.*; means of, 11.

Lieth in a sensible sight of sin and deserved wrath, xviii. 228; such an apprehension of God's mercy in Christ as maketh us turn to him, *ib.*; a grieving for and forsaking of our sins, and giving up ourselves to his service, *ib.*; encouragements to, 231.

Mistakes regarding, xix. 218; not some trouble for sin while we go on to commit it, *ib.*; not some faint resistance or striving against sin, *ib.*; not a hope to cry God mercy on a death-bed, *ib.*

In what it consists, xxi. 263; why this is a special means instituted by God for the cure of wounded souls, 265; directions, 268; the duties required in the work of, 270.

Repetition, Popish, in prayer, condemned, i. 32.

Repetitions vain (*βαπτολογία*), what they are, i. 22; a heathenish custom, 23; inconsistent with the true nature of God, *ib.*; a sin needlessly to affect, *ib.*; two extremes—shortness, out of barrenness or slightness, and length, out of affectation, 24; all are not vain, *ib.*

'*Reproach* of Christ,' meaning of the phrase, xiv. 461.

Reproaches for Christ matter for thanksgiving rather than discontent, iv. 65.

A usual, but yet a great and grievous, affliction to the children of God, vi. 205; such as light upon religion itself, *ib.*; or our own persons, 206; a grievous affliction, 207; upon a natural account, because a

good name is a great blessing, *ib.* ; upon a spiritual account, *ib.* ; why God permits, 209 ; a proper cure for the sin of pride, *ib.* ; for carnal walking, *ib.* ; for censoriousness, 210 ; for trial of faith, *ib.* ; of patience, *ib.* ; of uprightness, 211 ; comfort under, 213.

Reproaches, a usual affliction of the people of God, vi. 410 ; a grievous affliction, 411 ; as against nature, *ib.* ; and against grace, 412.

Permitted to fall upon christians to humble them, vi. 413 ; for the cure of pride, 414 ; careless walking, 415 ; censoriousness, 416 ; and for trial of faith, *ib.* ; mortification, 418 ; patience, *ib.* ; uprightness, 419 ; and for sanctification, *ib.* ; are like soap, which seems to defile the linen it cleanseth, *ib.* ; comforts against, 422.

Reprobation, God's sealed book, iii. 333.

Doctrine of, opened, v. 128 ; it is an eternal decree, *ib.* ; a decree and pre-ordination, not a naked foresight of them that perish, *ib.* ; this decree of God founded in his own good-will and pleasure, *ib.* ; contains preterition and pre-damnation, *ib.* ; the former merely from the good pleasure of God, 129 ; the latter presupposeth consideration of the creature's sin, *ib.* ; those who are passed by, never attain to saving grace, *ib.* ; being left of God, and destitute of saving grace, they freely and of their own accord fall into such sins as render them obnoxious to the just wrath and vengeance of God, *ib.* ; God's decree concerning such persons immutable, *ib.* ; doctrine proved from scripture, *ib.* ; vindication of the doctrine, 130 ; application of the doctrine, 133.

Doctrine of, stated and vindicated, x. 88.

Reproof, brotherly, is a necessary duty, which all are bound to practise as well as they can, xix. 112 ; by the law of nature, which requires us to reduce to the right way those who have gone out of it, 113 ; positively commanded by God, 114 ; is a necessary precept, which we must obey, 115 ; bindeth all, even inferiors to their superiors, 116 ; yet the admonisher should have a calling to it, by some relation between him and the offender, 117 ; distinctions regarding, 119.

Of those that err and go astray from duty to be more in compassion than in passion, xx. 121 ; Paul's example in, *ib.*

Reproofs must be managed with compassion and holy grief, v. 357 ; must be administered gently to the ignorant and seduced, *ib.* ; to those that slip of infirmity, 358 ; to the afflicted in conscience, *ib.* ; to those that err in smaller matters, *ib.* ; to the tractable, and those of whom we have any hope, *ib.* See *Severity*.

Resignation of ourselves to God, signs of, i. 55 ; when we choose and cleave to him as our all-sufficient portion, *ib.* ; when we set apart ourselves to his use, *ib.*

Of ourselves to God, motions to, vii. 445 ; we owe ourselves to God, and therefore should give ourselves up to him, *ib.* ; God offers himself to us, and it is reasonable we should give ourselves to him, *ib.* ; there is no such enjoyment as in giving ourselves up to God, 446 ; we cannot give other things to him unless we give ourselves, *ib.* ; it is our honour to be in relation to him, *ib.*

Of ourselves into Christ's hands should be whole and absolute, x. 214 ; must be an advanced act, 215 ; must still be accompanied with some confidence, *ib.* ; there must be a care of obedience, *ib.* ; must arise from a chief care of our souls, *ib.* ; must be of the body as well as the soul, 216.

To the will of God, the nature of it, xxi. 442 ; the grounds of it, 443 ;

the opposites of it, *ib.* ; argueth humility and trust, 444 ; means to attain, 447.

Resistance of the devil must not be faint and cold, i. 330 ; must be a thorough resistance of all sin, *ib.* ; must not be for a while, but continued, 331 ; arguments to persuade to, *ib.* ; graces that enable us in, 332.

Resolution in a course of godliness, a great advantage to come to, vi. 71.

In a course of godliness, good to engage us to come to God, vi. 335 ; to keep to God, *ib.* ; to be hearty in his service, *ib.* ; must be of the heart rather than of the tongue, 336 ; not weak and broken, but full, *ib.* ; not rash, but serious, *ib.* ; thorough, absolute, and peremptory, *ib.* ; present, not future, *ib.* ; made in a sense of our own insufficiency, and with dependence upon Christ, not in a confidence of our own strength, 337.

To serve God must be of the heart rather than the tongue, viii. 92 ; must be full, *ib.* ; serious, 93 ; thorough, absolute, perfect, *ib.* ; for the present, not the future, *ib.* ; must be according to the covenant of grace, *ib.* ; motives for keeping, *ib.*

Respect of persons, one sort of, is right and proper, iv. 180 ; is vicious when the judgment is blinded by some external glory or appearance, so that we cannot discern truth or right, *ib.* ; having the faith of Christ in, having too great a care of outward regards in church administrations, 181 ; over-esteeming the rich and debasing the poor, *ib.* ; in religious matters is a sin, *ib.* ; ways in which we may be guilty of, *ib.* ; by making external things, not religion, the ground of our respect and affection, *ib.* ; when we do not carry out the measure and proportion of affection according to the measures and proportions of grace, *ib.* ; when we can easily make greatness a cover for baseness, whereas it is its aggravation, 182 ; when we yield religious respects for advantage, *ib.* ; when church administrations are not carried on with an indifferent and even hand to rich and poor, *ib.* ; when we contemn the truths of God because of the persons that bring them to us, 183.

Of persons, sinful, what it is, xiv. 23 ; cannot be imagined of God, *ib.*

Of persons, is preference of one before another for something that is extrinsical, xviii. 408 ; as bodily gifts, strength, or beauty, *ib.* ; mental gifts, learning, prudence, *ib.* ; estate, rank, or quality, *ib.* ; nation or country, 409 ; externals in religion, *ib.* ; differences in lesser things, *ib.* ; denied of God in his government, 410 ; in his gifts of grace, *ib.*

Rest, reward of the faithful represented under the nature of, xx. 224 ; in allusion to the rest of Canaan, *ib.* ; to the sabbatic rest, *ib.* ; in opposition to the tedious conflicts which we have here about our spiritual estate and condition before God, 225 ; in opposition to whatever was grievous and burdensome in our duties, *ib.* ; in opposition to the calamities and troubles of the present life, *ib.* ; is a felicitating rest, *ib.* ; a holy and religious rest, 227 ; is for soul and body, 229.

Restraining grace, God may bridle the hearts of men while yet they are unrenewed, xii. 58.

Restraints, God puts upon the unconverted, that they are not able to do the evil that naturally they would, iii. 309.

Resurrection of the body, argument for, i. 368.

Of Christ, the evidence and assurance of a christian's happy resurrection, i. 468 ; shows his victory over sin and over death, 471 ; is the great prop and foundation of our faith, 473.

Resurrection, certainty of, the foundation of all godliness, i. 470; Christ's makes ours possible, *ib.*; easy, *ib.*; certain and necessary, 471; of the faithful shall be blessed and glorious, 472; considerations to help the belief and hope of, 474; it is a work of omnipotency, *ib.*; God's justice is involved in it, *ib.*; and his unchangeable covenant love, which inclines him to seek the dust of his confederates, *ib.*; the redemption of Christ extends to the bodies of the saints, 475; honour is put on their bodies now, *ib.*

Of Christ, efficient cause of, iii. 348; his own prayer, *ib.*; God's power put forth upon his prayer, *ib.*; the power of his own Godhead, *ib.*; final causes or ends of, 349; the chiefest ground of comfort to christians in the scriptures, *ib.*; all spiritual enemies subdued, *ib.*; all spiritual blessings procured for us, 350; confirmeth the heart in the person of Christ, 351; and his office, *ib.*; as an evidence, a clearing and justifying of his merits, 352; a pledge or earnest of the raising of our bodies, *ib.*; as an influence, our life depending on his life, 353.

Of Christ, due consideration of, doth mightily promote the spiritual life in us, xi. 221; advantage we have by it, *ib.*; evidenceth the verity of the christian religion, *ib.*; showeth us the perfection of his satisfaction, 222; is a visible demonstration of the truth of the resurrection and life to come, 223; it is by his resurrection that Christ is the cause of our life, *ib.*; his life after his resurrection is a pattern of ours, both as to the immortality and perfection of it, 224.

The condition on which it is promised, xii. 18; the certainty of its performance, 19; the bodies of believers shall be raised at the last day through the inhabitation of the Holy Spirit, *ib.*; why this inhabitation is the ground of a glorious resurrection, 20; is a work of divine power, *ib.*; this divine power belongeth in common to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, *ib.*; they all concur in a way proper to them, 21.

There is something special in Christ's resurrection above his death which hath an influence upon our justification, xii. 368; it is a proof of the truth of his person and office, 369; a token of the acceptance of Christ as our mediator and surety, 370; and a victory over death, *ib.*; peculiar benefits derived from, 371.

The respect that is between, and spiritual life, xiii. 203.

Of Christ, power of, what it is, xx. 59; is the Lord's work in our regeneration, *ib.*

Difference between that of the righteous and the wicked, xx. 62; a self-denying believer earnest to obtain the former, 63; blessedness of the saints in, 64. See *Saints*, blessedness of, &c.

Is a work of omnipotency, xx. 173; required by the justice of God, 174; by his unchanging covenant love, *ib.*; by the redemption of Christ, which extendeth to the bodies of saints, *ib.*; by the honour which is put upon the bodies of saints, 175.

Retaliation, God often uses, paying sinners in their own coin, i. 127.

Returning to God, a people gone off from the ways of God are not easily brought to a sense of the necessity of returning to him, xv. 317; this is true of mankind in general, of nations, and of particular persons, *ib.*; the shifts men use to divert a particular acknowledgment of sin, 320; it is but a notional, and not a real repentance, when we profess to return to God and know not wherein we should return, 323.

Revelation, not rational to expect new, now the canon and rule of faith is closed, iii. 25.

- Revelation*, necessity of, iii. 131 ; possible means of, *ib.* ; necessary to be committed to writing, 132 ; both a safe and a full rule to walk by, *ib.*
- Book of, contains as many mysteries as words, v. 415.
- Special, desire after, a temptation to be resisted, vii. 426.
- Necessity of, x. 427 ; for the honour of God, that he should give man a rule, *ib.* ; for the safety of religion, that fallen man might not obtrude fancies on his neighbours, 428 ; in respect of man, to repair the defects of nature, *ib.* ; to satisfy the desires of nature, 429.
- God hath plainly revealed his mind concerning the duty of the creature by the light of nature and the word, xv. 395 ; the revelation of God's mind in the word consists of two parts, the moral and the evangelical, 396 ; whatever God hath so revealed is good, 397 ; several sorts of goodness distinguished, *ib.* ; in the revelation of our duty God exacteth nothing of us but what is good, proved from the design and structure of the christian religion, 398 ; God only requireth from us that which is amiable, pleasant, profitable, and honourable, 402.
- The coming of Christ so called, xx. 234 ; reasons, 235 ; approach of, 236 ; will bring his mighty angels with him, 240 ; terrible manner of, in flaming fire, 245.
- Revenge*, sweet to nature, contrary to grace, i. 185.
- Is often disguised as zeal for God, i. 236.
- And injury differ only in order, vi. 211.
- Christians are never to pray for, xix. 20.
- Revival* of decayed religion, means of, v. 435 ; united and earnest prayer, *ib.* ; godly and peaceable walking before God and man, *ib.* ; stirring up ourselves, and provoking one another to more forwardness, 436 ; delighting in, and waiting on, the powerful ministry of the word, *ib.* ; by the ministry Christ must still be preached, 437 ; humbling doctrines must be duly pressed, 438 ; the duties of relations to be specially urged, *ib.* ; peace to be so compounded with purity, that neither may lose its due respect, *ib.* ; by the magistrates, 439 ; being holy and godly in their own persons, *ib.* ; giving encouragement to a godly ministry, *ib.* ; heartily establishing a holy government in the church, *ib.* ; countenancing godly persons, *ib.* ; honouring and sweetening religion by some release of the people's burdens, 440.
- Reward*, not a sin to desire, v. 352.
- Of faithful servants, is not only verbal commendation, but real remuneration, ix. 454 ; preferment and advancement to a higher place in the family, *ib.* ; the joy of their Lord, 455.
- God's people will have great cause to wonder at their final, x. 67 ; at the reason alleged, *ib.* ; at the greatness of Christ's condescension, 68 ; at the greatness of the reward, *ib.*
- Rewards* and punishments, how far they may be reflected on as incentives in duties of religion, xiii. 459.
- Rich*, with whom Christ's grave was made, was Joseph of Arimathea, iii. 363.
- Men usually persecutors or oppressors, iv. 202 ; others have the will, but have no power, *ib.* ; and riches exalt the mind and efferate it, *ib.* ; wealth often leads to pride, *ib.* ; the gospel is distasteful to rich men, because it puts all on the same level, *ib.*
- Should help the poor, reasons why, xvi. 477.
- The difficulty of their salvation, xvii. 49 ; this difficulty ariseth because of the duties required of them in common with others, 49 ; so also because more is required of them than others, 53 ; reasons why this should be much pressed and seriously thought of, 55.

- Rich*, to have a will to be, bewrayed by intention or scope, xviii. 189 ; and by industrious prosecution, 190 ; danger of, 191.
- Riches* compared to a flock of wild birds, which perch in a man's field to night, and are gone to-morrow, i. 152.
- Not altogether inconsistent with christianity, iv. 67 ; in themselves are God's blessings, 68.
- Hard to possess, without sin, iv. 399.
- Given by God as a means to escape wrath, by a liberal and charitable distribution of them to his glory ; should not be used as a means to treasure up wrath, iv. 407.
- What are true, vi. 133 ; gracious experiences or testimonies of the favour of God, *ib.* ; knowledge, *ib.* ; faith, *ib.* ; good works, 134 ; why these are riches, *ib.*
- And honour do not hurt faith in themselves where there is a gracious heart to manage them, xiv. 407.
- It is a hard matter for such as abound in, to enter the kingdom of heaven, xvii. 26 ; the point explained, *ib.* ; whence this difficulty ariseth, 29 ; are apt to breed atheism, *ib.* ; keep men from being broken-hearted, 30 ; make men take up their rest here, and sit down satisfied with the world as their chiefest good, 31.
- Trusting in, there is such a sin shown from scripture, xvii. 37 ; it is a very common and secret sin, 38 ; the heinousness of it, 39 ; the mischievousness of its effects, 40 ; signs and discoveries of it, 42 ; remedies against it, 45.
- Whether we may desire and pray for, xviii. 194.
- Riddle*, scriptural ; before we are able to speak, we speak lies, vi. 87.
- Right*, a gracious way of, established between God and his people, according to which they may expect mercies, viii. 371 ; understood by comparison of the two covenants, *ib.* See *Covenants*, two.
- Righteous*, none of the sons of Adam are, before the throne of God, xviii. 4.
- Righteousness*, superficial, keeps men from Christ, ii. 53.
- Of Christ, threefold, iii. 444 ; essential and divine as he is God, *ib.* ; absolute and personal as he is mediator and God-man, *ib.* ; dispensation and relation wrought out for us, 445 ; in his personal, two things remarkable—the sincerity of his spirit, and the innocency of his conversation, *ib.* ; imputation of, denied by Papists and Socinians, 447 ; of the righteousness of his active obedience, denied by others, 448 ; interest in, cometh by union, *ib.*
- A care of, bringeth peace with it, iv. 323.
- Of God, put for the whole perfection of the divine essence, vi. 423.
- God's promise a word of, viii. 264 ; because God hath in his promises pawned his truth with the creature, and so given us a holdfast upon him, *ib.* ; because none that depended on God's word were ever disappointed, 265 ; because God standeth much on the credit of his word, *ib.*
- Of God, what it is, viii. 438 ; sometimes put for the whole rectitude and perfection of the divine nature, *ib.* ; particular, with respect to his dealings with the creature, especially man, *ib.* ; as absolute lord, his righteousness is nothing but the absolute and free motion of his will concerning the estate of all creatures, *ib.* ; as governor and judge, his righteousness consists in giving all their due according to his law, 439 ; his governing justice is legislative or judicial, 440 ; judicial is remunerative, *ib.* ; or vindictive, 441 ; proved from the perfection of the divine nature, 442 ; from his office as governor and judge of the

- world, *ib.* ; from his giving Jesus Christ that he might be known to be a just God, *ib.* ; from the divine nature infused into us, 443.
- Righteousness*, all righteousness, and nothing but righteousness, to be found in the word of God, ix. 261 ; no virtue which it commendeth not, no duty which it commandeth not, no vice which it condemneth not, *ib.* ; the more the gospel is preached, the more righteousness is spread in the world, 262.
- Of God in the condemnation of the world, though they remain in their blindness, xi. 114 ; because God hath done enough, *ib.* ; they have not done their part, 115 ; in the reward of the righteous, 116 ; engaged by Christ's merits, *ib.* ; by God's promise, 117 ; by positive ordinances, *ib.*
- In what sense it may be taken, xiii. 307 ; of Christ, the meritorious cause of our being made the righteousness of God in him, 311.
- Arguments to quicken us to seek after, xiii. 487 ; the fruit and benefits of, 488 ; means, 489.
- Of Christ, application of, to ourselves a means of justification, xiv. 3 ; how to be applied, *ib.* ; to justify is not to make righteous, but to account or accept as, 9 ; none accounted righteous but those that are indeed so, *ib.* ; every righteousness will not serve the turn, but such only as will satisfy the justice of God, *ib.* ; God's justice can never be satisfied till the law is satisfied, 10 ; the law can never be satisfied but by active and passive obedience, *ib.* ; this satisfaction only to be had in Christ, *ib.* ; there is no having this righteousness in Christ but by imputation, 11 ; there is no imputation but by union, *ib.* ; there is no union but by faith, *ib.*
- By faith opposite to the righteousness of the law, and to any act, virtue, or grace of our own, xiv. 217 ; is called a heritage because of its dignity and excellence, 218 ; to note the largeness of our portion and spiritual estate, *ib.* ; to show the nature of our tenure, 220 ; to show the condition of our present state, 221 ; our title to this heritage is evidenced by faith, 222.
- Or justice, the nature of it, xvi. 143 ; we should give every one his due, *ib.* ; do injury to no man, 144 ; make restitution, 147 ; bear injuries with patience, 148 ; in many cases not demand our own extreme right, *ib.* ; do as we would be done by, 149 ; public good to be preferred before private, *ib.* ; according to our power be useful to others, 150 ; the reason we have to look after the grace of righteousness, 151.
- Of faith is the obedience and death of Christ apprehended by faith, xviii. 217.
- Its office, xix. 268 ; to seek the peace and welfare of the communities in which we live, 269 ; to give every man his due, *ib.* ; fidelity in our relations, *ib.* ; christianity advanceth these things to a greater height, 270.
- All unconverted men have some counterfeit, wherein they please themselves, xx. 6.
- Superficial, keepeth men from Christ, and maketh their conviction and conversion more difficult, xx. 10.
- Paul's own, was by the moral law, xx. 42 ; and the ceremonial law, 43 ; this he disclaimed, *ib.* ; that which he affected was of the new covenant, *ib.* ; founded upon Christ's obedience unto death, 44 ; applied by faith and new obedience, *ib.* ; in the day of judgment, which will be a day of exact search and trial, none can appear before God with safety and comfort without some righteousness, 45 ;

righteousness by the law of works we cannot have, 46 ; the loss of legal righteousness we cannot repair, *ib.* ; Christ by his sacrifice and ransom has provided a righteousness, *ib.* ; this he dispenses on his own terms, 47 ; these terms are the new law of grace, *ib.* ; repentance, faith, and new obedience, 48.

Righteousness, what it is, xxi. 33 ; what it is to do righteousness, *ib.* ; what it is to be righteous, 34 ; in the way of sanctification, he, and he only, is the upright christian that doeth righteousness, *ib.* ; reasons why, *ib.*

Of justification, what it is, xxi. 36 ; considered as to the threatenings and promises, 37 ; the respect this righteousness hath to the life of holiness, 38.

RITUALS, MORALS BEFORE, ii. 5.

Ritual, without serious devotion, but knowing Christ after the flesh, xiii. 226.

Romans, overcome in many battles, but not in any war, so christians, i. 177.

Rome, church of, is it a church of Christ ? iii. 40.

State of, that necessitated the reformation, vi. 305.

Root out of a dry ground, refers not to Christ's coming from the virgin's womb, but from the decayed family of David, iii. 221.

Royal law, so called, either because it is the law of God, the king of kings, and of Christ, the king of saints, or because of its excellence, iv. 206 ; hath a kingly author, 207 ; requires noble work, fit for kings, *ib.* ; there is royal wages, *ib.*

Ruin, speedy, a special way to save a church and people from, is the repairing of decayed godliness, v. 419.

Rulers, religious, and well affected to religion, a precious gift of God, vi. 219.

Running the way of God's commandments, what it signifies, vi. 338.

Sabaoth, Lord of, equivalent to Lord of hosts, iv. 410.

Sabbath-breaking a mark of ungodliness, xvi. 158.

Sabbath-day, a feast-day for souls, vi. 270.

Sabbath, rare to delight in, xviii. 152.

SACRAMENT, PREPARATIVE SERMON FOR RECEIVING THE, xv. 329.

SACRAMENT, SERMONS ON THE, xv. 342.

SACRAMENT SERMON, xv. 427.

SACRAMENT SERMON ON LUKE xxii. 20, xv. 475.

SACRAMENT, THE ENDS OF THE, SERMON ON, xv. 487.

Sacrament, in those times in which there is much care had about the right celebration of a sacrament, there are yet many that are unworthy, xv. 333 ; reasons of this, *ib.* ; the need of humbling ourselves for sacrament sins, 334 ; exhortation to pastors and people, 335 ; how a man is said to be worthy, 336 ; unworthy receivers described, *ib.* ; no cause why we should abstain from the use of ordinances because of wicked men communicating, 338 ; reasons why so many rush upon the ordinances notwithstanding their unpreparedness, 339 ; the heinousness of unworthy receiving, 340 ; the grievousness of the punishment, 341.

Sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper respect the whole tenor of the covenant of grace, v. 465 ; on God's part, a sign and a seal ; on ours, a badge and a bond, *ib.* ; give us great advantages above the word and bare proposal of the covenant, 466.

- Sacraments*, a solemn means of our communion with the death of Christ, xi. 163. See *Communion*, &c.
- And sacrifice, difference between, xiii. 444.
- Sacrifice* of Christ, its value commended by the dignity of his person, the greatness of his suffering, and the merit of his obedience, i. 431.
- Every christian is, ii. 223; mortification is the salt wherewith it must be salted, 226.
- Of Christ, the only true satisfactory and expiatory sacrifice for sin, iii. 387; because it was of God's own ordaining, *ib.*; other sacrifices but types of it, *ib.*; no other thing could be satisfactory and expiatory, *ib.*; it complied with God's design of discovering the glory of the Trinity, his love to the souls of men, and the Spirit's efficacy, 388; and of magnifying his justice and displeasure against sin, *ib.*
- Instituted because of sin, xi. 427; the victims were substituted for the offender, and died for him, *ib.*; the offerings presented to God in our stead were consumed and destroyed, *ib.*; effects of, respect God, *ib.*; or sin, 428; or the sinner, *ib.*
- Of Cain and Abel, the occasion of, xiii. 437; the warrant of, 439; wherein lay the difference between, 442.
- Christ's death hath the true notion and full virtue of, xviii. 79; the new covenant made and confirmed by virtue of this, 80.
- Christ's, accepted of God, xix. 182; the greatness of his sufferings, *ib.*; from the dignity of his person, *ib.*; the merit of his obedience, *ib.*; God hath himself declared it, 183; by his resurrection, *ib.*
- Sacrifices*, what was figured in the old, must be spiritually performed in the duty of prayer and praise, viii. 109; brokenness of heart, *ib.*; eyeing of the Redeemer, *ib.*; renewing of the covenant, 110.
- Legal, were glasses to represent their misery, and the debt contracted by sin, xviii. 81; were figures of the mercy of God and the merit of Christ, 82; were obligations to duty, *ib.*
- Sad*, reproof of those who are always, x. 359; makes unfit for duty, darkeneth the ways of God, and brings a scandal upon Christ's spiritual kingdom, 360.
- SAINT'S TRIUMPH OVER DEATH, ii. 439.
- Saints*, a praying people, i. 12.
- Their privileges and benefits in the world to come, i. 374; freedom from all evil, *ib.*; enjoyment of all good, 375; their glorified bodies, *ib.*
- We must be here, or we shall never be hereafter, v. 33.
- In what sense they shall judge the world, v. 293.
- Cannot give grace, ix. 383; have not a sufficiency for themselves and us too, *ib.*; have no power to transfuse and put over their righteousness to another, 384; nor authority and commission to do so, *ib.*
- Permitted so often to fall that they may stand the firmer, x. 337.
- Of all places and ages make but one perfect body, xi. 72.
- They only are acquainted with the operations of the Spirit, xii. 254; they only are fit to converse with God in prayer, *ib.*
- All believers are or ought to be, xix. 194; some are so only by external dedication and profession, *ib.*; others by internal regeneration, 195.
- Blessedness of in the resurrection is complete felicity in body and soul, xx. 64; why the body shows the felicity, *ib.*; because the man cannot be happy till the body be raised, *ib.*; the body had its share of the work, and shall have of the reward, 65; the estate of those

who die will not be worse than that of those who are changed, *ib.* ; in the heavenly state there are objects which only the bodily senses can discern, *ib.* ; as Christ's body is in heaven, so shall those of his people be, *ib.* ; felicity of the soul in the vision of God and the likeness of God, *ib.* ; perfection of justification, adoption, and redemption, 66 ; means of attaining, *ib.* ; holiness, dying to sin, and living to God, 67 ; sufferings, 68 ; rather than fail of, we must submit to any means which God hath appointed, 69.

Saints, their examples set before us for our imitation, xx. 110 ; those who lived in former ages, *ib.* ; their examples suited to persons of all degrees, and for all christian ends, 111 ; show that there is nothing impossible in our duty, and nothing so difficult but can be overcome by Christ's help, *ib.* ; confirm by experience the truth and reality of our hopes, 112 ; those now living, *ib.* ; they are in our eye, *ib.* ; greater provocation in their examples, 113 ; their circumstances are more like our own, *ib.* ; how to be imitated, *ib.* ; how far, 114 ; why, 115.

In glory, all have the same felicity in substance, but not in degree, xx. 233.

Glory reserved for, at the day of judgment, xx. 265 ; absolution pronounced by the judge on the throne, *ib.* ; a participation of judicial power, *ib.* ; Christ's public owning of them before God and his angels, 266 ; in the immortality, charity, and spirituality of their bodies, 267 ; the full satisfaction of their souls, *ib.*

And believers, identical, xx. 271.

Salt, wherewith the christian or a sacrifice is salted, is the grace of the Holy Spirit, by which sin is subdued and prevented, ii. 226 ; fitness of the comparison, *ib.* ; necessity of, 228.

Salting with fire and with salt, what it means, ii. 222.

Salvation, what it is, ii. 152 ; what the right of believers is to, 153 ; what the faith is that giveth a title to, 154.

Beginning and first cause of, the mere love of God, ii. 340.

Every well of, hath its proper stream, iii. 353

Business of man's, transacted by way of covenant between God and Christ, iii. 376.

Of sinners, Jesus Christ taketh an infinite contentment and satisfaction in, iii. 408 ; pleased and entertained himself in the thought of it before the world was, *ib.* ; the end and aim of his coming into the world, 409 ; his rejoicing in heaven to see the work thrive, *ib.* ; shall be his triumph and his joy when he cometh to judge the world, *ib.* ; nature of this satisfaction, *ib.*

We are not only to take care of our own, but of that of others, iv. 474.

None but Christ, iv. 479 ; none can be saved by him but those that know him and believe in him, *ib.* ; and that according to the tenor of the scriptures, *ib.* ; lesser differences in and about the doctrine of the scriptures, though consistent with the main tenor of salvation, yet if held up out of bye-ends, or against conscience, are damnable, *ib.* ; gross negligence, or not taking pains to know better, is equivalent to reluctance or standing out against light, 480.

Course of, first rise and spring in election, breaketh out in effectual calling, floweth down in the channels of faith and holiness, till it lose itself in the ocean of everlasting glory, v. 18.

- Salvation*, common, wherein all saints are concerned, v. 100; all chosen by the same grace, *ib.*; all have the same Christ, *ib.*; all equally justified by the same righteous one, *ib.*; all by the same faith, *ib.*; all under the same rule and direction, 101; all one in one mystical body, ministering supplies to one another, *ib.*; beware of impotency, 102.
- Of God, the fruit of his mercy, effectually dispensed and applied to his people according to his word, vi. 439.
- Eternal, the ground of, is mercy, or pity of the creature's misery, vi. 444; dispensed according to the word, 445.
- Is put for temporal deliverance, for the exhibition of Christ in the flesh, for the benefits we have by Christ on this side heaven, for everlasting life, vii. 349.
- Far from the wicked, ix. 146; temporal, *ib.*; because all outward things are at God's disposal, *ib.*; it belongeth to God, as judge of the world, to see that it be well with the good and ill with the bad, *ib.*; in this covenant, declared in his word, he promiseth temporal happiness to the godly, and threateneth misery and punishment to the wicked, 147; objection stated, *ib.*; and answered, 148; eternal, 150; reasons, *ib.*; the inseparable connection between privileges and duties, *ib.*; the perfect contrariety between the temper of wicked men and this salvation, 151; they care not for God, who is the author of salvation, *ib.*; they slight Christ, who is the procurer of salvation, *ib.*; they despise the word, in which we have the offer of this salvation, 152; they refuse the beginnings of salvation, *ib.*
- None can and do rightly hope for, but those that keep the commandments, ix. 224; because God hath enjoined means and end, and offered the promises with a qualification, *ib.*; because true hope is operative, and hath an influence this way, 225; because there is no such thing to damp hope and weaken our confidence as sin, *ib.*; because our hope is increased by our diligence in the holy life, *ib.*; none do and can keep the commandments but those who hope for salvation, 226.
- Longing for God's temporal, implieth a sense of our impotency, ix. 277; dependence upon God's fatherly care and powerful providence, 278; holy desires vented in prayer, *ib.*; waiting God's leisure, and submission for the kind, time, and means of, *ib.*; reasons and encouragements for, 279; God hath bound himself by covenant as our God, *ib.*; he is able to make his covenant good through his power, *ib.*; wisdom, 280; and love, *ib.*
- Longing for God's eternal, is the duty and property of God's children, ix. 285; reasons, from the object, *ib.*; the subject, 286; the end and use of this longing, 287; the state and condition of the present world, 288; motives to long for, *ib.*; means to, 290.
- How far all are bound to hope for, xii. 203; no salvation without hope, *ib.*
- Of infants, xiv. 81.
- None can hope for, but those that keep God's way, xv. 15; none can keep God's way but those that hope for salvation, 16.
- By grace, the greatness of it, xvi. 59; its completeness, 60; excellency, *ib.*; the judgment on those that despise the offer, 62; directions, 63; reasons why salvation is said to appear to all men, 65.
- The difficulty of, xvii. 63; wherein the difficulty consists, 64; how this should be reflected on, 68; why, 69; is impossible for a man

of his own natural strength, 73 ; reasons why, 74 ; those who have a deep sense of their impotency and carnality should encourage themselves by reflecting on the power of God's grace, 79.

Salvation consisteth of redemption and conversion, the one by way of impetration, the other of application, xviii. 161 ; was Christ's great end and business, 162 ; excellence and reality of, 166 ; thankfulness for, the great duty of christians, 168.

Christ's, is both privative and positive, xix. 453 ; both temporal and eternal, *ib.* ; eternal is begun here in justification and sanctification, 454 ; is not typical, but real, *ib.* ; accompanied by satisfaction, merit, and power, 456.

Means of, xix. 478 ; causes and means of, must not be separated from one another, nor confounded with one another, *ib.*

The whole business of, floweth from the pleasure of God's goodness, xx. 284 ; and is accomplished by his almighty power, 286.

The causes and means of, xx. 303 ; the love of God, *ib.* ; the satisfaction of Christ, *ib.* ; the operation of the Spirit, *ib.* ; the conversion of the sinner, 304 ; the word and sacraments, *ib.* ; these must not be confounded one with another, *ib.* ; nor separated, 305.

We best promote our own, in promoting the glory of Christ, xx. 332.

The effect of grace, xx. 342 ; mercy and grace distinguished, *ib.* ; is ascribed both to God and Christ, 343 ; the causes, means, and end, 344.

Sanctification begins with mortification, ii. 214.

Not only an external dedication, but an internal and real change, iii. 106 ; connection between, and belief of the truth, 107 ; of cause and effect, *ib.* ; of concomitancy, *ib.* ; of subordination, 108.

A better evidence of God's favour than worldly comforts, viii. 416 ; a greater privilege than justification, 417.

Is a setting apart by God and by ourselves, x. 411 ; a purging by degrees, and making free from sin, 412 ; endowing with God's image and likeness, *ib.* ; should be chiefly minded in prayer, *ib.* ; because of the excellency of it, *ib.* ; because God aimeth at it in all his dispensations, *ib.* ; God alone can sanctify, 415 ; we cannot ourselves, *ib.* ; the means cannot without God, *ib.* ; means of, 418. See *Truth*.

Of believers is the setting them apart for the Lord, to glorify him in all holy conversation and godliness, xi. 10 ; is in the truth, *ib.* ; for the truth, 11 ; through the truth, *ib.*

Christ came for our, as well as for our justification, xi. 431 ; proved from the constant draft and tenor of the scriptures, *ib.* ; the plaster else would not be as broad as the sore, 432 ; Christ's undertaking would not else answer the trouble of a true penitent, nor remove our sorest burden, *ib.* ; to make way for the work of the Spirit, 433 ; for the glory of God, *ib.*

Of heart, motives to seek after, xii. 26.

Grace of, must be exercised, preserved, and increased, xii. 64.

Requisite in order to glory, xii. 461.

Must be carefully distinguished, but not separated, from justification, xv. 65 ; reasons why sanctification is the greater privilege of the two, 66 ; is the end of justification, as glorification is the end of sanctification, 67 ; the beginning of the life of glory, *ib.* ; a real moral perfection, *ib.* ; the work of faith with respect to it, 69.

An error to think that it hath no influence upon our comfort and

peace, xviii. 414; true nature of that which giveth us hopes of acceptance with God, 416.

Sanctification is meritorious, applicatory, practical, xviii. 439; consists in consecration and purification, *ib.*; Christ the author of, 441; by his merit, *ib.*; by his Spirit, *ib.*; by blessing his word and sacraments to this end and purpose, 442.

Sanctifying of God the great duty of christians, i. 89.

Is setting apart and dedicating, v. 26; cleansing, with its positive act, renewing and adorning with grace, 27; is habitual or actual, 28; habitual, wrought in the heart, is thorough, but not full, *ib.*; actual, in the life, thoughts, words, actions, 29; actions sanctified when they are performed on new principles, *ib.*; and for new ends, 30; necessity of, to the people of God, 31; for the honour of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, *ib.*; because of the hopes to which they are called, and the happiness which they expect, 33; counterfeits of, 35; civility, *ib.*; formality, 36; restraining grace, 37; common grace, 38; God the author of, 39.

Of himself, Christ's, xi. 6; he separated himself from all other ends and uses but that of his work of redemption, *ib.*; as God, he fitted himself for the work, 7; sanctified and consecrated himself as a sin-offering, that we might be sanctified and consecrated as a thank-offering, 10.

Sanhedrim, account of the, v. 259.

Sarah and Hagar, types of the covenants of grace and works, xii. 104.

Sardis, church of, its state described by its repute and renown among other churches, v. 417; by the judgment of Christ, 418.

Satan—see *Kingdom* of sin and Satan.

Has a hand in all sins, i. 206; but some are purely of his suggestion, *ib.*; his sin in tempting must be distinguished from ours in consenting, 208.

Assaults the children of God by stirring up their enemies to persecute them, and by inflaming their lusts and corruptions, i. 235.

Strives to dissuade from good by representing the impossibility, trouble, and small necessity of it, and to persuade to evil by profit, pleasure, necessity, i. 266; fits his temptations to men's conditions, 268.

May have some power allowed him by God over the bodies of God's people, i. 281; to carry them from one place to another, *ib.*; in possession, *ib.*; in disease, *ib.*; yet this power limited, *ib.*; he seeks this power in order to draw them into sin, 282; his contrary temptations, *ib.*

His promises are false and fallacious, i. 309; and have a spiteful condition annexed, 310; never maketh a proffer to our advantage, but to our loss and hurt, *ib.*; how to counterwork, 311; by mortification and growing dead to the world, *ib.*; by considering how little substance and reality is in the world's fair appearance, *ib.*; by opening the eye of faith, *ib.*; considering the falsity of his promises, 312; and the sufficiency and stability of God's promises, *ib.*

Had a permitted power over Christ, and was the prime instrumental cause of his sufferings, i. 324; though he lost the victory, he retained his malice, *ib.*

Cannot overcome us without our consent, i. 331.

Usually a libertine; when he professeth to be a saint, will be stricter than Christ himself, ii. 96.

- Satan* hath no power over death as a lord, but as an executioner, ii. 296.
 His grand design to lessen our opinion of God's goodness, ii. 342.
 Sometimes dresses up sins in the form and appearance of duty, at other times represents duty in the garb of sin, iv. 206.
 Hath a great hand and stroke in all sins, iv. 361; though a proud spirit, he careth not for praise or dispraise, he aims at homage and obedience, *ib.*; duty of christians to resist, *ib.*; how he works on men and insinuates his temptations, 362; resistance of, 363; by faith, prayer, sobriety, watchfulness, sincerity, *ib.*; arguments to resist, 364; resistance may not be immediately, but will be ultimately, successful, 365.
 Instigateth our enemies, and inflameth our lusts, x. 402.
 His enmity with Christ, xvii. 245; his power, 247, 251; his work, 247; how Christ overcomes the power of, 252; how far his head was crushed in the conflict with Christ, 255.
 The various ways God's people may be vexed by, xvii. 399; special reasons why the devil is more terrible and dangerous than any human power, 400; why God permitteth this, 401; how God bridles and restrains his rage, 403.
 The enemy and avenger, stilled, xviii. 21; not in respect of his being, *ib.*; or in respect of his malice and enmity, *ib.*; but in regard of his power, *ib.*; enough done by way of merit to break his power, 22; Christ is upon the throne to counteract his working, *ib.*; his throne is in an absolute subjection to the throne of the Mediator, *ib.*; his reign will in time be utterly destroyed, 23; his power over individual man is broken on their conversion, *ib.*; and gradually destroyed, *ib.*; this does not exclude our duty, 24; but secures victory to the striving christian, 25.
- Satan's* weapons against us are either subtle wiles or fiery darts, i. 227; he suiteth every distemper of our souls with a proper diet or food, *ib.*; he covers his base designs with plausible pretences, *ib.*; hath only weapons offensive, the christian both offensive and defensive, but none for the back, 228.
 Buffetings, many times better for us than a condition free from temptation, vii. 259.
- Satiety* of the word appears by seldom attendance upon it, vi. 189; by fond affectation of luscious strains, 190; by affection to novel opinions and erroneous conceits, *ib.*; by looking for all the virtue of religion from notions and opinions, and not from Christ, 191; by worldly projects, *ib.*
- Satisfaction* made by Christ, three parties must consent to—God, Christ, and the sinner, i. 174.
 Of the good man, how from himself (Prov. xiv. 16), xviii. 472; not to the exclusion of God, but of the world and external things, *ib.*
 Christ's, completeness of, xix. 36; from the dignity of the person satisfying, *ib.*; from the unity of the mediatory office, 37; from the greatness of the punishment imposed on Christ, *ib.*; from God's approbation of his person and sacrifice, *ib.*; comfort from, to the poor sinner, 39.
- SAVING FAITH, EXCELLENCY OF, ii. 160.
- Saving* faith, nature of, xv. 8; receives the promise of God with the terms and conditions required by it; the conditions which God requireth are partly belief in the promise, partly obedience to the command annexed, 9; lest we deceive ourselves with a notion, God loves to

try whether we have received the promise sincerely, 10 ; because we are fickle creatures, God will have us by solemn profession of faith visibly enter into covenant with him, 12 ; having thus solemnly entered into covenant with God, we are bound to make it good if we would have benefit by it, 13.

Saviours, subordinate instruments to salvation so called, xix. 455.

Scandal more dangerous than persecution, ii. 89.

Scandals, or offences, anything that may discourage or divert us from our duty to God, or may occasion us to fall, to the great loss or ruin of our souls, ix. 210 ; may be taken when power is gone, *ib.* ; or given when power is taken, 211 ; or both given and taken, *ib.* ; may be in word, by evil counsel or carnal suggestion, *ib.* ; or in deed, when they do things that are simply unlawful, and so propagate their sins to others by their example, *ib.* ; or by the abuse of christian liberty, to the wrong and hindrance of others in a way of godliness, 212 ; or by persecution enforce others against their duty, *ib.*

Scapegoat, a type of Christ, i. 480.

Sceptics need to be scourged as fools till they feel themselves to be something, ii. 321.

Schism, fault and crime of, not always in those that withdraw, but in those that cause it, v. 328 ; does not depend upon numbers, *ib.* ; is rash, sinful, and unjust separation, 329.

Scholars, great, why so much mistaken in the things of the kingdom of God, iii. 226.

Schools are to the church what nurseries are to orchards, i. 110.

Scorn of the proud, a grievous temptation, vii. 43 ; should not move us either to open defection or partial declining, *ib.* ; it is a usual evil, which the people of God have to expect, *ib.* ; it is to be taken with resignation, as from God, 44 ; railing and calumny cannot prevail with rational and conscientious men, to make them change their opinions, *ib.* ; it is the duty of God's children to justify wisdom, *ib.* ; carnal men approve what they seem to condemn, *ib.* ; their judgment is perverse, not to be stood upon, 45 ; if some dishonour us, others, who are better able to judge, will honour us, *ib.* ; a christian should be satisfied with God's approbation, *ib.* ; and with the prospect of the crown, 46.

SCRIPTURE SUFFICIENT WITHOUT UNWRITTEN TRADITIONS, v. 485.

Scripture, not the bare words of, but the meaning, must be regarded, i. 284.

Not the less to be esteemed though Satan and his agents use it, i. 287 ; what it speaks to all is to be esteemed as spoken to each particular person, *ib.*

How to be studied, vi. 105 ; to be often meditated upon, *ib.* ; received in the love of it, *ib.*

Clearness of, denied by Papists and libertines, viii. 73.

Clearness of, objections answered, viii. 74 ; 'Why do men so often mistake, that have the scriptures and consult them?' *ib.* ; some come to the word with a presumption of their own wit, and leaning upon their own understanding, *ib.* ; many bring their prejudicate opinions along with them, *ib.* ; some search the scriptures, not from any love of the truth, but to oppose it, *ib.* ; some come to the word leavened with some carnal affection, 75 ; some content themselves with superficial apprehensions, *ib.* ; when men are right in the main, there will be mistakes about lesser things, *ib.* ; 'If there be such a light in the scriptures, what need is there of the Spirit?'

ib. ; the scriptures are the means of light, the Spirit the author of light, *ib.* ; 'What need of the ministry?' 76 ; it is God's institution, and we must submit to it, though we see no reason for it, *ib.* ; its use is to explain and vindicate truth, *ib.* ; to apply generals to particular cases, *ib.* ; to keep doctrines still afoot in the church, *ib.* ; a peculiar blessing and efficacy to a christian from their calling, *ib.* ; 'It is said that there were some things hard to be understood,' *ib.* ; hard, but not impossible, 77 ; some, but not many, *ib.* ; 'Christians in scripture complain of darkness,' *ib.* ; our darkness should not be urged in disparagement of the word, *ib.*

The true witness of its certainty is not the authority of the church, but experience of its sanctifying virtue, x. 426.

Important to inquire into the truth of, x. 433 ; to prepare and induce carnal men to respect it, and to wait for the confirmation of the Spirit, *ib.* ; to give additional confirmation and greater certainty to the people of God, *ib.* ; to awaken them who have received the word upon slight grounds, to be better settled, *ib.* ; that we may know the distinct excellency of our profession above all other professions in the world, 434 ; wicked men, remaining wicked, can have no absolute assurance of, 435 ; because all external arguments, without the light of the Spirit, work but a human faith, *ib.* ; because the Spirit worketh not by way of certioration and full assurance, but when he sanctifieth, *ib.* ; arguments that prove the scriptures to be the word of God, 438 ; God has owned them by the wonderful success of the doctrine and religion which they establish, *ib.* ; and that notwithstanding the contemptibleness of the human instruments, 439 ; by miracles, 441 ; the accomplishment of prophecies, threatenings, and promises, 444 ; God hath owned the word by associating the operation of his grace and powerful Spirit with it, and with no other doctrine, 446 ; the Spirit's testimony, 447 ; their wonderful preservation, 448 ; his judgments on those who have reviled, abused, and persecuted this truth, 449 ; intrinsic arguments, 453 ; the majesty of the style, *ib.* ; the simplicity of the style, *ib.* ; the fidelity of the reports, 454 ; the harmony and agreement of all the parts, 455 ; their impartiality, 456 ; the matter contained in them, *ib.* ; precepts, *ib.* ; promises, 457 ; doctrines, 458 ; histories, *ib.* ; prophecies, *ib.*

Reason not to be heard against, xv. 214 ; cannot be understood or applied without the Spirit, 216.

Scriptures, the beauty and glory of, is within, and must be fetched out with much study and prayer, iv. 162.

Sometimes a seeming difference in, but no real contrariety, iv. 264.

An excellent art to rank in their order, and to know wherefore everything is spoken in the word, iv. 351.

The duty of every christian to be acquainted with, v. 172.

Sufficient for our faith, our duty, and our happiness, v. 494 ; authority, sufficiency, and perspicacity of, weakened by the Papists, because they cannot stand before their light, 495.

Doctrines of, concerning God and his works, wonderful, vi. 261.

Written not for ministers or professed students, but for all sorts of men, viii. 354 ; difficulties in, not such that the people cannot read with profit, 355.

Unchangeable certainty and everlasting verity of, must be apprehended, ix. 119 ; considered, *ib.* ; believed, 120 ; known from their self-

- evidencing light, *ib.* ; by the testimony of the Spirit, 121 ; the experience of the truth of the word in God's hearing prayer, *ib.*
- Scruples*, affected, are sinful, xiii. 188.
- Scrupulosity* often ends in licentiousness, i. 283.
- Searching* the heart, God a searcher of the hearts of men, xii. 243 ; the scripture argueth this from the immensity and greatness of God, from creation, and from God's government, *ib.* ; they that would worship God aright had need be deeply possessed with this truth, *ib.* ; there can be no true worship unless we are deeply possessed with a thorough sense of the infinite knowledge of God, 247 ; this doctrine a great comfort to sincere worshippers, *ib.* ; cautions against hypocrisy in prayer, 248.
- Season* of receiving good to be improved, xix. 363 ; of doing good, 364.
- Secret*, that God seeth in, is the hypocrite's fear and the saint's comfort, ix. 68.
- Sins, their aggravations, xv. 376.
- Of the Lord, with the righteous, xviii. 382 ; knowledge of his will, *ib.* ; direction in duty, and satisfaction in his dispensations, 383 ; intimate familiarity between God and them, *ib.*
- Secure* sinners, exhortation to, iii. 284.
- Security*, careless, prevents men believing in Christ, iii. 199.
- Carnal, and solid assurance, difference between these, xx. 80 ; in the grounds, the effects, and the way whereby they are gotten and maintained, *ib.*
- Seducers* in the early church, to them we are indebted for the fulness of the scriptures, v. 103.
- Wicked, usually of a turbulent and impetuous spirit, v. 285.
- '*Seed of God*,' what is meant by, xxi. 64.
- Seeking* after God must be the business of those who would be blessed, vi. 21 ; presupposeth our want of God, *ib.* ; is seeking union and communion with him, *ib.* ; consists in the exercise of grace, 22 ; and in the use of ordinances, *ib.* ; motives to, 23 ; directions, 25 ; must be with the whole heart, 26.
- God, general, for relief of our sinful and wretched condition by nature, vi. 91 ; particular, in our exigencies and straits, *ib.* ; in all our businesses and affairs, *ib.* ; constant observance of him in the use of his ordinances, 92 ; should be with sincerity of aim, *ib.* ; integrity of parts, 93 ; uniformity of endeavours, 94.
- God, what it is to seek God, xix. 160 ; is stirred up in us by God's grace and the help of his Spirit, 161 ; must be the great business of our lives, 162 ; the nature of this faith, 164 ; the influence it hath on our obedience and service, 165 ; encouragements to seek after God, 166 ; reproof of those that do not, 168 ; motives to seek God, 169.
- Self*, several sorts of, i. 67 ; carnal self, *ib.* ; natural self, 68 ; spiritual self, *ib.* ; glorified self, 69.
- To be given up to, worse than to be given up to Satan, i. 134.
- Self-confidence* prevents men believing in Christ, iii. 201.
- In spiritual things discovereth itself by venturing on temptations without a call and warrant, vi. 76 ; by neglect of the means whereby graces may be fed or comforts supplied, *ib.* ; by going forth to any work or conflict without an actual renewing of dependence upon God, *ib.* ; by boasting of courage before we are called to a trial, *ib.* ; cure, *ib.*

Self-deception, how to be avoided, iv. 155.

SELF-DENIAL, A TREATISE OF, xv. 175.

Self-denial a fruit of faith, ii. 149.

One of the first lessons in Christ's school, iii. 310.

The great trial of faith is in acts of, iv. 268.

The first lesson required of the creature in the new life, xiii. 211 ; never powerful and thorough unless animated by the love of God, 213 ; of Christ an example, 217.

The duty of all Christ's disciples, xv. 181 ; how far self is to be denied, 182 ; reasons why this duty is incumbent on all christians, 187 ; notes and signs of self-denial, and also of the absence of it, 193 ; means whereby this work may be made more easy, 197 ; general observations concerning this duty, 200 ; particular kinds of, 205 ; self-righteousness, 206 ; self-wisdom, 214 ; self-dependence in spiritual things, 224 ; self-dependence in temporals, 232 ; self-will, 240 ; self-love, 258 ; self-seeking, 279 ; reproof of self-lovers and self-seekers, 291.

Self-dependence in spiritual things, importance of the duty of self-denial in, xv. 225 ; how far spiritual strength is to be denied, 226 ; signs of depending on our own spiritual strength, 231 ; in temporal things, that there is such a sin evidenced from scripture and experience, xv. 232 ; the heinousness of it, 234 ; signs by which it may be discovered, 236 ; means of remedy and cure, 238.

Selfishness is a kind of self-excommunication, i. 108.

Unlike God, iv. 349 ; injurious to him, *ib.*

Self-love, how far criminal, xv. 259 ; the kinds of it, *ib.* ; the persons to whom it is incident, 260 ; how it discovers itself, 261 ; its odiousness, 262 ; some remedies against it, 263, 275 ; the experiences by which this disposition is to be measured, 268 ; the acts of it, 271 ; the state of it, 274 ; means to avoid, 277.

Self-lovers and self-seekers, reproof of several sorts of, xv. 291.

Self-reflection, Pythagoras and Seneca as to, xvii. 436.

Self-righteousness not to be trusted in, xiii. 489 ; considerations to draw us off from, 490.

Notes by which we may discover, in ourselves, xiv. 5.

The example of Paul in regard to, xv. 206 ; the difficulty of bringing men off from, 207 ; the danger of it, 209 ; rules for the discovery of it, 211 ; helps and remedies, 213.

The causes of, are ignorance, error, self-love, negligence, and security, xvi. 450.

Self-seekers many times the greatest losers, xiv. 445.

Self-seeking, what it is, xv. 279 ; notes for the discovery of, 283 ; the danger of it, 284 ; remedies by way of consideration and practice, 285.

Or seeking great things for ourselves, a sin very unbecoming the people of God, xxi. 481.

Self-will, denial of, and submission to the will of God, a duty of christians, xv. 240 ; the difficulty of, 241 ; motives and arguments to a denial of, 243 ; rules for direction and trial, 246 ; how far we are to submit to the will of God in providence, 249 ; the grounds of this submission, 254 ; helps to it, 256.

Self-wisdom, how far we are to deny our own wisdom in doctrine and practice, xv. 214 ; the difficulty of drawing men off from leaning on their own understanding, 219 ; signs whereby self-wisdom may be discovered, 221 ; dissuasives and directions, 223.

Sense doth but make less of God, iv. 433.

Spiritual, different from bodily, viii. 43; in those things which are liable to external sense, a man may have an outward sense of them when he hath not an inward, 44; can discern that which cannot be discerned by the outward, 46; the outward sometimes sets the inward to work, *ib.*; differs from a bare act of the understanding, *ib.*; its use to discern things good and wholesome from things noxious and hurtful to the soul, 47; to refresh and comfort the soul in the sweetness of spiritual things, 48; to preserve vitality of grace, *ib.* See *Taste*, spiritual.

Senses, guarding of, a great means of mortification, vi. 389; helps to guarding, 393.

Sensualists are enemies to the cross of Christ. xx. 123; those who profess friendship may yet be enemies, *ib.*; friendship and enmity are not to be interpreted so much by profession as by the constitution of the heart and the course of the conversation, *ib.*; the worldly spirit is blank opposite to the cross of Christ, 124; their sin, 132; its aggravations, *ib.*; their punishment, 133.

Sensuality is an inordinate desire and delight in soft and delicate living, v. 331; defiles both soul and body, 332.

Separation from the fellowship of God's church, a sinful work of the flesh, v. 327; Cain the first separatist, *ib.*; what is sinful, 328; only lawful grounds of intolerable persecution, damnable heresy, and gross idolatry, 330.

SERMON, A WEDDING, ii. 162.

SERMON, FAREWELL, ii. 409.

SERMON, FUNERAL, ii. 423.

SERMON AT THE FUNERAL OF MR CHRISTOPHER LOVE, ii. 439.

SERMON AT THE FUNERAL OF MRS JANE BLACKWELL, ii. 455.

SERMON ON ANTICHRIST, iii. 1.

SERMONS ON THE SACRAMENT, xv. 342.

SERMON PREACHED BEFORE THE PARLIAMENT, xv. 414.

SERMON PREACHED BEFORE THE SONS OF THE CLERGY, xv. 463.

SERMON ON THE ENDS OF THE SACRAMENT, xv. 487.

SERMON PREACHED ON A DAY OF PUBLIC THANKSGIVING, xvii. 283.

SERMON PREACHED ON THE DEATH OF DR MANTON, xxii. 125.

SERMON on Genesis iii. 15, xvii. 241.

SERMONS on Genesis xxiv. 63, xvii. 263.

— on Exodus iv. 21, xvii. 221.

— on Leviticus xix. 17, xix. 107.

SERMON on Deuteronomy xxxii. 51, xvi. 387.

— on Joshua vi. 26, xviii. 29.

— on 2 Samuel vii. 27, xviii. 62.

— on 2 Samuel xxiv. 24, xxii. 81.

— on Job x. 2, xxii. 61.

— on Psalm viii. 2, xviii. 13.

SERMONS on Psalm xix. 13, xxi. 337.

SERMON on Psalm l. 5, xviii. 74.

— on Psalm lxxxiv. 7, xviii. 314.

— on Psalm lxxxiv. 10, xviii. 146.

SERMONS on Psalm xc. 1, xviii. 171.

SERMON on Psalm xci. 1, xxii. 22.

SERMONS on Psalm cxix., vi. 1.

SERMON on Psalm cxxvii. 3, xviii. 85

- SERMONS on Psalm cxxxi., xxi. 406.
- SERMON on Proverbs iii. 17, xviii. 367.
- on Proverbs iii. 18, xxii. 13.
- on Proverbs iii. 31, 32, xviii. 376.
- on Proverbs vi. 6-8, xxii. 3.
- SERMONS on Proverbs x. 20, xviii. 387.
- SERMON on Proverbs xiv. 14, xviii. 464.
- on Ecclesiastes vii. 29, xix. 49.
- on Ecclesiastes xii. 7, xix. 61.
- on Isaiah l. 10, xviii. 51.
- on Jeremiah xlv. 5, xxi. 480.
- SERMONS on Ezekiel xviii. 23, xxi. 463.
- SERMON on Micah vi. 5, xviii. 40.
- SERMONS on Micah vi. 8, xv. 394.
- SERMON on Micah vii. 18, xv. 438.
- on Zechariah xiv. 20, 21, xvii. 441.
- on Malachi iii. 17, xviii. 337.
- on Matthew viii. 5-10, xvii. 146.
- on Matthew xv. 21-28, xvii. 155.
- on Matthew xix. 30, xxii. 41.
- on Matthew xxii. 11-13, xvi. 13.
- on Matthew xxii. 14, xx. 353.
- SERMONS on Matthew xxv., ix. 313.
- SERMON on Mark ii. 17, xviii. 3.
- SERMONS on Mark iii. 5, xvii. 191.
- SERMON on Mark iv. 24, xviii. 420.
- on Mark vii. 37, xx. 364.
- SERMONS on Mark x. 17-27, xvi. 409.
- SERMON on Luke ii. 52, xviii. 116.
- SERMONS on Luke xii. 48, xvi. 363.
- SERMON on Luke xvi. 25, xviii. 295.
- SERMONS on Luke xvi. 30, 31, xvii. 353.
- SERMON on Luke xvii. 32, xv. 369.
- SERMONS on Luke xix. 10, xviii. 155.
- SERMON on Luke xix. 14, xviii. 104.
- on Luke xxii. 31, 32, xvii. 395.
- on Luke xxiii. 34, xix. 14.
- SERMONS on John i. 29, xviii. 475.
- SERMON on John iii. 14, 15, xvii. 453.
- on John iii. 33, xv. 379.
- on John viii. 56, xvii. 167.
- on John xiii. 8, xv. 451.
- SERMONS on John xiv. 1, xvi. 345.
- on John xvii., x. 107.
- SERMON on John xviii. 11, xix. 3.
- on John xix. 30, xix. 29.
- on John xix. 34-37, xxii. 33.
- SERMONS on Acts ii. 37, 38, xxi. 237.
- SERMON on Acts vii. 55, 56, xxii. 70.
- on Acts x. 34, 35, xviii. 405.
- on Acts xvii. 30, 31, xvi. 397.
- SERMONS on Acts xxiv. 14-16, xvii. 419.
- SERMON on Acts xxiv. 25, xviii. 357.
- on Romans ii. 7, xix. 145.

- SERMON on Romans iv. 18-21, xvii. 179.
- SERMONS on Romans vi., xi. 151.
- on Romans viii., xi. 381.
- SERMON on Romans x. 5-9, xviii. 236.
- on Romans x. 10, xviii. 245.
- on 1 Corinthians viii. 3, xviii. 134.
- on 1 Corinthians viii. 6, xviii. 259.
- on 1 Corinthians xi. 26, xviii. 326.
- on 1 Corinthians xiii. 4-8, xviii. 306.
- SERMONS on 1 Corinthians xv. 19, xix. 125.
- SERMON on 2 Corinthians iv. 17, xx. 371.
- on 2 Corinthians iv. 18, xviii. 274.
- SERMONS on 2 Corinthians v., xii. 421.
- on 2 Corinthians xiii. 14, xix. 156.
- on Galatians v. 5, xviii. 216.
- on Ephesians v., xix. 169.
- on Philippians, i. 21, xx. 179.
- SERMON on Philippians, ii. 7, xviii. 124.
- SERMONS on Philippians iii. 7-21, xx. 1.
- SERMON on Philippians iv. 8, xviii. 96.
- on 1 Thessalonians v. 8, xviii. 453.
- SERMONS on 1 Thessalonians v. 16, xvii. 469.
- SERMON on 1 Thessalonians v. 17, xvii. 491.
- SERMONS on 2 Thessalonians i. 3, xvii. 95.
- on 2 Thessalonians i., xx. 198.
- SERMON on 1 Timothy vi. 9, xviii. 189.
- on 2 Timothy ii. 19, xviii. 348.
- SERMONS on Titus ii. 11-14, xvi. 37.
- SERMON on Hebrews i. 9, xvii. 407.
- on Hebrews ii. 11, xviii. 430.
- SERMONS on Hebrews vi. 18, xvi. 293.
- on Hebrews xi., xiii. 317.
- SERMON on Hebrews xii. 24, xxii. 106.
- on Hebrews xiii. 5, xviii. 443.
- on Hebrews xiii. 20, 21, xvii. 374.
- on 1 Peter i. 12, xviii. 202.
- SERMONS on 1 Peter i. 23, xxi. 299.
- SERMON on 2 Peter iii. 9, xviii. 226.
- on 1 John i. 7, xxii. 50.
- SERMONS on 1 John ii. 12-14, xx. 380.
- SERMON on 1 John ii. 20, xxii. 95.
- SERMONS on 1 John iii., xx. 438.
- on Revelation, i. 5, 6, xix. 80.
- Sermons*, the actual profit we get from, is when we deal seriously with God about what we have heard, i. 18.
- Servant* of God or Christ, different applications of the term in scripture, v. 10 ; any kind of subserviency to God's will and secret counsels, or instrumentality in the execution of his decrees ; so Cyrus and Nebuchadnezzar, *ib.* ; noteth a pious care to perform God's revealed will ; so christian masters are said to have God for their master, *ib.* ; designation to any public office for God's glory, as magistrates, Old Testament priests, New Testament ministers, *ib.* ; especially the prophets and apostles, *ib.* ; Christ himself, because of his office of mediator, *ib.*

- Servant* of God is one that dedicates himself to God's use, vi. 405 ; and liveth under a sense and consciousness of his dedication, *ib.* ; to them only the word of God is established, 406 ; notwithstanding weaknesses and failures, is for the main swayed by the fear of God, 407.
- Servants* of Christ now have present maintenance, afterwards they shall have their wages, i. 113.
- God's best, should carry it thankfully all their days, viii. 276 ; and humbly, 277.
- God's, some are in a peculiar manner, viii. 285 ; by voluntary choice, and not merely by necessity of nature, 286 ; *de facto*, and not only *de jure*, *ib.* ; really and indeed by self-dedication, and not only by visible profession and baptismal engagement, *ib.* ; some are, by general relation, and others by way of special attendance, 287 ; those who are may plead it when they want any mercy, temporal or spiritual, 288 ; not a plea contrary to grace, *ib.* ; nor contrary to humility, *ib.* ; speaketh comfort, *ib.* ; persuasives to become, 289 ; directions, 292 ; characteristics of, 293.
- Of God, who may be said to be, xv. 463 ; how far a blessing cometh on the posterity of, 465 ; reasons, 468 ; how this can be reconciled with experience, 469 ; to whom the promise is most eminently fulfilled, *ib.* ; advice to parents, 470 ; advice to children, 471.
- Service*, what is included under, i. 315 ; of God, must be suitable to his nature and attributes, 322.
- Of God consists in adoration, affiance, thankfulness, obedience, i. 451.
- Of God, the meanest, more honourable than any sinful dignity, iii. 443.
- Of Christ, the highest honour, v. 11 ; implies resignation and consecration to the will of Christ, *ib.* ; walking as the Master pleaseth, 12 ; teaches ministers that they must be diligent in the Lord's work, since they are servants, and must give account, 13 ; the people must give their persons all honour, and hear their doctrine with meekness and patience, *ib.*
- Of God after conversion should be as earnest as of sin before, xi. 328 ; though a service, yet is more pleasant, more honourable, more profitable than any other work, 329 ; should be as earnest on the part of the converted as that of sin is on the part of the unconverted, 331 ; in reason and strict justice it might be required to be more so, *ib.* ; care and solicitude to do the work, 332 ; industry and diligence, 333 ; promptness and readiness of mind, *ib.* ; resolution and self-denial, *ib.* ; thorough-going, *ib.* ; progress, 334.
- Of God, the true test of the value of life, xiv. 443 ; determined by the call of God's providence, *ib.* ; may as well be in a lower station as in a higher, 444.
- A gracious heart will not serve God with that which is little worth, xxii. 81 ; reasons, *ib.* ; cautions, 86.
- Services*, in all, we must honour both the Father and the Son, iv. 18.
- SEVERAL DISCOURSES TENDING TO PROMOTE PEACE AND HOLINESS AMONG CHRISTIANS, ii. 1.
- Severity* in reproof to be used to seducers, v. 360 ; to the hardened, *ib.* ; to secure libertines, *ib.* ; must arise from zeal, a desire of God's glory, and their salvation, *ib.*
- Shame* of a guilty conscience and of a tender conscience, vi. 58.
- The fruit of sin, vi. 322 ; by reason of its folly and filthiness, *ib.* ; is fear of a just reproof from God and from ourselves, *ib.*
- An act of repentance, xi. 347 ; there is a confounding and a penitential,

- ib.* ; the penitential continueth and increaseth under the greatest assurance of forgiveness, *ib.* ; the first sort considereth sin as it damneth or destroyeth, not as it defileth ; the second, as it is an act of filthiness or folly, 348 ; the first is accompanied with slavish fear, the other with love, *ib.* ; of hypocrites, is because of the world ; of the godly, because of God, *ib.* ; the effects are different, *ib.*
- Shameful* sin, a man that hath long kept close to God should yet pray to be kept from falling into, vi. 323 ; they who are most steadfast are not past all danger, *ib.* ; the miscarriages of God's children are most shameful, *ib.* ; because of the hopes they have of speeding in prayer, *ib.*
- Sheep*, no creature more prone to wander and lose its way, iii. 300 ; irrecoverably lost when it wanders, unless sought and found by the shepherd, 301 ; *animal sequax*, *ib.* ; exposed to a thousand dangers when it wanders, *ib.*
- Going astray like a lost, may refer either to sin or misery, ix. 300 ; implies that we are brutish in our sin and defection from God, 301 ; our proneness to err, *ib.* ; our inability to return, 302 ; our readiness to follow evil example, *ib.* ; the danger of straying, 303 ; the best liable to, *ib.*
- Why the godly are compared to, x. 43 ; they are gregarious, *ib.* ; innocent and harmless, *ib.* ; obedient to the shepherd, *ib.* ; poor dependent creatures, because of their tendency to wander, and their weakness, *ib.*
- Shepherd*, we have a good, who loves us, ix. 310 ; one great part of his office is to reduce his people from their straggling, *ib.* ; he delights to guide us in our wanderings, *ib.* ; he will bear with our infirmities, and, if humbly sought, will take care of us, 311.
- Christ represented under the notion of, x. 40 ; as Mediator, he is put in trust of the flock, *ib.* ; he keeps, feeds, and defends them, *ib.* ; the good, *ib.* ; in care and vigilance, 41 ; in pity and wisdom, *ib.* ; in constantly performing all parts of a shepherd's duty to them, *ib.* ; differs from others in giving his life for them, *ib.* ; in making them to become his sheep, 42.
- Shield*, divine protection set forth under the notion of, viii. 170 ; excellency of, lies in the largeness and breadth of it, *ib.* ; in the hardness and impenetrableness of it, *ib.* ; stones and darts flung upon, are beaten back upon him that flings them, *ib.*
- Sickness*, God's children never question his love so much as in, iv. 450 ; chief care of a sick man should be for his soul, 451.
- Sight*, great difference of believers' and unbelievers', vii. 457.
- Of God, walking as in, is a note of sincerity, and a good means to make us keep his precepts, ix. 237 ; all men are in, but few think of it, *ib.* ; implieth a looking upon God as witness and judge, 238 ; we are to remember, not only in the duties of piety to God, but also in those of righteousness to men, *ib.* ; not only our actions, but our principles and aims, and the secret motives of our hearts, are in, *ib.* ; a good means to make us keep his precepts, 239 ; maketh for the restraint of evil, *ib.* ; and for encouragement to every good work, *ib.* ; makes us serious in all our addresses to God, 240 ; sincere in our whole course, *ib.* ; faithful in our relations, 241 ; a noble thing to live always in, 242.
- Signs* frequently used by the prophets, ii. 327.
- Simony*, the true, consists in making religion subservient to private profit, xiii. 456.

- Simple*, in a good sense, the sincere and simple-hearted, viii. 347 ; in a bad, the ignorant, 348.
- Sin* of God's people brings dishonour on God's name, i. 78.
- The least reserved, is a pledge of the devil's interest and right in us, i. 123.
- Requisites to the pardon of, i. 174 ; acknowledgment of the debt, *ib.* ; pleading of the satisfaction of Christ, *ib.* ; an unfeigned purpose to forsake sin, *ib.*
- Putting off, will not put away, i. 175.
- In the children of God is cast down in regard of regency, but not yet cast out in regard of inherency, i. 176.
- Its evil not lessened by the death of Christ, i. 181.
- God alone can pardon, i. 191 ; as the wronged party and as the supreme judge, *ib.* ; officers of the church can remit declaratively, 192.
- The greatest of evils, because it endamageth our inward man, and endangereth our everlasting hopes, i. 233 ; to be kept from the evil of, a greater mercy than to be kept from the trouble of temptation, *ib.*
- Reigns when there is no course of mortification set up against it, i. 239 ; distinction between reigning and remaining, *ib.*
- The evil of, greater than of affliction and trouble, i. 241.
- What it is, i. 417 ; there is in it fault and guilt, *ib.* ; forgiveness of, a dissolving the obligation to punishment, 418 ; not a disannulling of the act, as a natural action, *ib.* ; nor its abolition as a faulty or criminal action, *ib.* ; nor a lessening of the demerit of the sinful act, *ib.* ; but a passing by the fault so as not to punish it, *ib.*
- Made more hateful by the agonies, blood, shame, death of Christ, i. 423.
- God's nature engageth him to hate, and his justice to punish, ii. 182.
- Four things in—the fault, the guilt, the stain, the punishment, ii. 199.
- What it is to be turned from, ii. 204 ; to be freed from its guilt and power, *ib.* ; this a blessed thing, *ib.* ; the great cause of offence between God and us is taken out of the way, *ib.* ; we are freed from the great blemish of our natures, 205 ; we are freed from that which is the great burden of the creature, *ib.* ; we are freed from the great bane of our persons and happiness, 206 ; it is the matter of our serenity, comfort, and peace here, *ib.* ; and the pledge of our eternal felicity hereafter, 207 ; this blessing is through Christ, *ib.* ; in what way he doeth it, 209 ; he hath purchased this grace for us, *ib.* ; and he works it in us, *ib.*
- Worse than money, ii. 208.
- Christ bore the punishment of, in the essence, though not in the accidentals, ii. 272.
- Original, emphatically called, ii. 417 ; that doth so easily beset us is original, improved into some tyranny or evil custom, *ib.* ; what it is to lay aside, 418 ; how, *ib.*
- Our soul-sickness, iii. 266.
- The great sickness and wound of the soul, iii. 287 ; a wasting disease, *ib.* ; a painful disease, 288 ; a loathsome disease, 289 ; an infectious and catching disease, *ib.* ; a mortal disease, 290. See *Healing*.
- Original, three branches of, iii. 297 ; the communication of Adam's guilt by imputation, *ib.* ; the want of original righteousness, *ib.* ; corruption and pollution of nature, *ib.*
- The guilt and punishment of, laid on the back of Christ, iii. 324 ; taken off from the sinner, 325 ; transferred to Christ, *ib.*
- Heinousness of, seen in the sufferings of Christ, iii. 404.

- Sin*, Christ's bearing, importeth the susception of our guilt, and the sustaining of our punishment, iii. 480; comfort from this, *ib.*
- Always driving away and casting out, iv. 19.
- God not the author of, iv. 89; passages of scripture cleared, *ib.*; his efficiency and concurrence about it, 90; without God, sin would not be, *ib.*; yet he can by no means be looked on as the author of it, *ib.*; concerned about it by foreknowledge and pre-ordination, *ib.*; by permission, 91; concurrence to the action, though not to the sinfulness of it, *ib.*; desertion of a sinner and leaving him to himself, *ib.*; concession and giving leave to wicked instruments to stir up to evil, 92; presenting of occasions, *ib.*; judicial tradition to the power of Satan and their own vile affections, *ib.*; limitation of sin, *ib.*; turning of it to the uses of his glory, 93; pedigree of, 100; progress of, 101.
- Is a judging of the law, iv. 381; to make more than God hath made, is to judge the law, 382.
- The soul's sickness, iv. 462; resembles bodily sickness in distemper, deformity, pain, weakness, *ib.*
- Of the godly is a kind of sacrilege, stealing a holy thing from God, v. 26.
- How far it may be in a child of God, vi. 32; he has a corrupt nature, *ib.*; has daily failings and infirmities, *ib.*; may be guilty of some sins which by watchfulness may be prevented, *ib.*; may now and then fall foully, *ib.*; may have some particular sins which may be called predominant, 33; but cannot fall into those iniquities wherein there is an absolute contrariety to grace, *ib.*; does not sin with the whole heart, *ib.*; it is not his course, 34; when he falls he does not rest in sin, *ib.*; his falls are sanctified, *ib.*; grace discovers itself by the constant endeavours he makes against sin, *ib.*
- Caution to God's people to beware of all, vi. 34; of gross, committed against light and conscience, 36; of continuance in, *ib.*
- Every, is an affront to God's authority, a despising of his command, vi. 44.
- The matter of, not so much to be regarded as the manner, vi. 195.
- Of others, may we not speak of in any case? vi. 212; a very hard matter to do so without sin, *ib.*; speak not of, but to the offender, 213; if at all, with tenderness and grief, *ib.*
- The power of, stands in the love of it, vi. 370.
- Knowledge of, by the law, *quoad naturum peccati*, viii. 63; *quoad subjectum*, 64; *quoad reatum et magnitudinem peccati*, *ib.*
- Dominion of, is either more gross and sensible, viii. 389; or more secret and close, 390; there is a predominancy of one sin over another, and a predominancy of sin over grace, 391; is habitual or actual, *ib.*; reigns with a full and plenary consent, or with reluctance and contradiction, 392; is a great evil, *ib.*; because it is a renouncing of the government of Christ, *ib.*; it is a sure note of a carnal heart, 393; it is mischievous, 394; it is uncomely, and misbecoming the new estate, wherein we have so many helps and encouragements to resist sin, *ib.*; the saints should deprecate, 395; because there is still sin in us all, and it is always working and striving for the mastery, *ib.*; fearful estate of them that lie under, 396.
- Hatred of, if it be right, is universal, ix. 183; implacable, *ib.*; still growing, *ib.*; constantly watching and striving against it, *ib.*; must be strong, utter abhorrence, 184; sin deserves such, *ib.*; no other will serve the purposes of grace, *ib.*

- Sin*, being dead to, referreth to the baptismal engagement, xi. 154 ; to take occasion from free grace to live in, is most absurd, unjust, and blasphemous, *ib.* ; yet the corrupt heart of man is apt to draw such a consequence, *ib.* ; we all affect liberty to a degree of licentiousness, 155 ; the flesh taketh all occasions to indulge itself, and catcheth at every pretence to countenance it, *ib.* ; this consent is strengthened, because many that profess christianity live licentiously, 156 ; Satan abuseth the weakness of some teachers, and the ignorance of some hearers, to misapply the grace of the gospel, *ib.*
- The law discovereth the multitude and heinous nature of, xi. 157 ; gives an awakening sense of the punishment due to, *ib.*
- Freedom from, the consequent of our dying with Christ, xi. 202 ; nature of this freedom, *ib.* ; we quit the evil disposition and temper of our souls, *ib.* ; we renounce our former course of living, *ib.* ; the degree of it, 203 ; all the converted are freed from the reign of sin, *ib.* ; the more obedient we are to the motions of the sanctifying Spirit, the more power we have against, *ib.* ; if we fall into heinous, wilful sin, God manifesteth his displeasure by withdrawing his Spirit, 204 ; when the work is really begun and duly submitted unto, it still increaseth towards perfect blessedness, *ib.* ; value of freedom from, 205 ; sin the cause of all the controversy between God and us, *ib.* ; is a defacing of God's image in us, and a bringing in of the image of the devil, *ib.* ; disableth us for God's service, 206 ; setteth our hearts against it, *ib.* ; is an evil always present with us, *ib.* ; makes ease and comfort impossible, 207.
- Why said to reign in the body rather than the soul, xi. 237 ; not that sinful lusts are only in the body, or have their original in the body, *ib.* ; because these lusts mostly manifest themselves in the body, and belong to the body and the flesh, *ib.* ; because they are acted and executed by the body, and are therefore called the deeds of the body, *ib.* ; because the disorder of the sensual appetite is the great cause of all sin, 238 ; reigns, when it is not opposed, or but slightly opposed, 241, 259 ; when we obey and follow it, and do that to which it enticeth us, 242 ; christians strictly obliged to prevent its reign over them, 243 ; by the light of nature, *ib.* ; by christian piety, or the tenor of our religion, *ib.*
- Dominion of, distinguished from its being, xi. 259 ; reigns when it is not opposed, *ib.* ; when it is^o opposed weakly, and with a faint resistance, 260 ; it doth not reign, though there are certain unavoidable infirmities which the saints cannot get rid of, 261 ; though there are a smaller sort of sins, as the sins of daily incursion, *ib.* ; by the sway of great and headstrong passions, some that make conscience of their ways in the general may fall into sins more heinous, *ib.* ; but they do not make a trade of it, or settle in an evil way, 262 ; as sin in general should not bear sway, so no one sin should have dominion over us, 262 ; dominion of, is more gross and sensible, or more secret and close, *ib.* ; there is a predominancy of one sin over another, and the predominancy of sin over grace, 264 ; the dominancy of, is either habitual, 265 ; or actual, 266.
- There is still in christians a liability to fall under the dominion of, xi. 266 ; because there is still sin in us, *ib.* ; it is always working in us, and striving for the mastery, *ib.* ; it is always warring, as well as working, 267 ; the more it acteth, the more it getteth strength, *ib.* ; heinous nature of reigning, 268 ; it plucketh the sceptre out of God's

- hands, and giveth it to some vile and base thing which is set up in God's stead, *ib.* ; turneth the man upside down, and degradeth and depresseth him to the rank of beasts, 269 ; is burdensome as well as base, 270 ; rendereth sincerity questionable, and when it is habitual, is a sure note of a carnal state, *ib.* ; unsuitableness and uncomeliness that it should reign in christians, 271 ; encouragements to conflict with, 274 ; the undertaking of our blessed Redeemer, *ib.* ; the new nature put into us, 275 ; yet to be remembered that there is the back-bias and corruption of the flesh, 276 ; that grace is operative indeed, but doth not work necessarily, but voluntarily, 277 ; the Spirit of sanctification still dwelling and working in us, 278 ; the promises of the gospel, which secure this benefit to us, 281 ; the ordinances whereby this grace is conveyed to us, 282 ; the sanctification of providences to this use, 283.
- Sin*, no solid benefit or profit to be gotten by, xi. 344 ; doth not answer expectation, *ib.* ; the profit will not countervail the loss, 345 ; nor the pleasure the pain, *ib.* ; if there be any fruit of sin singly, yet comparatively it is as none, *ib.* ; makes us loathsome to ourselves, infamous to others, odious to God, 350.
- Its heinousness aggravated by the proportion of its object, xi. 372.
- Reasons why the body is dead because of, xii. 13 ; the meritorious cause of death, *ib.*
- The sad consequences of letting sin alone, xii. 63 ; instances in Judas, Gehazi, Ananias and Sapphira, David, and Solomon, *ib.*
- Abundance of, remaineth with the regenerate, xii. 65 ; as there is abundance of sin, so it is active and stirring, 66 ; manifests itself in several ways, 67 ; its pestilent and mischievous influence, *ib.* ; directions for rooting it out, 68.
- Viewed through the spectacles of Satan, and after the anointing of our eyes with the salve of the Holy Spirit, xii. 74.
- Sometimes the punishment of sin is called sin (Gen. iv. 13), sometimes a sacrifice for sin (Hosea iv. 8), xiii. 181.
- The notions by which it is set forth in scripture, xiii. 190.
- Pardon of, one great branch or fruit of our reconciliation with God through Christ, xiii. 262 ; the nature and worth of the privilege, *ib.* ; is an act of great grace and favour on God's part, 263 ; and a matter of great privilege and blessedness to the creature, *ib.* ; the manner how this privilege is brought about and applied to us, 265 ; is a fruit of our reconciliation with God, 268 ; why those that are reconciled to God have yet need of prayer for pardon, 269.
- The greatest affliction better than the least, xiv. 450 ; reasons, 451.
- Without the washing of the soul from sin there can be no communion with God in Christ nor interest in him, xv. 452 ; with respect to the nature of God, *ib.* ; with respect to our natural estate, 454 ; with respect to the new covenant, 454 ; with respect to the types of the law, 457 ; the necessity of this washing, 458.
- Even in God's children, may cost them very dear, xvi. 388 ; instance in Moses and Aaron at the waters of Meribah-kadesh, *ib.* ; the state and quality of the persons, 390 ; the nature of the crime, 391 ; the punishment, 392 ; sins of the godly are most provoking, 393 ; the effects of their sins, 394 ; reasons why God should punish them in this world, *ib.* ; lessons to be derived from the history, 395.
- The sinfulness of, as a subject for meditation, xvii. 314.
- The great aggravation of, that for temporal trifles men lose eternal joys,

and even the hazard of eternal pain, for the ease, mirth, and pleasure of a moment, xviii. 282.

Sin and wrath, the whole world, in its natural estate, lieth under, xviii. 486 ; is a burden too heavy for us to bear, 487 ; none can take it off but Jesus Christ, 488 ; he taketh it away by bearing it in his own person, *ib.* ; hath procured both justification and sanctification for us, 489 ; accomplished by degrees, 490 ; carried on with respect to his threefold office, 491.

Washing from, the great instance of Christ's love, xix. 86.

The light of nature imperfectly shows its turpitude, xix. 326.

The heinousness of, as it is a transgression of the law, xx. 498 ; its folly, as it is a deviation from the best rule, 499 ; its disobedience and rebellion, 500 ; its shameful ingratitude, 501 ; it is a disowning God's propriety in us, 502 ; a contempt of God's holiness and purity, *ib.* ; a denial of the goodness of God, 503 ; a depreciation and contempt of God's glorious majesty, *ib.* ; it is a questioning, if not a flat denial of, God's omniscience and omnipresence, 504 ; it is a breach in the moral order and harmony of the world, 507 ; a disbelief of the promises and threatenings, *ib.* ; a slighting all the providences of God, 508 ; the slenderness of the temptation, 509 ; the folly of those who make a mock and sport of sin, *ib.* ; the folly of those that not only make light of sin themselves, but think God makes little account of it also, 510 ; the justice of God in appointing eternal punishment as the fruit and reward of sin, *ib.* ; the necessity of our entering into the gospel covenant, 511.

In what sense Christ is said to take away, xxi. 4 ; the means by which he takes it away, 5 ; reasons why, since Christ came to take away sin, we should not live in it, 6 ; Christ propounded in the scripture as our pattern and example, 10 ; what sin is, 14 ; how it is taken away, 15 ; what we must do that it may be taken away, 19 ; the grounds we have that Christ will take it away, 21 ; why union with Christ is inconsistent with sin, 28.

While men live in a sinful course they are children of Satan, and not of God, xxi. 44 ; our being children of either is to be determined by practice, not profession, *ib.* ; reasons why evil-doers are children of Satan, 45 ; the destruction of the kingdom of Satan Christ's design in coming into the world, 50 ; the advantage we have by the one over the other, 51 ; the power of Satan over the fallen creature, 52 ; his work without us and within us, 53 ; how Christ destroys the works of the devil, 56.

In what sense it is said of the children of God that they do not and cannot sin (1 John iii. 9), xxi. 59 ; opinions of the fathers on this passage, *ib.* ; the true sense of the words, 60 ; vindication from abuse, 66.

The commonness of, xxi. 99 ; its heinousness, 101 ; means to avoid it, *ib.*

When it is said to have dominion over us, xxi. 367 ; reasons why we should take care that sin reign not over us, 370 ; helps to resist the dominion of sin, 375 ; how we may know when sin hath dominion over us, 376.

Some sins greater than others, xxi. 391 ; wherein this difference consists, *ib.* ; how lesser sins make way for greater, 395 ; cautions against divers excuses for sin, 396.

Remission of, implieth both justification and sanctification, xxii. 50 ; when ascribed to Christ it noteth justification, when to the Spirit,

sanctification, *ib.* ; justification considered with respect to the fault, the guilt, and the punishment, 51 ; whether all sins are forgiven at once, 53 ; the extent of the privilege, *ib.* ; what the blood of Christ doth as the meritorious cause, 54 ; whence it hath its cleansing power, 56 ; the persons who receive this benefit, 58.

Sincerity, a kind of perfection, iv. 205.

Singing of psalms, a duty of the gospel, iv. 441 ; scruples about, *ib.*

Psalms, a godly exercise, xvi. 157.

Sinlessness, question of the possibility of, in this life, merely curious, and of no use and profit, iv. 275 ; of particular actions may be possible, *ib.*

Sinners, misery of impenitent and unpardoned, i. 175.

God may choose the worst of, iv. 267.

Sinning, many several ways of, iii. 304 ; by reason of the activeness of man's spirit, *ib.* ; through diversity of constitution, *ib.* ; from different businesses and occasions in the world, 305 ; custom and education, *ib.* ; company and example, *ib.*

None absolutely good and exempted from, iv. 277 ; sins of the best are many, 298.

Sin-offering usually called sin, iii. 369.

Sins, God may blot out of his book, when he doth not blot them out of our consciences, i. 179 ; do not bring eternal death on pardoned persons, but may occasion temporal troubles, 180.

Of particular persons often bring mischief on the whole community, i. 188.

All mortal and damnable, i. 137.

Renewed, need new pardon, i. 426.

Not mortified, are mortal, ii. 451.

Not all equal ; all damning, not all alike damning, iv. 213.

Whether any are so foul in their nature that a child of God cannot fall into them, iv. 276 ; some gross corruptions very contrary to grace, into these they may fall, though very rarely and seldom, *ib.* ; other sins extremely contrary to nature itself, into which a renewed man cannot fall, *ib.*

Seldom go alone, iv. 335 ; wantonness goes with drunkenness, envy with covetousness, &c., *ib.*

Degenerate human nature doth not only practise, but glory in, iv. 395 ; of ignorance, are sins, though more remissible, 396 ; of knowledge are most dangerous, *ib.* ; of omission, as well as of commission, aggravated by knowledge, 398.

Often the cause of sickness, iv. 455.

Multitude of, doth not hinder our pardon or conversion, iv. 481.

Incident to sharp and tedious afflictions, vii. 375 ; impatience and murmuring against God, *ib.* ; a spirit of revenge against the instruments of our trouble, *ib.* ; using indirect means for our relief, 376 ; desponding and distrustful thoughts of God, 377 ; questioning our interest in God merely because of the cross, *ib.* ; not only despairing, but atheistical thoughts, *ib.* ; considerations to preserve us from, 378 ; we make our condition so much the worse if we fall into sin because of trouble, *ib.* ; a sincere love to God will make us adhere to him when he seemeth to deal most hardly with us, *ib.* ; by forgetting God's precepts we put away comfort from us, *ib.* ; afflictions rightly imposed will make us remember God's precepts rather than forget them, 379.

- Sins* of the justified, doubtful whether they will be mentioned in the day of judgment, x. 58 ; certainly not to their trouble and confusion, *ib.*
- Wilful, against an express commandment, x. 341 ; against express warnings of those who wish well to our souls, *ib.* ; against checks of conscience, and motions of God's spirit in our hearts, *ib.* ; against restraints of providence, *ib.*
- All are in their own nature mortal, xi. 376 ; small, are the mother of great, and the grandmother of great punishments, 377.
- Even the greatest, except that against the Holy Ghost, are pardonable, xix. 10 ; remission of, is the free gift of God, and a special benefit, *ib.*
- How we may be partakers of other men's, xix. 239 ; by counselling, *ib.* ; by alluring and enticing, *ib.* ; by consenting, 240 ; by applauding, *ib.* ; conniving, *ib.*
- Secret, have aggravations which other sins have not, xix. 314 ; they are more against knowledge and conviction, 315 ; they have atheism annexed to them, *ib.* ; are more studious and premeditated, 316 ; involve the more in sin, *ib.* ; bring great mischief, *ib.* ; God loveth to discover, 317.
- Forgiveness of, what it is, xx. 383 ; how obtained, 386 ; such as have obtained, are bound to express their gratitude and thankfulness to God, 388 ; reasons why, *ib.*
- Slander* killeth three at once : him that is slandered, his family ill report ; him to whom it is told, his belief with a lie ; him who tells it, with the sin of detraction (Bernard), iv. 294.
- Either to devise or receive, very faulty and sinful, vi. 420.
- Slavery* to sin implieth a willing subjection, xi. 413 ; customary practice and observance, *ib.* ; inability to come out of this condition, *ib.*
- Sleep* of souls between death and the resurrection an unfounded conceit, i. 91.
- Of the disciples on the mount of transfiguration whether natural or special, i. 370 ; was a weakness on their part, *ib.* ; yet directed and overruled by God, 371.
- In the worship of God, warning against, i. 371.
- Spiritual, is when graces are not lively and kept in exercise, ix. 349 ; a weak and dead faith, that consists more in a form of knowledge than a lively assent to the truths of godliness, *ib.* ; a feeble and sleepy love, *ib.* ; a cold and careless hope, 350 ; effects of, *ib.* ; intermission of care and caution, *ib.* ; abatement of zeal and fervency, *ib.* ; forgetfulness or non-attendancy to the Lord's coming, *ib.* ; may seize not only on young christians, but those of long standing, 351 ; when we are in greatest danger we are usually most secure, 352 ; may be shown in public relations, *ib.* ; after some solemn service, *ib.* ; though there be an intermission of the acts of grace, yet no intermission of the habits of grace, 353 ; a universal slumber is not usually incident to the saints, *ib.* ; they are more easily alarmed and roused up than those that sleep the sleep of death, *ib.* ; when they arise again, and repeat, and do their first works, they are more earnest and fervent than they were before, *ib.* ; reasons, *ib.* ; imperfection of grace, *ib.* ; outward occurrences, both prosperous and adverse, 354 ; conversing with spiritual sluggards, *ib.* ; a dead worship, *ib.* ; a lesser degree of carelessness making way for a greater, slumber for sleep, 355 ; the omission of holy duties, *ib.* ; grieving the Spirit, 356 ; immoderation in worldly things, whether cares or delights, *ib.* ; signs of, 357 ; motives against, 359 ; means to avoid, *ib.*

- Slothfulness* is wickedness, ix. 471 ; because total omissions against knowledge and conscience, especially of necessary duties, are great sins, *ib.* ; the motives which drive us to idleness and sloth are paltry, base, and such as offer great wrong to God, 472 ; negligent unfruitfulness is a breach of trust, to which we are bound by covenant, *ib.* ; when we cease to do good, evil must needs ensue, 473 ; means against, 474 ; faith, 475 ; patience, *ib.* ; love, *ib.*
- Small things*, their influence upon great, iv. 285.
- Snares* laid for the godly by Satan and by wicked men, viii. 127 ; to entice them from their duty, *ib.* ; to endanger their safety, *ib.* ; of a mixed nature, to entice by endangering, and endanger by enticing, 128.
- Sobriety* a necessary grace, xvi. 118 ; some prejudices removed, 119 ; what it is, 120 ; sobriety in pleasures and recreations, 122 ; rules to be observed in the choice of, 124 ; helps to sobriety in the use of, 126 ; the baseness and danger of carnal pleasures, 129 ; sobriety in meats and drinks, 130 ; becomes all persons, especially magistrates, ministers, women, and youth, 131 ; what this sobriety is, 132 ; sobriety in apparel, rules for, 134 ; how the abuse of, may be discerned, 136 ; helps to, 139 ; sobriety in worldly cares, 140 ; what this worldly care is that is to be moderated, 140 ; whence it ariseth, 141 ; the cure of it, 143.
- Societies*, human, great influence of religion on the welfare of, vi. 490.
- Socinian* doctrine as to the nature of Christ, xx. 306.
- SOCINIANS, CHRIST'S ETERNAL EXISTENCE, AND THE DIGNITY OF HIS PERSON, ASSERTED AND PROVED, IN OPPOSITION TO THE DOCTRINE OF THE, i. 413.
- Socinians*, their evil blasphemy that Christ only died by occasion of sin, not for sin, iii. 277.
- Sodom* and Gomorrah, their sin, v. 220 ; how suffering the vengeance of eternal fire, *ib.* ; their destruction the world's great example, 226.
- Solifidians*, the doctrine of the, disproved, xvii. 430.
- Sonship* of Christ, the foundation on which his church is built, i. 389 ; the question put to those that would enter upon christianity, *ib.* ; the engagement of his disciples to adhere to him, *ib.* ; the end for which the scriptures were written, *ib.* ; the ground of submission to Christ in all his offices, 390.
- Sons* of God, this privilege considered as to the real grant on God's part, xii. 97 ; as to believers' sense of their adoption, *ib.* ; that this is a great privilege will appear if we consider our present relation to God or our future inheritance, 98.
- Of Joseph, reasons why they were blessed rather than others, xiv. 396 ; in what manner this blessing was bestowed, 397.
- Of God, their glorious relation to God, with the effects and fruits of it, is not seen by the world, xx. 453 ; because it is spiritual there is a veil upon it, 454 ; it is hidden, 455 ; it is future, 456 ; reasons why this glory doth not now appear, 457 ; the apprehension we should have of it for the present, 467.
- SONS OF THE CLERGY, SERMON PREACHED BEFORE THE, xv. 463.
- Sorrow*, godly, a christian never more joyful than after, yea, in, iv. 373.
- God alloweth and even requireth, iv. 425 ; what kind he alloweth and requireth, 427 ; unlawful, 430 ; such as overwhelmeth and dejecteth the spirit, *ib.* ; such as is peevish, *ib.* ; such as is impatient and discontented, 431 ; such as unfits for duty, *ib.* ; excessive,

- very dishonourable and derogatory to Christ, 432 ; a dishonour to our profession, *ib.* ; very prejudicial, 433 ; very unreasonable, *ib.*
- Sorrow*, God's children oftentimes lie under the exercise of such deep and pressing, as is not incident to other men, vi. 265 ; their burdens are greater, *ib.* ; their sense is greater, 266 ; their exercise is greater, 267.
- Immoderate, and uncomely dejection of spirit checked by consideration of God's faithfulness, vii. 278.
- Soul*, all other things must be hazarded for the saving of, ii. 141 ; only faith will make us do this, *ib.*
- Blessedness of the saint's, in heaven, ii. 466 ; perfection of knowledge, *ib.* ; complete love, 467 ; complete union with, and fruition of, God, *ib.*
- Its diseases greater than those of the body, as being seated in the nobler part, as a cut in the body is worse than a rent in the clothes, iii. 286.
- Travail of Christ's, the affliction of his whole man, but chiefly of his inward man, iii. 401 ; suffered in his reputation, 402 ; in every part of his body, and through every sense, *ib.* ; consummated in his painful, shameful, and accursed death, *ib.* ; in his soul, 403 ; his desertion, *ib.* ; the apprehension of his Father's wrath, 404.
- Salvation of, a christian's main care, iv. 151.
- God must be served with, as well as with the body, ix. 228 ; because God hath a right to both, as he made both, *ib.* ; because soul-service is suitable to his nature, 229 ; because the soul is the principal thing, *ib.* ; is *fons actionum ad extra*, *ib.* ; *terminus actionum ad intra*, 230 ; it is hearty soul-service that will bear weight in the balance of the gospel, *ib.*
- Is with Christ presently after death, xi. 94.
- At death, is sanctified and purified from all imperfections, and brought into the sight and presence of God, xii. 15 ; at the resurrection, shall assume its body again, *ib.*
- That it is distinct from the body appeareth from scripture, reason, and experience, xiii. 27 ; that it is not only distinct from the body, but can exercise its operations apart from it, and that the souls of the saints actually do so, proved from scripture, 29 ; at death the soul immediately appears in the presence of the Lord, *ib.*
- Of man is a spirit, xix. 62 ; immediately framed by God, 63 ; returneth at death to God as judge, *ib.* ; its immortality, *ib.* ; proved from scripture, 64 ; from reason, 68.
- Soundness* of heart is opposed to the form of godliness, vii. 340 ; and to the sudden pangs and hasty motions of temporaries, *ib.* ; is such a receiving of the word into the heart that it is rooted there, and diffuseth its influence for the seasoning of every affection, 341 ; requires an enlightened understanding, 342 ; an awakened conscience, *ib.* ; a rightly-disposed will, 343 ; the affections purged and quickened, *ib.* ; value of, shown by the respect God hath to it, *ib.* ; and the evil it freeth us from, 344 ; directions to attain, 348.
- Sovereignty* of God modified and mitigated in the dispensation of it with infinite justice, ii. 337 ; great faithfulness, 338 ; great wisdom, *ib.* ; much love, *ib.*
- Of Christ over his church is superadded to the sovereignty of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as creator, xix. 458 ; is comfortable and beneficial to us, 459.
- Sparing*, sordid, a sure sign of a worldly heart, iv. 403.

- Speech*, in giving the anatomy of wickedness in all the members of the body, the apostle (Rom. iii. 13-15) stayeth longest on the organs of throat, tongue, lips, mouth, iv. 279; remedies, 280; get a pure heart, *ib.*; watch and guard, 281; seek God's help, *ib.*; employ speech oftener about holy uses, *ib.*; christianity doth not take away the use of, but rules it; doth not make us dumb in converse, but gracious, 282.
- Speeches*, as well as actions, come under the judicatory of God and the word, iv. 224.
- Spirit*, his great work to bring us and Christ together, i. 114.
- Of God, christians to be led by, in all things, i. 259.
- Holy, sometimes said to pray in us, sometimes we to pray in him, i. 351.
- Worshipping of God in, opposed to the legal ordinances, ii. 24; implieth the worship of God with the inward and spiritual affections of a renewed heart, *ib.*; implies the assistance and continual influence of the Holy Spirit, *ib.*; why a true christian doth worship in the spirit, 26.
- And flesh, different acceptations of, ii. 284; both in a christian, 286; he is at liberty to walk after the one or the other, 287; duty of living according to the operation and influence of the better principle, 289; to do so implies conversion, 291; prevalency and increase of the Spirit, how known, 292.
- To walk in, the sum of all christian piety, ii. 284; it is to direct and order our actions according to the instructions of the new nature, 285; this is the means of mortifying and keeping under inbred corruption, 286; the christian has it in his power to walk after, or after the flesh, 287; it lieth upon us as our duty, though the power must be from above, 289; the profit of so walking, *ib.*; the danger of the opposite, 290.
- First works and then witnesses; first a guide and sanctifier, then a comforter, ii. 305.
- His motion and revelation to be waited for, iii. 217; yielded to, *ib.*; cherished, *ib.*; God to be praised for, 218; his revelations distinct, *ib.*; give an experimental taste of Christ, *ib.*; influence to obedience, 219.
- His work in convincing the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, x. 40; Acts of the Apostles a comment upon, 42.
- Things of, are such things as the Spirit revealeth, xi. 442; such things as the Spirit worketh, *ib.*; such things as the Spirit urgeth and inclineth unto, *ib.*; minding of, what it is, 443.
- Indwelling of, implies intimacy, or familiar presence, xi. 485; constancy, *ib.*; sovereignty, 486; dwelleth nowhere but where he hath changed the heart so far as to put a new nature in us, 487; when the heart is thus prepared, the Spirit takes possession of it for God's use, 488.
- Of Christ, the possession of, distinguishes the real from the nominal christian, xii. 1; exclusive and inclusive marks of the possession of this Spirit, *ib.*; what it is to have this Spirit, 2; not any created habit or gift, but the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, *ib.*; consists in immediate presence in essential operation, *ib.*; this operation either in a way of common gifts or special graces, 3; as to sanctifying and saving effects, may be considered as moving, warning, and exciting, *ib.*; as renewing and changing, *ib.*; why having the Spirit is an evidence that we are true christians, 4; all true christians have

- it, *ib.* ; the only sure and proper evidence of being true christians, 6 ; persuasives to seek after the presence of the Spirit in our hearts, 9.
- Spirit*, the work of the, to reveal the love of God to us, and to recover our love to God, xii. 75 ; the Spirit's help necessary even after conversion and enlightenment, 76.
- A guide and leader to the godly, xii. 92 ; the guidance of the Spirit promised, *ib.* ; it is begged by the saints as a great and necessary blessing, 93 ; the necessity of it, *ib.* ; it is both directive and persuasive, *ib.* ; the way in which the Spirit performeth the office of a leader or guide, 95 ; in its nature it is twofold, restraining and inviting, *ib.* ; as it is the office of the Spirit to guide and lead us, so it is our duty to submit to his direction, 96.
- The work of, upon the heart, xii. 102.
- Of bondage, what it is, xii. 102 ; in the profane it giveth occasion of further sinning, *ib.* ; in some it may prove the instrument of conversion, 103 ; how it is the fruit of the law-covenant, *ib.* ; whether it is good or bad, 105 ; information and instruction how to carry ourselves in relation to it, 106 ; we should put ourselves upon trial and self-reflection whether we have this spirit, 107 ; we should strive to get rid of it, and prevail upon it more and more, 108 ; motives for doing so, 108 ; means, 110.
- The witness of, that we are children of God, xii. 127.
- Of prayer, there is a fourfold spirit worketh in prayer—the natural spirit of man, a carnal spirit, the new nature, and the Spirit of God, xii. 249 ; the operations of this fourfold spirit, *ib.*
- In what sense God is said to know the mind of the Spirit in prayer, xii. 251 ; why this knowledge is such a comfort and benefit to the children of God, 252.
- An argument, strong and full, to confirm us in the truth and worth of the promised glory, xii. 492 ; an earnest of blessedness to come, 493.
- Produces the fruits of righteousness, xix. 274 ; as our guide, *ib.* ; as our sanctifier, *ib.* ; as a comforter, 276.
- As opposed to the flesh, signifieth the new nature, or that gracious frame of heart which is produced in us by the Holy Ghost, xix. 399 ; characteristics of, 400.
- To be filled with, is either to be filled with his gifts or his graces, xix. 395 ; incumbent on christians, 402 ; means of, 406.
- Of God in converting doth enlighten, xx. 8 ; benefit of this enlightening, *ib.* ; we know things more clearly, *ib.* ; more certainly, 9 ; more seriously, *ib.* ; more efficaciously, *ib.*
- Gift of the, what it is, xxi. 289 ; in what sense we are said to receive the Spirit upon repentance and belief, 291 ; the use and office of the Spirit so received, 292 ; how this is peculiar to those that repent and believe, 294.
- Spirits*, glorified, their perfect subjection to God's will, i. 368.
- Spirit's* witness of adoption, what ? i. 51 ; he lays down marks in scripture, *ib.* ; works such graces as are peculiar to God's children, *ib.* ; helpeth to feel and discover those acts in ourselves, 52 ; helps us to compare them with the rule, *ib.* ; helps us to conclude rightly of our state, *ib.* ; enlivens and heightens our apprehensions, and so fills us with comfort and joy, 53 ; gives no immediate testimony, *ib.*
- Spiritual growth*, in regard of, there is great difference among christians, xx. 393 ; the eldest may be babes in Christ, the youngest, fathers, 394 ;

some may be weak and strong, young and old, at the same time, 395 ; there is a difference between christians and themselves at sundry times, *ib.* ; all this does not hinder but some may be called ' fathers,' ' young men,' and ' babes,' 396 ; they are fathers who best know Christ from the beginning, 399 ; what it is to know Christ from the beginning, *ib.* ; speculative and historical knowledge, 404 ; practical and saving knowledge, 405 ; what is herein proper to fathers, or how this can be a ground of distinction between them and others, 406 ; there are a middle sort of christians who may be called ' young men,' 416 ; wherein they differ from the fathers, 417 ; from the ' babes,' 418 ; these young men are most exposed to temptations and conflicts, 419 ; in regard of the temptations of Satan, *ib.* ; in regard of themselves, 421 ; that which is most eminent in them is strength, 422 ; this spiritual strength serves for three uses : to bear burdens with patience, *ib.* ; to perform duties with cheerfulness, 423 ; and to resist temptations with success, *ib.* ; this strength they have because the word of God abideth in them, 424 ; what this abiding is, 425 ; those that have the word abiding in them overcome the devil, *ib.* ; the adversary, *ib.* ; the victory, 426 ; ' babes,' wherein they differ from the fathers, 428 ; from young men, *ib.* ; from the carnal or temporary, 430 ; how God standeth in the relation of a father to his people, *ib.* ; the privileges accruing thereby, 432 ; even the lowest sort of christians know God as a father, 435 ; how this constitutes the difference between them and others, 436.

SPIRITUAL LANGUISHING, ENGLAND'S, &c., v. 411.

Spiritual support better than outward deliverance, vi. 269 ; it is the inward man that is esteemed with God, *ib.* ; the everlasting welfare of the whole person depends upon the flourishing of the inward man, *ib.* ; the loss of the outward man may be made up by the strength of grace, but not *vice versa*, *ib.* ; the inward man fits for converse with God, 270, life and strength of the inward man draws nearer to the life of God ; of the outward, to the life, pleasure, and happiness of a beast, *ib.* ; inward life the beginning of our life in heaven, *ib.* ; is that great thing which God hath been at such great expense about, *ib.*

Mindedness implies that we know spiritual things, xi. 466 ; and believe them, *ib.* ; and esteem them above all other things, *ib.* ; and pursue after them with all diligence, *ib.* ; is life and peace, *ib.*

Life, a pledge and beginning of the life of glory, xii. 82.

Life and animal life distinguished and described, xiii. 18.

Life, the fruit of Christ's death, xiii. 198 ; his resurrection the pattern of it, *ib.* ; what it is, 198 ; the correspondence between the common life and the life of grace, 199 ; wherein they differ, 202 ; the respect that is between this life and Christ's resurrection, 203 ; Christ's resurrection an example, a pledge, and a cause of it, 204 ; information as to the suitableness between Christ and believers, 206 ; the way in which this life is conveyed and continued to us, *ib.* ; exhortation to belief in it, 207 ; we should value and esteem it according to its worth and excellency, 208 ; we should deal with Christ about it, *ib.* ; if we have this new life there will be a great change wrought in us, 209 ; a solemn dedication of ourselves to God, *ib.* ; and vital operations stirred up within us, 210.

Strength, how far to be denied, xv. 226 ; to be drawn out by constant exercise, yet not to be rested in, 227.

- Spouse* of the church is bashful, and will not be familiar, and communicate his loves before company, but alone (Bernard), i. 13.
- Stancarists* think ordinances useless for believers, iv. 129.
- Standing fast* opposed to cowardly flight and to treacherous revolt, iii. 125 ; means of, by holding the traditions taught by the holy apostles, 126, 128.
- Opposed to a cowardly flight or a treacherous revolt, v. 490 ; means of, by holding fast the traditions taught by the holy apostles, *ib.*
- Stars*, wandering (Jude 13), to be understood as meteors rather than planets, v. 286.
- Statutes*, those that would keep God's, must fly to God's help, vi. 74 ; because we are weak and mutable creatures, *ib.* ; our strength lies in God, not in ourselves, 75 ; God gives out his strength according to his own pleasure, *ib.*
- God teaches us his own, vi. 115 ; outwardly by the ministry of men, *ib.* ; inwardly by the inspiration and work of the Holy Ghost, *ib.* ; necessity of this teaching, 116 ; benefit and utility of it, 118.
- God himself must teach us his, viii. 279 ; because he alone can give spiritual illumination, *ib.* ; because the heart of man is naturally full of darkness, and oppressed by the prejudices of custom and evil habit, *ib.* ; because the matter to be taught is the mysterious doctrine that came out of the bosom of God, *ib.*
- God's, they are wicked men who seek not, ix. 155.
- Stephen*, character of his vision, i. 64.
- The appearance of his face as that of an angel might have something extraordinary in it, yet there was an ordinary reason for it, i. 348.
- The vision of (Acts vii. 55, 56), xxii. 70 ; the encouragements which a sight of heaven and heavenly things affords to the christian in his service for Christ, 73.
- Sting* of death implieth both the stroke and the anguish of it, ii. 442.
- Strangers*, God's children are, upon earth, and do so account themselves, vi. 173 ; because of their frailty, 174 ; because they are unsatisfied with their present state, *ib.* ; because they have an interest in a better inheritance, *ib.* ; they account themselves, because born elsewhere, 175 ; there lies their inheritance, *ib.* ; there are their kindred, 176 ; there they abide longest, *ib.* ; the necessary exercise of their graces, faith, hope, love, makes them so account themselves, 177.
- And pilgrims, the children of God, where they have best sight and most possession, are but strangers and pilgrims, xiv. 253 ; instances in Abraham and David, *ib.* ; wherein this resemblance between the saints and the condition of a sojourner consists, 254 ; the inferences of duty to be drawn hence, 257 ; means to get our hearts into such a frame, 260 ; what reason we have to count ourselves strangers and pilgrims, and what profit we will have by it, 262 ; reproof of those that fix their rest here, 263.
- And pilgrims, in regard of condition, all men are, xiv. 316 ; in regard of affection and disposition, the children of God only, *ib.* ; how the children of God count themselves so, *ib.* ; the reasons why, 317 ; the influence faith hath upon this work, 318 ; marks by which we may learn whether we have that faith to count ourselves strangers and pilgrims here, 319 ; motives to quicken us to this work, 321 ; directions, 323.
- Strength*, as men, lieth in reason ; as christians, in spiritual discourse, iv. 28.
- Spiritual, what it is, vi. 271 ; habits of grace are planted in the soul,

- 272 ; these are continued and increased, *ib.* ; there is a concurrence of God to the act, *ib.* ; is needful for duty, *ib.* ; for suffering, 273 ; for conflict, *ib.* ; is wholly of God, *ib.*
- Strictness*, reproof of those who scoff at, xix. 354 ; not inconsistent with christian liberty, 355.
- Striving*, none crowned without, yet not for, iv. 75.
- Study* is like the winter sun, which shineth, but warmeth not ; meditation is like blowing up the fire, when we do not mind the blaze, but the heat, vi. 140.
- Of religion, and the grounds of it, indispensable, vi. 294 ; the providence of God doth necessitate, *ib.* ; sad consequences of erring, *ib.* ; if we light upon a good way without search and choice, it is but a happy mistake, when we have no sufficient evidence, *ib.* ; truth has a greater force upon the heart when we see the grounds and reasons of it, i. 295.
- Stumbling*, not light, but love, keepeth from, ix. 214 ; of God, *ib.* ; of the law of God, *ib.* ; of the brethren, 215 ; by this love the love of the world and its prosperity is much abated, *ib.*
- Subjection* of the church to Christ founded upon his authority, xix. 458 ; consisteth of willing and hearty consent to become his subjects, 459 ; and actual obedience, *ib.* ; is willing, 460 ; thankful, *ib.* ; constant, 461 ; reverential, *ib.* ; universal and unlimited, 462.
- Submission* to God, as to the choice of instruments for promoting his glory, required, i. 77 ; and as to the ways in which it is to be promoted, *ib.* ; to God, what it is, iv. 358 ; subjection to God's will, of the whole man to God's whole law, *ib.* ; humble addresses, *ib.* ; referring ourselves to the disposal of God's providence, *ib.* ; must be performed sincerely, *ib.* ; freely, *ib.* ; faithfully, 359 ; considerations to urge this duty upon the soul, *ib.* ; the necessity of it, *ib.* ; the nobleness of it, *ib.* ; the utility and benefit of it, *ib.*
- To providence, a fruit of faith, ii. 150.
- To God's will before the event a notable piece of faith ; after the event, is patience, ii. 331.
- To God's will is not insensibility, ii. 335 ; but a work of the judgment, *ib.* ; and of the will, *ib.* ; grounds of, 336.
- To the will of God, we must pray and wait with, viii. 257 ; for the mercy itself, in what kind we shall have it, 258 ; for the time, *ib.* ; for the ways and means, *ib.*
- To authority, ecclesiastical, civil, or economical, a duty, xix. 432 ; to be in love, *ib.* ; in the fear of God, *ib.*
- Substance* (*υπεστασις*), meaning of the word, xiii. 324.
- Success*, not too much stress to be laid on, iii. 246.
- Suffering* and doing, which is the greater, xiii. 334.
- The greatest, to be chosen before the least sin, xix. 355.
- Sufferings* of Christ, inward, iii. 267 ; the assaults of spiritual wickedness, *ib.* ; the desertion of God the Father, *ib.* ; the impressions of his Father's wrath, *ib.* ; suffered to free us from the wrath which he endured, 268 ; to satisfy for our sins that he had taken upon him, *ib.*
- Of Christ at his death, many and bitter, iii. 274.
- Of Christ laid on him by ordination and appointment of God the Father, iii. 370 ; he chose Christ's person, and designated and deputed him to the office of mediator, *ib.* ; bestowed him upon us, 371 ; determined all his sufferings, *ib.* ; not only foreknew and permitted, but concur-

red, *ib.* ; by withdrawing of his presence and the sight of his favour, 372 ; by sustaining the wicked instruments in their natures, beings, and actings, *ib.* ; by serving his love and glory by their wickedness, *ib.*

Sufferings of God's people are very short, though they seem long, x. 118.

Christ's, greatness of, xi. 5 ; none of the martyrs suffered as he did, *ib.* ; his willingness to suffer for us, 6.

Meaning of the word, xii. 139 ; temporal sufferings and eternal glory contrasted, 140 ; the counterbalancing temporal things with eternal necessary to prevent the delusions of the flesh, *ib.* ; this may be done by comparing the things of time with the things of eternity, 141 ; our sufferings come from men, but our glory from God, 142 ; our sufferings earthly, but our glory heavenly, *ib.* ; our sufferings short, but our glory eternal, *ib.* ; as they are short, so they are light, 143 ; the need of faith in temporal afflictions, 145 ; and of the influence and assistance of the Holy Ghost, 146.

Are helps to repentance and recovery, xix. 10 ; God's people should endure willingly whatever he calleth them to, 11.

Of Christ, the believer's fellowship in, xx. 60.

Suicide, some christians committed, in Diocletian's persecution, to avoid torture, x. 392 ; condemned, *ib.* ; an act of disobedience and distrust, a disparagement and dishonour to the cause which we maintain, *ib.*

Sun, why a horse was offered to, i. 88.

An example of unweariedness in labour, xii. 177.

Supererogation, works of, an absurd error, iii. 90.

Works of, conceit of, disproved, ix. 385.

Superstition, a bastard religion, is tyrannous, and puts men upon tedious services, i. 33.

Is either negative or positive, ii. 13.

Support under afflictions promised as a great blessing, viii. 102 ; accepted by the saints with thanksgiving, *ib.*

Supremacy, absolute, belongeth only to him who hath absolute power, iv. 385.

God's, is not precarious, but is backed with a mighty power, vi. 197 ; in the management of even men, he useth much condescension, 198 ; in making motions of peace to them, *ib.* ; in seeking to reclaim them, and soften them by many mercies, *ib.*

Surety, Christ became, for us, iii. 355.

Help of God expressed under the notion of, viii. 248 ; implieth the danger imminent, *ib.* ; that distress and misery cometh as a debt that must be paid, 249 ; that we are insolvent and undone unless some course be taken to satisfy the creditor, *ib.* ; that the surety take on himself the obligation of the debt, *ib.* ; God a sufficient surety, *ib.*

Swallowed up, meaning of the expression, ' Mortality is swallowed up of life,' xii. 473.

Swearing, light and inconsiderate, a great sin, iv. 435 ; other sins have an external bait, here is nothing but glorying in our shame, *ib.*

Sympathy of Christ the true grounds of comfort to his people, iii. 254.

Tabernacle a type of Christ, i. 480.

Talents, what things are to be accounted, ix. 434 ; all things that God hath entrusted us with, or anything that may help to promote the glory of God, *ib.* ; sanctifying gifts or the graces of the Spirit, 435 ; subservient helps, 436 ; gifts of nature, both of the mind and body, *ib.* ; outward interests, as wealth, honour, and power, *ib.* ; provi-

dences, whether mercies or afflictions, *ib.* ; ordinances and instituted helps, 437 ; what it is to trade with them, *ib.* ; to use them well and holily, *ib.* ; to be laborious according to our gifts and opportunities, *ib.* ; obligation to improve, 439 ; they are not only a gift, but a trust, *ib.* ; this trust is committed to servants, *ib.* ; a formal covenant on their part, *ib.* ; the fruit, comfort, and excellency of the thing trusted is best seen in the use, 440 ; to employ aright requires prudence, 441 ; fidelity, 442 ; industry, *ib.* ; unfaithfulness in improving due to laziness, 445 ; foolish modesty and pusillanimity, 446 ; self-love, *ib.* ; distracting businesses or love to the world, *ib.* ; fear of danger in being publicly active for God, *ib.*

Talking, good, cannot excuse bad walking, iv. 225.

Tamerlane, his good speech to Bajazet, i. 161.

Taste, spiritual, object of, the word of God, viii. 48 ; in order to taste its sweetness, there must be a sound belief of it, *ib.* ; serious consideration, 49 ; close application, *ib.* ; a palate qualified, a hungry conscience, *ib.* ; mortified affections, 50 ; a good evidence of the new nature, *ib.* ; gives assured knowledge of the truth and worth of spiritual things, *ib.* ; life of grace mightily depends on, 51 ; will make us more useful to others, *ib.* ; may be lost, 52.

Teaching, divine, necessary for all that would walk in the way of God's statutes, vi. 341 ; we have lost our way to true happiness, *ib.* ; we can never find it of ourselves till God reveal it to us, *ib.* ; besides the external revelation, there must be an inward teaching, 342 ; this inward teaching must be renewed and continued from day to day, *ib.* ; is earnestly desired by God's children, 345 ; all must be directed to practice, 346.

Divine, outward by the word, viii. 41 ; inward by common illumination, *ib.* ; by special operation, 42.

Temple at Jerusalem, a sacramental place, and type of Christ, i. 58 ; God present in it symbolically, *ib.* ; analogy between it and heaven, 62.

Temporal things insufficient for blessedness, by reason of their want of fullness, vi. 114 ; sincerity, *ib.* ; eternity, *ib.*

Things, the heart destitute of grace is wholly carried out to, vi. 372 ; by natural inclination, *ib.* ; by inveterate custom, 373.

Blessings not to be absolutely expected, vi. 443.

Loss, none which can accrue to us by the violence of evil men should make us forsake our duty to God, vii. 153 ; we entered on the profession of christianity on these terms, 154 ; on this condition we possess and enjoy the good things of this world, 155 ; our gain in Christ is more than our loss in the world 156 ; the wicked never overcome but when they foil us of our innocency, zeal, and courage, *ib.* ; fainting argues weakness, if not nullity, of grace, 157.

Blessings, we have liberty to pray for, viii. 399.

Blessings, the work of faith respecting, xv. 85 ; why these are so often expressed in the covenant, 92 ; how dependence on God for, is to be manifested, 93.

Temporaries, graces of, are for matter true, but slightly rooted, and therefore not sound, vii. 340.

TEMPTATION AND TRANSFIGURATION, CHRIST'S, i. 255.

Temptation, the nature of, i. 200 ; is of God, when he trieth what of grace is in us, *ib.* ; or what of corruption, 201 ; this he does by offering occasions in the course of his providence, *ib.* ; by withdrawing his grace, 202 ; by permitting the temptations of Satan and his instruments, *ib.* ; God's, is not to inform himself, but to discover his

creatures to themselves and others, *ib.* ; his tempting always good, and for good, in mercy or judgment, 203 ; he tempts no man in the sense of soliciting to sin, *ib.* ; from God's temptations or trials we do not seek exemption, but only a removal of the judgment of them, *ib.* ; in his trials of his people he hath a good deal of care of them under their trials, 205 ; though in trials we manifest weakness as well as grace, the weakness is to be done away, and the grace strengthened, *ib.*

Temptation by Satan, permitted by God for his glory and our good, i. 205 ; the devil tempts by propounding objects, 206 ; by the persuasion of instruments, *ib.* ; by internal suggestions, *ib.* ; by stirring up the humours of our body, *ib.* ; special temptations, 207.

Why God permits it, i. 213 ; for his own glory, to discover the power, the freeness, and the riches of his grace, *ib.* ; for the trial of the grace which he hath wrought in us, *ib.* ; to humble us, 214 ; to conform us to Christ, *ib.* ; to mortify sin, *ib.* ; to make us more meek to others, 215 ; to give us experience of the care and providence of God, and the comfort of his promises, *ib.*

Cannot come to us without the will of God, i. 225 ; nor be overcome but by his power, 226.

How God to be treated with by those under, i. 229 ; as the author and giver of grace, *ib.* ; as the sovereign giver and disposer of it according to his own will, 230 ; as a judge, correcting some former sin by present temptation, 231.

To be kept from the evil of, a greater mercy than to be kept from the trouble of, i. 240.

Of Christ not merely a phantasm, i. 258.

Of Christ, the time of, i. 260 ; presently after his baptism, *ib.* ; after a testimony from heaven, *ib.* ; immediately before he entered on his prophetic office, *ib.*

Of Christ, why he submitted to it, i. 261 ; that the parallel between the first and second Adam might be complete, *ib.* ; that he might conquer Satan in the nature which was conquered, 262 ; that the saints might have comfort in their temptations, *ib.* ; that he might be an exact pattern of obedience to God, 263 ; manner of his defence by scripture and by resolution, 264.

Of Christ, first, wherein would have been the sin of turning stones into bread, i. 270 ; it would have been following the devil's advice, *ib.* ; would have implied doubt of the voice heard at his baptism, *ib.* ; distrust of God's fatherly providence, *ib.* ; would have been an act of vainglory, *ib.* ; Christ's answer, 272.

Of Christ, second, i. 276 ; Satan probably permitted to carry him through the air, 277 ; cunning of it, 278 ; if he had thrown himself down, and had failed, and died of the fall, Satan would have triumphed ; if he had escaped, he had still submitted to the devil's direction, *ib.* ; Satan had no power to cast him down, *ib.* ; temptation backed by a reason taken from scripture, *ib.* ; wherein his citation faulty, 279 ; mainly in the application, *ib.* ; soreness of the temptation, 280.

Of Christ, the third, i. 301 ; how the tempter showed him all the kingdoms of the world, 302 ; promise to give them to Christ false and vain, 303 ; yet there was a colour for it, 304 ; grievousness of, *ib.* ; represented in a matter grateful and pleasing, *ib.* ; bait shown before sin suggested, 305 ; does not seek to move by naked words, but by the sight of the thing, *ib.* ; the tempter asks and promises

- in the same breath, 307 ; the request seems small, the promise great, *ib.* ; Christ's answer to, 313.
- Temptation* to sin must needs prevail with us when we have not faith, vi. 402.
- Faith, where lively and strong, baffles and defeats all, xiii. 333 ; a means to discern our faith, 339.
- The absence of, not grace, xiv. 334.
- How far God may be said to tempt man, xiv. 353, 360.
- Necessary to the life of faith, xv. 102.
- The various ways in which we are tempted of the devil, xvii. 399 ; reasons why the devil is more terrible and dangerous than any human power, 400 ; why God permits this, 401 ; how God bridles and restrains the devil's rage, 403.
- Temptations* arising from our own hearts, i. 209 ; man's heart fruitful of all that is evil, *ib.* ; without the flesh, the world and the devil can have no power over us, *ib.* ; the flesh is not neutral, but active in impelling us to sin, 210 ; of the flesh and the world go in conjunction, and help each other, *ib.* ; the propension of corrupt nature to outward things set at work by hopes and fears, *ib.* ; these temptations cannot be avoided so long as any carnal affection remains unmortified, 211.
- We should not be dismayed at, i. 216 ; we have taken an oath to fight under Christ's banner, *ib.* ; that is not the happiest condition which is most quiet and free from the temptations of Satan, *ib.* ; Jesus Christ himself was tempted, 217 ; there are abundance of comforts under, *ib.*
- Directions how to resist, i. 219 ; be completely armed, *ib.* ; pray often for renewed influences, 220 ; resist with a resistance strong and vehement, thorough and total, constant and perpetual, 221 ; be watchful, 222 ; be not over-confident or over-diffident, 223 ; be more solicitous about duties than events, about sins than dangers, *ib.* ; be more jealous of Satan's wiles than of his open assaults, 224 ; beware of those corruptions that harmonise with the temptation, *ib.*
- Experience of, fits for the ministry, i. 261.
- Of Christ to be understood literally, i. 268.
- Covert, implicit, and indirect, more dangerous than the open, explicit, and direct, i. 271.
- The more grievous follow the lighter, and the last assaults and trials are usually the greatest, i. 307.
- Of man by man, iv. 87 ; by commands, *ib.* ; solicitations and entreaties, 80 ; encouragements, *ib.*
- To depart from God's ways, viii. 36 ; from the natural instability of our own hearts, *ib.* ; from the furious opposition and malice of Satan, 37 ; and his instruments, *ib.* ; from the example of others, especially those who are of esteem for godliness, 38 ; from the providence of God, in the manifold disappointments of a good cause, and the success of an evil, *ib.*
- The diversity, frequency, and continuation of, should make us wary, x. 289.
- Do not usually enter by the fore-door of reason, but the back-door of sensual appetite and carnal desire, xix. 209.
- Tempting* of God, a usual, but a great sin, i. 287 ; is either explicit or implicit, 288.
- Of Christ in the days of his flesh, i. 288 ; in his state of glory, and with respect to his invisible presence, *ib.*

Tempting of the Holy Ghost, i. 289.

Or proving of God in the way of duty, i. 290 ; allowed in some cases, *ib.* ; sinful, 291 ; generally by every transgression, *ib.* ; more particularly by distrust, 292 ; by requiring stronger proofs of his power and presence with us than he alloweth, *ib.* ; by presumption, 293 ; when we presume upon God's help, forsaking the ordinary means, *ib.* ; when we expect the end without the means, 294 ; when without call we rush into every danger, *ib.* ; when we undertake things for which we are not fitted, 295 ; when we come to him with an idol in our hearts, *ib.*

Of God, heinousness of, i. 295 ; great arrogancy to seek to subject the Lord to our direction, *ib.* ; great unbelief, 296 ; looseth the bonds of all obedience, *ib.* ; great ingratitude, *ib.* ; wantonness, *ib.* ; impatiency, 297 ; the greatness of the sin seen by the punishment of it, *ib.* ; safeguards against, 300.

Tertullian, the saying of, that trials were to be sought, an error, xvii. 4.

Testament, the new covenant has the notion of a, xv. 475 ; all things concur there that belong to a testament, 476 ; more especially the two legacies of pardon of sin and eternal life, 478 ; this is a new testament, 482 ; founded on Christ's blood, 483 ; the respect which the Lord's supper hath to the new testament, *ib.*

Testaments, old and new, agree in the least things, iii. 364.

Testimonies of God, mean the whole declaration of his will, in doctrines commands, examples, threatenings, promises, vi. 16 ; keeping of, implies laying them up in our hearts, vi. 18 ; observing them in practice, 19 ; twofold keeping, legal and evangelical, 20.

Of God, are his word, for it testifieth of his will, vi. 129 ; delight in them, 130 ; in the study of God's word, *ib.* ; in walking in the way of them, *ib.*

God's, are any declaration of his will, in doctrines, precepts, threatenings, promises, viii. 134 ; to take, for our heritage, is to count them our choicest portion, 136 ; to make it our work to get and keep up an interest in them, *ib.* ; to hold them by the tenure of heritage, a child's tenure, *ib.* ; to have actual use and possession, and live upon them, *ib.* ; are a full heritage, 137 ; sure, 138 ; lasting, 139 ; believers alone take them as their heritage, 140.

Taking of God's, for our heritage, breeds joy and rejoicing in the heart, viii. 146 ; from the portion itself, *ib.* ; from the disposition of the hearts of those who take them, *ib.* ; from the dispensations of God, 147.

God's, wonderful in their majesty and composure, viii. 335 ; for the matter and depth of mystery concerning God and Christ, the creation of the world, &c., 336 ; for purity and perfection, 337 ; for the harmony and consent of all the parts, *ib.* ; for power, 338.

Which God hath commanded, divine authority, truth, and righteousness, only to be found in, viii. 456 ; there is a godlike authority speaking there, and commanding that which it becometh none but God to command, *ib.* ; all that God hath required of us is very righteous and just, becoming God to give and man to receive, 457 ; truth and faithfulness of, may be considered either in revealing or performing, making or making good, his promises, 461.

Everlasting righteousness of God's, consisteth in the tenor of them, and in that the terms on which God dealeth with us are never re-

pealed, ix. 25 ; in the effects of them ; they endure for ever, both in a way of grace and glory, 26 ; should be deeply imprinted on our minds, 27 ; so it will establish our judgments against vain fancies, *ib.* ; will bind and help to obedience, *ib.* ; will conduce to our comfort in all the changes of men's affection towards us, 28 ; in the changes of God's dispensations to us, *ib.* ; against the difficulties of obedience, 29 ; in death, *ib.*

Testimonies, God's, there is an everlasting stability, and a constant unchangeable truth in, ix. 114 ; proof : from their author, the unchangeable God, *ib.* ; their foundation in God's immutable nature, and in the blood of Christ, 115 ; their use, to be declarations of God's mind and will to the creature, *ib.* ; to be props and pillars of our confidence, *ib.*

Of the Spirit, a privilege of believers in time, and not left to the revelation of the last day, proved from the experiences of the saints, the promises of God, and by several arguments and reasons, xiv. 12 ; grace necessary to receiving, 15 ; must be exercised in holy duties, 16 ; the little reason they have to complain of the want of, who are negligent in the exercise of grace, 18 ; persuasions to the observance of these things, 19 ; how we may discern the testimony of the Spirit, 20 ; how we should behave ourselves with reference to this matter, 21.

Testimony, christianity is, xx. 280 ; given to the world by Christ and his apostles, 281 ; faith is the believing of, 282.

Thanks, in the worst times, much more cause for, than for complaints, vii. 167.

Thanksgiving to God a great and necessary duty, enjoined by him and expected from us, iii. 108 ; chiefly for spiritual and eternal mercies, *ib.* ; especially for election, 109.

Or singing to God's praise, the proper duty in time of mercies or comforts, iv. 441.

A special duty, wherein the people of God should be much exercised, vii. 160 ; a necessary duty, 161 ; a profitable duty, 162 ; a delightful duty, 163 ; exhortation to, 164 ; directions for, 166.

Public, for private mercies, lawful, convenient, in some sort necessary, vii. 284.

To God a great and necessary duty, the very life and soul of our religion, xi. 324 ; chiefly for spiritual mercies, 325 ; especially our conversion, 326 ; and that of others, *ib.*

A debt we owe to God in acknowledgment of his benefits, xvii. 96 ; is required by justice, *ib.* ; commanded by God, *ib.* ; maintains the supply of mercies, 97 ; by it spiritual graces are exercised, 98 ; reasons why we should especially own spiritual benefits, 100 ; not only those vouchsafed to ourselves, but to others, 103 ; the increase of grace should be acknowledged as well as the beginnings, 105 ; it is matter of thanksgiving that our inward man is in a good state, however it be with our outward condition in the world, 106.

Relateth to God's benefits, as praise to his excellencies, xix. 417 ; by way of commemoration, *ib.* ; by way of adoration, 418 ; in what sense to be always, 419 ; to be for common and temporal mercies, 420 ; for spiritual mercies, 421 ; for ordinary and extraordinary mercies, 422 ; for our personal mercies, and other men's, *ib.* ; for public and private mercies, *ib.* ; for our mercies in hand and mercies in hope, 423 ; for things prosperous and things adverse, *ib.* ; a necessary duty, 425.

Thieves, allegories of the ancients as to Christ's being crucified between two, iii. 477.

'*Things* not seen,' what they are, xiii. 353; various renderings of the words, 433.

Thirst, Christ's, on the cross, xix. 30.

Thomas, his doubt, conviction, and confession, i. 485; two things considerable in his confession—appropriation and dedication, 490.

Thorn in the flesh, by that expression the apostle intendeth some bodily distemper and racking pain, suppose the stone, gout, strangury, inward ulcer, or some like disease, iv. 451.

Thought, sins of, vi. 145; uncleanness, revenge, envy, pride, covetousness, *ib.*

Sins of, are least regarded by the world, viii. 155; especially if there be not apparent wickedness in them, 156; hateful to every one who loves God's law, *ib.*

Thoughts, vain, are either vain arguings and reasonings, viii. 157, vain musings, 158; or vain inventions and devices in the heart, 160; sins most usually committed in thought are uncleanness, *ib.*; revenge, *ib.*; envy, *ib.*; pride, 161; covetousness, *ib.*; distrust, *ib.*; on what grounds we are to make conscience of, *ib.*; because they are irregularities contrary to the law of God, *ib.*; God hath declared much of his displeasure against them, *ib.*; the most considerable of all sins in respect of the subject, *ib.*; from their nature, *ib.*; their kind, 162; their number, 163; remedies against, 165.

Three sorts of, in which the flesh and spirit bewray themselves, xi. 460; discourses and musings, *ib.*; musings, 460; counsels or devices, *ib.*

Threatenings, the lawful use of, xii. 45; their necessity during the law of grace, *ib.*

Danger of slighting God's, xviii. 30.

Time and eternity, things of, compared, xiv. 463.

And season, duty of christians to look to the due improvement of, xix. 361.

To be employed for glorifying God, xix. 365; for saving our own souls, *ib.*; encouragements to redeem, 367; too much time hath been spent already, *ib.*; we are accountable to God for time, *ib.*; that only is ours which is spent well, in pleasing God, and doing good, 368; not ours to dispose of at pleasure, *ib.*; a precious commodity, worth looking after, *ib.*; the present is the best, *ib.*; none but may be serviceable to some good use, 369; we have much work to do, *ib.*; the slight price we are to give for, 370; many things are apt to steal away and engross, 372.

Times, evils of those in which Dr Manton lived, v. 392.

Special, should be set apart for converse with God, ix. 74; rather than fail, should be taken from sleep, *ib.*

Titles of God in scripture, always suited to the matter in hand, xi. 114.

Toleration by the magistrate should be wider than by the church itself, ii. 70.

Indiscriminate, a great prejudice to religion, v. 407.

Tongue, bridling of, an important part of religion, iv. 170; why James doth pitch so much weight upon, *ib.*; because it is a chief part of our respect to our neighbour, *ib.*; because of the natural proneness that is in us to offend with the tongue, *ib.*; because it was the

- special sin of the age, *ib.*; because it seemeth so small a sin, 171; because it is usually the hypocrite's sin, *ib.*; because there is such a quick intercourse between the tongue and the heart, and the tongue is the best discovery of it, *ib.*; bridling of, is restraint of lying, swearing, cursing, railing, ribaldry, 172.
- Tongue*, to be able to bridle, an argument of some growth and happy progress in grace, iv. 278; how to be done, 293.
- Evil, is like a fire (James iii. 6), iv. 286; for the heat of it, *ib.*; the danger of it, 287; the scorching, *ib.*; kindled from hell, *ib.*; evils of, of large and universal interest, diffusing themselves into all conditions and estates of life, 288.
- Sins of, xviii. 389; lying, *ib.*; railing, 390; ribaldry, *ib.*; self-boasting, *ib.*; cursing and swearing, *ib.*; scorning and deriding at the power of godliness, 391; idle discourse and foolish garrulity, *ib.*
- Is our glory, xix. 202; because thereby we can express the conceptions of our minds for the good of mankind, *ib.*; and to the glory of God, 203; sins of, 204; filthy speaking, *ib.*; foolish speaking, 205; jesting, 206.
- Tradition*, unwritten, hath no evidence of its certainty, iii. 25.
- Doctrine of christianity is necessarily, iii. 127.
- No rule of faith, v. 494; yet not all to be rejected, 498.
- TRADITIONS, UNWRITTEN, SCRIPTURES SUFFICIENT WITHOUT, v. 485.
- Traditions*, either human or divine, iii. 123; unwritten not of authority now, 129; all not to be rejected, 134.
- Trajan's* testimony to the early christians (Tertullian), xiii. 383.
- TRANSFIGURATION, CHRIST'S TEMPTATION AND, i. 255.
- TRANSFIGURATION OF CHRIST, i. 337.
- Transfiguration* of Christ a solemn confirmation of his person and office, i. 337; a pledge of our glorious estate, *ib.*; witnesses of, why three, why those three, 338; mountain of, supposed to be Tabor, *ib.*; preceded by prayer, 339.
- Of Christ, a necessary and solemn act of his mediation and manifestation to the world, i. 354; how his body, when transfigured, differed from his body at other times, *ib.*; and how from his glorified body, 355; ends of, to show what Christ was, *ib.*; what he should be, 356; and what we shall be, *ib.*
- The voice from heaven Christ's instalment in his mediatory office, and showed his fitness for it, i. 392.
- The disciples' fear and astonishment, i. 402; their comfortable and gracious recovery by Christ, 408; event and issue of, 410.
- Transgressors*, Christ reckoned amongst, especially in his death and sufferings, iii. 477; by wicked men, *ib.*; by godly men, *ib.*; by God, *ib.*
- '*Treasure* in heaven,' what it is, xvi. 481.
- Tree* of life, what it was to Adam, xxii. 16.
- Trial*, why God makes, of his people, iv. 30; not for his own information, but that we may know ourselves, *ib.*; to convince the world by their constancy, *ib.*; with a respect to the day of judgment, 31.
- Trials*, God's people are not to seek, but to submit to, when they come upon them, i. 204.
- The common lot of the saints, xiv. 355; sometimes to discover their weakness, sometimes to manifest their glory, *ib.*; are sent to prove their sincerity, faith, patience, and humility, 356; our obedience, contempt of earthly things, and our dependence and trust in God, 357; seeing we must have trials, we should look for and prepare

- for them, *ib.* ; how we may prepare for them, 358 ; the greater the faith, the greater the trial, 359 ; how far God hath a hand in them, 360 ; we are never tried to purpose till we are tried in our Isaac, 362 ; cases when we are put to such a trial as the offer of our Isaac, *ib.* ; the influence of faith on the heart in the midst of trials, 365.
- Trials*, the saying of Tertullian, that they were to be sought, an error, xvii. 4.
- The need and use of, xx. 328 ; the comfort of, 329.
- Tribulations* and persecutions often befall God's dearest and choicest servants, xx. 200 ; that they may be conformed to their Lord, *ib.* ; for the trial of their faith, *ib.* ; to show the excellency of their spiritual estate, which can afford them joy under the saddest temporal condition, *ib.* ; because they need these sufferings, 201.
- Trinity*, doctrine of, stated and proved, x. 158.
- TRIUMPH OVER DEATH, THE SAINT'S, ii. 439.
- Triumph*, Christ's, his sufferings the ground of, iii. 457.
- TROUBLE, FAITHFUL FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST MUST EXPECT, ii. 113.
- Trouble*, sins incident to a time of, i. 224 ; impatience, *ib.* ; murmuring and repining against the Lord, *ib.* ; a spirit of revenge against instruments, *ib.* ; fainting in duty, *ib.* ; closing with sinful means of escape, 225 ; despair and distrustful thoughts of God, *ib.* ; questioning our interest in God, *ib.*
- Sincere followers of Christ must look for, ii. 115 ; proved from Christ's own example, *ib.* ; the nature of his kingdom, *ib.* ; the spirit of Christ, *ib.* ; the covenant of Christ, 116.
- The best way to ease, is a holy divertisement, vi. 221 ; of these, none so good as God's word, *ib.* ; for this end it must not be so lightly read, but our hearts must be exercised in the meditation of it, 222.
- Deliverance from, is from the mercy of God, vi. 439.
- Sins incident to a time of, viii. 281 ; uncomely passion and unadvised speeches, *ib.* ; some indirect course to come out of, *ib.* ; private revenge, or meeting injury with injury, *ib.* ; waxing weary of our duty, *ib.* ; despairing and distrustful thoughts of God, *ib.* ; questioning our interest in God by reason of the cross, *ib.*
- God seeth it necessary sometimes to exercise his people with a great deal of, ix. 16 ; in their collective body and community, *ib.* ; in particular persons, 17 ; this trouble may breed much vexation and anguish even in a gracious soul, 19.
- Is a proper time for prayer, ix. 63 ; though trouble drive us to the throne of grace, we shall not be unwelcome, *ib.* ; in the greatest, crying will bring relief, *ib.*
- Of heart, christians should carefully guard themselves against, xvi. 345 ; in what it consists, *ib.* ; the causes of it, 347 ; the nature of it, 348, 353 ; why christians should not let their hearts be troubled, *ib.* ; what we must do to prevent it, 350 ; faith a means to allay heart-trouble, 352 ; directions what to do in time of trouble, 361.
- Troubles*, God's people not exempted from, but comforted under, vii. 28.
- Should drive us to the word of God, vii. 335.
- Probabilities when God is about to bring, on the church, x. 368 ; after God hath laid in many spiritual comforts, *ib.* ; after trials and reformations, *ib.* ; when reformations stick in the birth, *ib.* ; when there are great differences between God's own people, *ib.* ; when libertines and fanatical persons increase in power and numbers, 369 ; when there is a decay of the power of godliness, and formality and contempt of the word take place, *ib.* ; when religion hath re-

- ceived wounds in the house of her friends, *ib.* ; when professors grow worldly, *ib.* ; when they come, should not be thought strange, 370.
- TRUE CIRCUMCISION, DESCRIPTION OF THE, ii. 23.
- True* nobility is to have a holy kindred, xiv. 394.
- Trust* a part of faith, ii. 351 ; respects all Christ's offices, *ib.* ; is practical, 352.
- In God, an exercise of faith, whereby looking upon God in Christ through the promises, we depend upon him for whatever we stand in need of, and so are encouraged to go on cheerfully in the ways wherein he hath appointed us to walk, vi. 449 ; how we ought to depend on him for temporal supplies, 450 ; not to set him a task to provide meat for our hearts, *ib.* ; not to be faithless and full of cares about outward supplies, 451 ; cannot be absolutely confident of particular success in temporal things, *ib.* ; must commit ourselves to God's power, and refer ourselves to God's will, *ib.* ; our duty, 452 ; benefits of, 453 ; marks of, 455.
- In God binds him to his promises, vii. 23 ; for his own honour, *ib.* ; with condescension to his people, 24 ; with respect to their enemies, *ib.* ; may be pleaded in prayer, *ib.*
- In God, what it is to trust ourselves in the hands of the Almighty, xxii. 23 ; how it is expressed and recommended to us in Ps. xci. 1, 26 ; how necessary a duty for all christians, 30.
- Trusting* God, utility and profit of, xviii. 59 ; grounds of, *ib.* ; to be against carnal reason, 60 ; and carnal affection, *ib.* ; upon his gospel assurance, *ib.*
- Truth*, the good of the understanding, iii. 19.
- Love of, what not to receive, iii. 79 ; in order to this love, the truth and doctrine of Christ must be made known, *ib.* ; it is not committed by bare weakness of understanding, 80 ; truth may be received in the light of it while not in the love of it, *ib.* ; this love must not be a slight affection, 81 ; just punishment of those who receive not love of the truth, 83.
- Constancy in the profession of, requires conviction and assurance of the grounds of it, iv. 58.
- Plain enough to those who wish to know, difficult enough to harden others to their ruin, iv. 107.
- Pretences of, are a disadvantage, arguing a conviction of the, and yet a refusal of it, iv. 232.
- Must not be violated for peace's sake, lest while we make peace with men we make a breach with God, iv. 316.
- Good to know in its frame, iv. 351.
- Honoured by a bold and resolute defence of it, v. 113 ; all should contend for, 119 ; private christians, *ib.* ; magistrates, 120 ; ministers, 121.
- The perfection of a rational creature, v. 130.
- The good of the understanding, vi. 130.
- The way of, to be chosen on the evidence of reason, vi. 310 ; of scripture, 311 ; and of the Spirit, *ib.*
- God's, the instrument of sanctification, x. 418 ; God's way of working is by light, and in infusing grace he beginneth with the understanding, *ib.* ; it must be a true, and not a false light, 419 ; every true light will not serve the turn ; it must be the light of the word, 420 ; not every part of the truth worketh, but only the gospel, *ib.* ; the gospel worketh not unless accompanied with the Spirit, 421 ; it

- must not only be presented in the power and demonstration of the Spirit, but received and applied by faith, *ib.*; sanctification by, is most suitable to God's honour, 422; and to man's nature, 423.
- Truth* must be added to goodness and righteousness, xix. 285; because they cannot be preserved without it, *ib.*; their life lieth in, 286; means of, 287.
- Truths*, general, we often think we believe, when we do not at all, or not with such a degree of assent as we imagine, ii. 302.
- Supernatural, in the word of God, are above natural light, but not contrary to it, iii. 23.
- Great, never do well when perverted by fancy, iii. 271.
- Of the word of God specially fitted for comfort in troubles and persecutions, vii. 331; God hath a fatherly care over us, 332; the humble soul, which casts itself into the arms of God's providence, shall either have a full and final deliverance, or present support, *ib.*; God doth wonderfully disappoint the designs of wicked men, *ib.*; the proud are near a fall, *ib.*; God will never leave us wholly destitute and in difficulties insupportable, *ib.*; God's usual way is by contraries, 333; it is better to suffer than to sin, *ib.*; holiness, faith, meekness, and patience are better treasures than any the world can take from us, *ib.*
- Our profession must be kept even in lesser, viii. 323.
- In scripture of two sorts, the porch and the secret chambers, viii. 346, 348.
- The most precious will do us no good unless they be digested into love and practice, xi. 318.
- Trying* (proving) all things is a christian's duty, xix. 295; every one that feareth God should be acquainted with his word, and have his senses exercised therein, *ib.*; we are not to take up opinions by chance, but by choice, 296; the judgment of others will be no plea for us in the last day if we be wrong, *ib.*; cautions against abuse of, *ib.*; the end of, is that we may walk as children of the light, 298.
- Turning* to God, in what it consists, xxi. 476.
- Twelve* tribes scattered abroad, show the severity of God's justice, iv. 19; the infallibility of his truth, 20; the tenderness of his love to the believers among them, *ib.*
- Unbelief*, positive cause of, is in ourselves, iii. 215.
- Heinousness of the sin of, v. 176; no sin doth so much dishonour God, *ib.*; against it God hath most declared his displeasure, 177; is the mother of all sin, *ib.*; final, an undoubted evidence of reprobation, *ib.*; depriveth us of much good of the comforts of providence, *ib.*; some more heinous than others, 180; is negative, 182; or positive, 183; reigns in all natural men, *ib.*; is broken in the godly, 185; its cure, 187.
- Natural to us; a sin we suck in with our milk, vi. 400; coldness in duty, and boldness in sinning, come from, 402.
- Unbeliever*, like a wave of the sea, always rolling; believer like a tree, much shaken, but firm at root, iv. 51; though he may receive something, has no right to expect anything from God, 52.
- Unchangeableness* of God, iv. 113; lessons from, 114.
- Unclean* persons can have no commerce with God, iv. 371.
- Uncleanness* excludeth from the kingdom of Christ, xix. 215; because it is contrary to the covenant by which the entrance is into that kingdom,

ib. ; because of God's express exclusion, *ib.* ; from the heinous nature of the sin, 216 ; because unclean persons are not meet for heaven, 217 ; the exclusion so absolute and peremptory, that it admits no exception but that of sincere repentance, *ib.* ; if the children of God fall into, they lose not their right, but their present fitness, 219.

Uction, extreme, of the Papists, is but a ridiculous hypocrisy, iv. 447.

The saints have a special, from Christ, to enlighten and confirm them in the truth of the gospel, xxii. 95 ; what this unction or anointing is, *ib.* ; the author or fountain of it, 99 ; the benefit, 'Ye shall know all things' (1 John ii. 20) ; how this is to be understood, *ib.* ; why this anointing confirms us in the truths of the gospel, 101 ; what we should do to get this unction, 103.

Understanding is the great wheel of the soul, and guide of the whole man, iii. 423 ; all the great opposition to faith is from, *ib.*

David begs for, again and again, vi. 256.

Got by the precepts of the word is better than that gotten by long experience, viii. 16 ; it is more exact, *ib.* ; a more sure way of learning wisdom, whereas experience is more uncertain, 17 ; a safer and a cheaper way of learning, *ib.* ; the way by age and experience is long, and so a man's younger age must be miserable and foolish, *ib.*

Is vain, unless it lead to hatred of sin, viii. 63 ; he is made wise that is made better, *ib.*

Spiritual, necessity of, ix. 30 ; because of our ignorance and folly, which is the cause of all our sin, *ib.* ; because knowledge is our cure, *ib.*

Undertakings must all be referred to the will of God, iv. 393 ; measuring all our actions by his revealed will, *ib.* ; undertaking any action more comfortably when we see God in it, *ib.* ; not binding the counsels of God in our desires and requests, *ib.* ; constantly asking his leave in prayer, *ib.* ; still reserving the power of his providence.

Ungodliness, God being the first cause, ignorance is ungodliness, v. 136 ; and want of dependence on him, 137 ; and not observing his providence, *ib.* ; and not sanctifying the things we use and undertake by asking his leave and blessing, 138 ; God being the chiefest good, it is ungodliness not to think often of him, *ib.* ; not to delight in communion with him, 139 ; not to fear to offend him, *ib.* ; not to care to please him, 140.

God being the supreme truth and authority, it is ungodliness not to receive the counsels of his word with all regard and reverence, v. 140 ; not to yield him reverence in worship, *ib.* ; not to give a willing subjection of our hearts and lives to his laws, 141 ; God being the utmost end, it is ungodliness not to aim at his glory in all acts, natural, moral, spiritual, *ib.*

What is meant by, xvi. 75 ; what it is to deny ungodliness, 77 ; what it is in itself, 78 ; negatively, in denying God his due honour, reverence, and obedience, *ib.* ; positively, in putting actual contempt and scorn upon God, 88 ; cautions against, *ib.* ; means to avoid, 89.

Unification of the heart, v. 453.

Union, necessity, excellence, and utility of, ii. 73 ; seven uniting considerations, 74.

Mystical, is of believers with Christ, the head by faith, with one another by love, x. 323 ; moral, is of believers with one another, consisting of consent in doctrine, *ib.* ; and a mutual agreement and concord of affection, *ib.* ; the end of Christ's incarnation, 324 ; no one thing so

much inculcated in his sermons, 325 ; or in his prayers, *ib.* ; because it is such an excellent blessing, 326 ; because he foresaw how much the church would need this blessing, *ib.* ; that we might know that unity among believers is a possible blessing, 327 ; to encourage us to pray for it, *ib.* ; he died for this end, 328 ; aimed at in his ascension and the pouring out of the Spirit, *ib.* ; the end of his gracious dispensation, 329 ; the end of his ordinances and appointments in the church, *ib.*

Union of believers with Christ the head, and with one another, hath some resemblance to the unity that is between the divine persons themselves, x. 333 ; spiritual, close, constant, and inseparable, holy, consisting with order and distinction, *ib.*

Mystical, with Christ the head, xi. 24 ; the whole Trinity concerned in, *ib.* ; yet the honour is chiefly devolved upon Christ, the second person, 25 ; whole Christ is united to a whole believer, *ib.* ; is secret and mysterious, yet real, 26 ; explained, so far as our present light will bear, by analogy to the union between the head and the members, 27 ; of the members one with another, *ib.* ; instituted as a means to convey to us all grace here, and glory hereafter, 28 ; the ground of that exchange which is between Christ and sin, 29 ; those who are once interested in, are safe, *ib.* ; the honour of, 30 ; the happiness of, 31 ; known by the Spirit of Christ, *ib.* ; resemblance between, and the unity of the persons in the divine nature, 34 ; between it and the hypostatical union, 35.

Mystical, fruits of, that tend to the conviction of the world, xi. 50 ; love and mutual serviceableness, *ib.* ; holiness and strictness of life and conversation, 51 ; contempt of the baits of the world and allurements of sense, *ib.* ; cheerfulness and comfortableness in the midst of troubles and deep wants, *ib.* ; faithfulness in the duties of relatives, *ib.* ; constancy in the profession of faith, 52.

With Christ represented in conception by many metaphors, xi. 182 ; engrafting, 183.

With Christ is more than a relation to him as a political head, xi. 389 ; of every particular believer with Christ is immediate, person with person, *ib.* ; is effected by regeneration, or the converting work of his Spirit, 391.

Between Christ and believers is by the Spirit on Christ's part, and by faith on ours, xii. 380.

With Christ, love the mutual bond between us and Christ, as Christ is between God and us, xii. 418.

With Christ not perfect in the present life, xii. 453.

With Christ the fruit of faith, xiii. 330.

With Christ, what it is, xxi. 24 ; must not only be begun, but continued, 26 ; why union with Christ is inconsistent with sin, 28.

UNITY IN THINGS INDIFFERENT, A PERSUASION TO, ii. 68.

UNITY, HOPES OF, IN AND BY DIVIDED AND DISTRACTED TIMES, v. 377.

Unity of the churches, a privilege of the coming of the day of the Lord, v. 382 ; purity the ground of, 385 ; promises to this effect, *ib.* ; this will best suit with the great and happy estate of the latter days, *ib.* ; God will then make some visible provision against the scandal of dissension, 386 ; the misery of those times doth seem to enforce the greater unity, 387 ; comfort from, 388 ; and order brought in by confusions, 389.

- Unity*, exhortation to endeavour after, v. 393 ; to the people, *ib.* ; to the ministry, 400 ; to the parliament, 404.
 Consists in an agreement in the truth, not in a coagulation of errors, v. 497.
 Between God and Christ, xi. 33 ; of essence, as he is the second person of the Trinity, *ib.* ; personal, of the two natures, as mediator, 34.
- Universal* redemption disproved, x. 250.
- Universalists* confuted, iii. 453.
- Unlawful* things not only must be denied for Christ, but things lawful must be disesteemed for his sake, xx. 14.
- Unmercifulness* a sin most unsuitable to grace, iv. 230 ; is unlike God, *ib.* ; it consists in a defect in giving, and a refusing to forgive, *ib.*
- Unprofitableness*, a damning sin, x. 11. See *Omission*, sins of.
- Unregenerate* men, differences among, i. 15.
 All are void of righteousness, yet all are not alike sinful, xi. 337.
 Can do nothing good, the regenerate nothing perfect, xi. 477.
 There may be some amiable qualities in, xvi. 458.
 Men represented in scripture as asleep in sin, xix. 331 ; their sleep is natural, 332 ; or judicial, *ib.* ; represented as dead, *ib.* ; manner of recovery, 334 ; exhortations addressed to, 338.
- Unrighteousness*, what? iii. 94 ; chiefly false ways of worship, 94.
- Unsanctified* heart is drossy, and little worth, xviii. 395 ; as to acceptance with God, 397 ; as to the benefiting and profiting of others, 398.
- Unseen* and eternal things, the man who has made them his great scope and aim can easily do and suffer anything for God, xviii. 275 ; looking upon, implieth faith, 276 ; hope, 277 ; and expectation, 278.
- UNWRITTEN TRADITIONS, SCRIPTURE SUFFICIENT WITHOUT, v. 485.
- Upbraiding*, God's not, what it is, iv. 39.
- Uprightness*, what it is, xxi. 379 ; its inconsistency with the reign of sin, 382 ; the privileges of being upright, *ib.* ; how we may know whether we are upright with God or not, 385 ; persuasives, 387 ; means, 388.
- Vainglory* sometimes the motive principle to excellence in public gifts, xiii. 447.
- Valentinian* for conscience' sake gave up the place of a tribune, and afterwards became emperor, vii. 156.
- Valley* of weeping, what in Ps. lxxxiv. 6 ; is 'the valley of Baca ;' the Septuagint renders 'the valley of weeping,' xii. 181.
- Value* of things to be estimated by eternity, xx. 103 ; sin, afflictions, sufferings for Christ, death, *ib.* ; enjoyments of the world, duties, graces, Christ, the favour of God, 104.
- Vanity* of the creature, creation teaches us a lesson of, xii. 180.
- Vehemency* in religious duties, how true from false may be distinguished, xiii. 463.
- Veil* that must be taken away before we can have a true discerning of the mysteries revealed in the word of God, vi. 164 ; the veil of ignorance, *ib.* ; of carnal knowledge and wisdom, 165 ; of prejudice and corrupt affections, *ib.* ; of carnal sense, *ib.*
- Veneration* of relics but a fond conceit, xiv. 416.
- Vengeance* of God on the wicked, sometimes lawful to imprecate, iv. 469 ; moral difference between public and private persons, *ib.* ; in public cases we must not desire revenge directly and formally, 470 ; God's people do not desire vengeance against particular persons, *ib.* ; their prayers are against the plots rather than the persons of their enemies, *ib.*

Victory, Christ's, over sin, death, and the law, ii. 443 ; is imputed to us, *ib.* ; the benefit is imparted and applied to us, 444.

The christian's, not to be measured by prosperity or adversity, but by his adherence to God, vii. 156.

Of faith, the true believer is more than conqueror over the trials and tribulations of the world, xii. 393 ; the author or cause of the victory is Christ working through the Holy Spirit, *ib.* ; the nature of the victory explained, *ib.* ; the ends or things we contend for, 394 ; how we are more than conquerors, 396 ; who they are that will be more than conquerors, *ib.* ; reasons why we are more than conquerors, 397 ; persuasions to get such a degree of faith, love, and patience as will make us more than conquerors over the world, 403.

Of Christ over Satan is by his incarnation, xviii. 19 ; by his passion, or death on the cross, 20 ; by his resurrection and ascension, *ib.* ; by his sitting at the right hand of God, *ib.* ; by his secret and invisible providence, *ib.*

Violence, none in Christ, in spirit, words, or practice, iii. 366.

Virgins, christians are called, for the purity of their faith, ix. 321 ; of their worship, 322 ; of their conversation, *ib.*

Foolish, do not represent members of a church corrupt in worship, discipline or doctrine, ix. 323 ; nor scandalous members of a pure church, *ib.* ; nor only those that have a false or counterfeit profession, *ib.* ; but those who had a common, though not a saving, work in their hearts, *ib.* See *Common work*.

Virtue cannot be supported without the thought of a world to come, iii. 7.

Vision of Christ, in what it consists, xx. 460 ; is either ocular or mental, *ib.* ; three things are necessary to—a prepared faculty, a suitable object, and the conjunction of these, 462 ; the season when we shall enjoy this, 466.

Volition and velleity, difference of, vi. 50.

Waiting for the coming of Christ would much quicken us to repentance, ii. 251 ; engageth to holiness, and putteth life into obedience, *ib.* ; would produce a more heavenly temper and conversation, *ib.*

Implies an earnest expectation of what is to come, and a patient submission to God for the present, xii. 187.

Walking with God, what it implies, xiv. 52.

With God, in what it consists, xv. 405 ; reasons enforcing this duty, 409.

Wander, readiness to, men are the more sensible of, the more experience they have of the ways of God, vi. 96 ; through a large sense of duty, *ib.* ; and greater experience of difficulties and dangers, 97.

Wantonness, how the grace of God may be turned into, v. 49.

War, in a wicked man's heart, between him and his conscience, iv. 326 ; between conviction and corruption, 326 ; between corruption and corruption, *ib.*

Wars, whether any are lawful, iv. 327 ; nothing in scripture expressly against, *ib.* ; seemeth to be somewhat in the letter of scripture for, 328 ; may be proved lawful by such reasons and consequences as do well suit with the analogy of faith and the intent of the scriptures, *ib.* ; so little in scripture about it, because nature is so prone to, 329 ; conditions to lawfulness of, *ib.* ; a good cause, good authority, a right end, a right way of conducting, *ib.*

Watchfulness needed against occasions of sin, x. 398 ; and privy distempers of heart, 399.

Watchfulness, omission of, xi. 286; when we grow bolder with sin, and the temptations and occasions of it, *ib.*; when we make a small matter of those corruptions which were once so grievous and intolerable, 287; when we content ourselves with the customary use of holy duties, *ib.*; when we neglect the state of our hearts, *ib.*; spring and rise of, in the soul, from faith, 289; fear, *ib.*; love, 290; is never out of season, *ib.*; must be against Satan, 291; the world, *ib.*; the flesh, 292; more particularly the object is our thoughts, 293; occasions, 294; all appearance of evil, *ib.*; to prevent the sin itself, *ib.*; the mischief of heinous or presumptuous sins, 295; evil customs, 296; darling sins, 297.

Necessity of continual, xx. 82; the course of temptation may be altered, *ib.*; corruptions are sometimes strangely disguised, *ib.*; there is danger after suffering, *ib.*; when there seemeth to be least danger, there is often most cause of fear, *ib.*; when conscience is asleep, a child of God may fall into grievous sins, *ib.*

Watching is made up of prudence and diligence, ix. 413; with respect to our present state and safety, 414; for the avoiding of evil, *ib.*; for the performance of our duties, 416; *unto* prayer, *in* prayer, *after* prayer, *ib.*; with respect to our future state, that we may be ready to meet Christ at his coming, 417; consisteth in a deep and lively sense of Christ's appearing, *ib.*; in preparation, 418; and that speedy, *ib.*; serious and thorough, 419; constant and daily, 420; reasons to move us to, 421.

Way, every man naturally turneth to his own, iii. 308; implieth a defect or want of guidance, 309; a following the dictates of our own corrupt minds, *ib.*; and a fulfilling the desire of a corrupt will, 310; our own way not the right way to please God, 311; or to do good to ourselves, 313; cautions against our own way, *ib.*

Ways of God, undeserved censures cast upon, yet at length wisdom found in, ii. 101.

And laws of God, the more others despise, the more should a gracious heart love and esteem, viii. 308; because the ways of God are still the same they were before, *ib.*; God expects more from gracious hearts, 309; the good and bad do exercise and keep one another in breath and vigour, 310; unless our love be exercised at such a time, it will not hold out against so great a trial, *ib.*; because it is very acceptable to God, and a note of sincerity, to increase in zeal when others desert him, 311.

Of God, the privilege and duty of those whose hearts are set upon, to go from strength to strength, xviii. 317; reasons, 318; that we may recover what we have lost, *ib.*; to preserve what we have, *ib.*; to attain to what is promised, *ib.*; to perform what is required, 319; to answer the patterns set before us, *ib.*; to answer our many experiences, *ib.*; to answer the care and cost that God hath been at with us and for us, 320; motives, 322.

In which God and Christ are glorified when the work of faith is fulfilled with power, xx. 324; passively and actively, *ib.*; in the heart, *ib.*; with the tongue, 325; in our lives, *ib.*; by fixing this glory as the end of our lives, *ib.*; by doing such things as best suit with this end, 326; by our patience and constancy under troubles and persecutions, 327; by open confession and praise, 328; in deeds many ways, *ib.*

Weakness, God pardoneth much, where he findeth anything of grace and sincerity, iv. 268.

- Weakness*, a sense of, should not be a discouragement, but an advantage, iv. 350.
- Weary* of God, what it is to be, xv. 306 ; is a sin incident to persons and communities, *ib.* ; the causes of it, 310 ; the effects of it, 311 ; the heinousness of it, 313 ; the terribleness of the judgment, *ib.*
- WEDDING SERMON, ii. 162.
- Wedding* garment, the danger of coming to God's feast without one, xvi. 13 ; what is meant by God's feast, 14 ; this feast serveth two purposes, the honour of God and the refreshment of man, 14 ; there is in it all that can be expected in a feast, *ib.* ; what coming to this feast is, 15 ; what the wedding garment is, 16 ; the odiousness of the sin of coming to the feast of God without a wedding garment, *ib.* ; the certainty of discovery, 18 ; the dreadfulfulness of the doom and punishment, 20.
- Weddings*, Jewish, description of, ix. 320.
- Weight*, kinds of, to be laid aside, ii. 415 ; delights of the world, *ib.* ; business and cares of the world, 416.
- ' *Weight* of glory,' meaning of the phrase, xx. 371.
- Well-doing* is obeying righteousness, or acting agreeably with those obligations which lie upon us with respect to our relations to God, to others, and to ourselves, xix. 150 ; is obeying the truth, or acting agreeably to the will of God revealed in the scriptures, 151 ; must be patient continuance in, *ib.* ; two arguments for patient continuance in, 155.
- WHAT KIND OF PERFECTION IS ATTAINABLE IN THIS LIFE, ii. 56.
- ' *What* shall we do to be saved ? ' (Acts ii. 38), the usual question of men wounded in spirit and in straits of conscience, xxi. 256 ; the weightiness of the question, *ib.* ; not a legal question, 257 ; when it is fitly propounded, *ib.*
- Whispering* is privy defamation of our neighbour, ii. 279 ; great evil of, *ib.* ; all private complaints against others are not, 280.
- Wicked*, certainty of their resurrection, i. 469 ; raised by Christ as a judge, not as a redeemer, *ib.*
- Their present state sad, at death worse, in hell worst, ii. 449 ; their death usually full of terror, *ib.* ; conscience and Satan accuse, the body curseth the soul for an ill guide, and the soul the body for a wicked instrument, 450.
- Or lawless one, the Antichrist, iii. 57 ; manifestly the Pope, *ib.* ; what meant by his revelation, *ib.* ; progress of his tyranny, 58 ; his ruin, 59 ; not presently to be destroyed, but to waste away by a lingering consumption, 60 ; the Lord the author, his word the instrument, of this consumption, 63 ; his providential word, *ib.* ; his gospel, 64 ; his final destruction, 65 ; his prevalency no blemish to providence, 93.
- Men, God usually retaliates and dealeth with, according to the manner and way of their wickedness, iv. 230.
- Men, can they have good desires ? vi. 50.
- Company of, how far to be avoided, viii. 180 ; necessary civil converse allowed, *ib.* ; must not forsake the church because of some wicked men therein, *ib.* ; not hindered from endeavouring to do good to their souls, 181 ; should not be familiar with them, *ib.* ; should not enter into a durable relation with them, such as will put us in continual converse, *ib.* ; if necessitated to keep company with them, must not comply with them in their sins, *ib.* ; hard to keep familiarity with them, and escape the contagion of their example, 182 ; they will molest and disturb us in the exercise of godliness by their scoffs and persecutions, 183 ; will seek to pervert us by carnal suggestions and

- counsels, *ib.* ; familiarity with, will be a blemish and scandal upon our good name, *ib.* ; if we have any love for God, their company must be grievous and offensive to us, *ib.* ; a familiarity with them may harden them in their sin, 184 ; great judgments follow evil company, *ib.*
- Wicked* of the earth are as dross, viii. 223 ; as to external show, *ib.* ; their intermingling with purer metal, *ib.* ; their worthlessness in God's esteem, *ib.* ; their inability to stand trial, 224 ; God's business in heaven is to put them away as dross, 225.
- Prosperity of, not incompatible with the divine justice, viii. 444 ; God's word doth sufficiently declare his displeasure against them, though his providence do not, *ib.* ; there are other punishments besides outward afflictions, 446 ; providence must not be viewed by halves, but in its whole frame and connection, *ib.* ; the solemn triumph of God's justice will be at the last day, *ib.*
- Men, authors of their own ruin, ix. 153.
- Impenitent, and persecutors, and contemners of the word, we ought to pray for, because we know not the secret purposes of God's grace, x. 251.
- Cannot hurt the godly but when God permitteth, xviii. 44 ; God can protect against the fraud as well as the violence of, *ib.*
- Prosperity of, they have from the hand of God's providence, but his heart is not with them, xviii. 379 ; they are hated and rejected of God, which is the greatest calamity that can befall a creature, *ib.* ; God can, when he pleaseth, easily ruin and destroy them, 380 ; he will not always bear with them, 381.
- Filled with his own ways, xviii. 470 ; it may be in this life, 471 ; certainly in the world to come, *ib.*
- Their punishment at the last day exceeding great and terrible, xx. 254 ; eternal destruction, 255 ; objection answered, *ib.* ; punishment of loss and of sense, 257 ; God inflicts with his own hands, 259 ; this very dreadful, 260 ; pledges of, 261.
- Wickedness*, the vilest, will have a fair covert and pretence, iv. 206.
- The word and rule discovereth, when our blind consciences do not, iv. 211.
- Studied, is worst of all, iv. 303.
- Of his enemies, God doth for a while bear with, viii. 298 ; to show his bounty and goodness to all his creatures, *ib.* ; to chastise, exercise, and prove his own people, *ib.* ; though he bears long, he hath his times to punish, 300 ; with respect to himself and his own glory, *ib.* ; with respect to his people, 301 ; with respect to the wicked, *ib.* ; when the time is come, he will make speedy work, 302 ; his time is usually when the impiety and insolency of wicked men is come to a height, *ib.* ; when disobedience and contempt of God is general, 303 ; when it groweth impudent and outrageous, *ib.* ; desperate and incorrigible, *ib.* ; when they run into unnatural sins, *ib.* , excessive violence and vexation of the saints, *ib.* ; in such times, we may mind God of the deliverance of his people, 305.
- Will* of God, is either his decree concerning future events, or that which he hath revealed concerning our duty, i. 121 ; it is for accomplishment of the latter we pray, *ib.*
- God's, that we may do, we must have a heart to do it, skill to do it, and strength to do it, i. 123.
- God's, arguments to make conscience of, i. 129 ; Christ's example, *ib.* ;

God's right, *ib.* ; our own incapacity, *ib.* ; the benefit that accrueth to us, 130.

Will of God, motives to a more tender regard of, i. 130 ; his absolute authority to command, *ib.* ; the equity of what he hath commanded, *ib.* ; to be given up to our own will a great judgment, 131 ; to be subject to, the truest liberty, *ib.* ; he who hath a heart bent to, hath the clearest knowledge of the mind of God, *ib.* ; God will surely punish violations of, 132 ; directions to do, *ib.* ; there must be some solemn time of resigning our wills to him, *ib.* ; and that without bound or reservation, 133 ; make great conscience of special things concerning which God has more expressly given charge, *ib.* ; be willing to obey God at whatever cost, 134 ; do not disobey him for whatever profit, *ib.*

Mistakes about doing, i. 134 ; pretending to do it in the general, but sticking at it when it comes to particulars, *ib.* ; commending and approving, but not practising, *ib.* ; having high thoughts of it, under temporary impulses, without serious choice and invincible resolution, 135 ; being urged to do God's will by a seeming awe on the conscience, while yet the heart is averse from God, *ib.* ; an idle wish that we were brought under the power of it, *ib.* ; halving the will of God, 136 ; loathness to know the will of God, 137.

God's intended, is either secret or declared, ii. 330.

A twofold, as a twofold nature, in Christ, ii. 333.

Of God, disposing, demands absolute submission, iii. 144 ; governing, requires obedience, *ib.*

God's, is the supreme reason of all things, vi. 43.

Our own, is the proudest enemy Christ hath out of hell, i. 122 ; more corrupted than the understanding, *ib.*

Winning of Christ is getting an interest in him and his benefits, xx. 36 ; ransom from the wrath of God, 37 ; the favour of God and comfortable access to him, *ib.* ; restoration of the image of God, *ib.* ; supply of all wants, 38 ; hope of eternal life, *ib.* ; excellence of, above all other gain, *ib.* ; is most comfortable, universal, everlasting, and sanctifying, *ib.* ; in order to, must use the means, 40 ; submit to his terms, *ib.* ; trust in him that is true, *ib.*

WISDOM IS JUSTIFIED OF HER CHILDREN, ii. 93.

Wisdom means the doctrine of the gospel, ii. 94 ; children of, professors of the gospel, *ib.*

Justified more by works than a verbal plea, ii. 102.

And prudence shown by God in the dispensation of grace by Christ, ii. 257 ; as to the purchase and impetration of grace by the incarnation and death of his son, *ib.* ; as to the publication of it in the gospel or covenant of grace, 259 ; in the application of grace to particular believers, 262.

Needed for the right management of affliction, iv. 39 ; to discern God's end in it, *ib.* ; to know the nature of it, whether to fear or destroy, 40 ; to find out our duty, *ib.* ; to moderate the violence of our own passions, *ib.* ; must be sought of God, *ib.*

And knowlege do well together, the one to inform, the other to direct, iv. 299 ; true, endeth in a good conversation, 300 ; the more true the more meekness, *ib.*

True, is pure and clean, iv. 310 ; in heart and life, *ib.* ; from error and sin, 311 ; in word and deed, *ib.* ; evangelically and morally, 312 ; in inward frames and outward administrations, *ib.* ; from real defilements and defilements in appearance, 313.

- Wisdom* of God in creation, v. 368 ; in providence, 369 ; seen in the methods of his grace, *ib.*
- God imparts to his people through his commandments, vii. 482 ; not craft or wisdom to do evil, 483 ; not worldly policy, *ib.* ; not great skill in arts and civil discipline, *ib.* ; not a bare knowledge of God's will, 484 ; that we get by the commandment directs us how to keep in with God, who is our great wisdom, 485 ; teacheth us how to give the enemy no advantage and needless provocation, 486 ; God's people were thus their enemies in their general choice, as they have a nobler end, 488 ; use choice and apt means, 489 ; vigorously prosecute fit means to the best end, 490 ; lieth in diligent and constant labour in the spiritual life, 491 ; circumspection and watchfulness, *ib.* ; self-denial, *ib.* ; wiser as to the conduct of the controversy between their enemies and them, viii. 3 ; they have made God their friend, *ib.* ; as long as God hath work for them to do, he will maintain them and bear them out in the midst of all dangers, 4 ; in case things succeed ill with them, they have provided for the worst, 5.
- Of the flesh is downright opposition and enmity to God, xi. 469 ; human nature may be so far forsaken as that among men there should be found haters and enemies of God, *ib.* ; we hate God if we love him not at all, 470 ; if we love him not so much as we ought to do, or not so much as we love some other thing, *ib.* ; if we rebel against him and disobey his laws, 471 ; God's enemies carry on a double war against him, offensive and defensive, 472 ; all the enemies of our salvation make us enemies to God, 473 ; the enmity arising from the flesh is the more strengthened and increased, the more it gaineth and corrupteth the mind, 474.
- Of true religion, how it is to be justified of its children, xiii. 118.
- Of God appeareth in the order of creation, xiii. 390.
- Is the heavenly doctrine revealed in the word of God, especially the gospel, or salvation by Christ, xviii. 367 ; true peace and pleasure found nowhere but in obedience to, 369 ; this peace by walking, not by speculation, 370.
- Necessary to accurate walking or ready obedience, xix. 379. See *Obedience.*
- Of the flesh acts on the understanding and the heart, xx. 10.
- The benefit we enjoy by, xxii. 13 ; the persons qualified to enjoy this happiness, 14 ; restores men to that life and happiness which they lost in Adam, 14.
- Wise*, God is, v. 368 ; is only, 371 ; originally and independently, *ib.* ; essentially, *ib.* ; infinitely, *ib.*
- Wisest* and best men not always happy, ii. 325.
- Wish* and desire, difference between, vi. 429.
- Witnesses*, saints are, to God, by their faith and the fruits of their faith, ii. 412 ; why called a cloud, *ib.*
- Wives*, their unquestionable duty to be subject to their husbands, xix. 438 ; the subjection consisteth in reverence, *ib.* ; in obedience, 439 ; grounds and reasons of, 441 ; impediments, 444 ; motives, 445.
- Women* have special need to take heed of worldly pleasures and lusts, iv. 345.
- Wonder*, holy, ariseth from comparing our own wretchedness with God's rich mercy in Christ, v. 24.
- The word of God never entertained rightly till entertained with, viii. 344 ; we have not a true sight and sense of the word if we admire it

not, *ib.* ; should be excited upon every new looking, *ib.* ; a great help to practice, *ib.* ; means, 345.

Wonders in the doctrines of scripture, vi. 261 ; he who is sensible of, will be talking of them, 263 ; and ought to be, for the honour of God, the edification of others, and his own profit, 264.

Two great, that any man should reject the christian faith, and that any should embrace it and yet live sinfully and carelessly, x. 9.

Two, that any should suspect the christian faith, and think it a fond credulity ; that any should embrace the christian faith and yet live sinfully, x. 105.

Word of God, will ward off the blows of every temptation, i. 314.

Of God, intelligible enough in all necessary matters, iii. 23 ; illumination of the Holy Spirit doth accompany, 24 ; humble and sincere minds have promises of direction, *ib.*

When heard, is to be received, iv. 149 ; and that with meekness, *ib.* ; disputing against, is a judging of ourselves, 150 ; in God's hand, is an instrument to save our souls, 151 ; sometimes called the word of truth, and sometimes the word of life ; the former noting its quality, the latter its fruit, 151 ; to be used till we come to heaven, 152.

Hearing of, good, but must not be rested in, iv. 152 ; doers are the best hearers, 153 ; bare hearing deceives men into a good opinion of themselves, 158

Of God, a glass to show us God and Christ, iv. 159 ; ourselves, 160 ; a perfect law, 163.

Not to be forgetful hearers of, requires attention, iv. 167 ; affection, *ib.* ; application and appropriation, *ib.* ; meditation, 168 ; observation of the accomplishment of truths, *ib.* ; practice, *ib.* ; committing to the Spirit's keeping and charge, *ib.*

Of God, a full declaration of his mind, vi. 16 ; certainty of it, *ib.*

Of God, a remedy against natural uncleanness, vi. 84 ; as a rule, *ib.* ; as an instrument, 85.

Of God, to be hidden in the heart, vi. 100 ; that we may have it ready for use, 101 ; because God doth so in our conversion, 104.

Of God, beneficial to enlighten and direct, vi. 191 ; to comfort in all straits, 192 ; to supply and strengthen, *ib.*

Of God, until owned as a divine and infallible truth, hath no efficacy upon us, vi. 401.

Of God, dearer to a gracious heart than all the riches in the world, vii. 262 ; offereth benefits which riches cannot buy, 264 ; grace that we get by it can easily supply the want of the world, the world cannot supply the want of grace, *ib.* ; wealth can only support and maintain the present life, the word directs to the blessedness of the world to come, 265 ; outward things vain and uncertain, the word endureth for ever, 266 ; why the children of God value it so, 267 ; they are enlightened by the Spirit, while others have their eyes dazzled by external splendour, *ib.* ; they are affected with their true necessities, *ib.* ; they measure all things with respect to the world to come, 268 ; they have had trial and experience of the word, what a comfort it hath been to them, *ib.*

Of God, the remedy for sinking under afflictions, vii. 423 ; represents to us God, the true fountain of all comfort, *ib.* ; Jesus Christ the meritorious and procuring cause, *ib.* ; the Spirit the applier, *ib.* ; faith as the instrument whereby we receive comfort, *ib.* ; pardon and life the true matter of comfort, *ib.* ; the renewed or sanctified the parties capable, *ib.* ; teaches not only how to bear afflictions, but how to improve

them, *ib.*; to depend upon God for the moderating of them and deliverance from them, *ib.*; shows the experience of God's people under the cross, *ib.*; teaches that God governs all things for the good of his people, *ib.*

Word of God abideth for ever in respect of its obligation and authority, vii. 461; in its fruits, *ib.*; eternal life is in it, 462; God's people have a great love to, 463; it deserves this love in respect of its author, *ib.*; because of its matter, 464; recommended by its truth, *ib.*; its goodness, 466; its profoundness, 468; because of its use, 469; the saints readily yield this love, 471; because their hearts are suited to it, *ib.*; because they have tasted its goodness, *ib.*; love of, will wean us from sinful delights, 472; will make our hearts stable and upright with God, 473; will give us a clearer understanding in the mysteries of godliness, *ib.*; directions to get this love, 474; signs of it, 476.

He that would keep, must stand at a great distance, in heart and practice, from all sin, viii. 26; a christian must do both, *ib.*; and both with the whole heart, *ib.*; the one required in order to the other, 27; avoiding evil first in order, *ib.*

Of God, called a light, as it shows us the right way to our desired end, viii. 65; as it convinceth of errors and mistakes, both in judgment and practice, 66; by way of prevention, *ib.*; of humiliation and reproof, *ib.*; in regard of comfort, *ib.*; in outward darkness, *ib.*; in spiritual troubles, 67; types of, *ib.*; the pillar of fire, *ib.*; the lamp of the sanctuary, *ib.*; natural men have a sense of, and therefore fear, 68; godly men find a great deal of comfort and satisfaction from, *ib.*; those who go against, do sensibly miscarry, *ib.*; is like its author, 'God is light,' 69; those by whom it was given were holy men, 70; God's end in giving, 71; that heavenly doctrine might be kept free from corruption, *ib.*; that it might be read of all ages and sexes, 72; for converting of men, or leaving them without excuse, *ib.*; to be a rule of faith and manners, by which all doctrines are to be tried, *ib.*; is a full direction, *ib.* See *Scriptures*, clearness of.

We ought not only to love, but to love above all worldly things whatever, viii. 315; from the worth of it, and the reward and benefits that are gotten by studying and obeying it, 316; because, if it be not preferred before earthly things, it is not received with any profit and good effect, 317; unless we love it above riches, we cannot possess riches without a snare, *ib.*; because, where grace is planted in the heart and prevaieth, the desire of wealth is mortified, and worldly lust denied, 318; signs of such an esteem and affection to the word of God, 319.

Of God, wonderful, viii. 333; in itself, *ib.*; in its effects, *ib.* See *Testimonies*, God's.

Of God, purity of, viii. 478; pure in itself, because it is a holy rule, *ib.*; as it maketh us pure if we diligently attend to it, *ib.*; an appointed instrument by which the Spirit works in purifying our hearts, *ib.*; a fit instrument for this end, 479; as containing pure precepts, *ib.*; pure examples and patterns, 480; offering great helps to purity, *ib.*; excellent encouragements and motives from the rewards promised to the pure, 481; and terrible threatenings to the impure, 482.

Of God, love of, viii. 482; not an outward receiving, or a loose owning of it as the word of God, *ib.*; not a bare approbation of its purity

and holiness, 483 ; not a pang or passionate delight, *ib.* ; such a love as causeth us to consult with it on all occasions, read, hear, meditate upon it, *ib.* ; such as makes us chary of transgressing it, *ib.* ; makes us cheerfully and readily do what it requireth to the glory of God and our salvation, 484 ; is a rooted affection, *ib.* ; without this love we cannot be accepted of God, *ib.* ; our work will be very difficult, grievous, and irksome, *ib.* ; we will never be constant with God, 485 ; ground of this love is the purity of the word, 486.

Word of God is righteousness, ix. 3 ; because it is a copy of that righteousness which is in God, *ib.* ; because it is the rule and pattern of all righteousness to men, 4 ; because it is the great instrument to promote righteousness, *ib.* ; is everlasting righteousness, 5 ; in the constitution of it, *ib.* ; in the effects of it, 6.

A sure, should be entertained with a pure faith, ix. 119.

Of God, a true reverence of, must be planted in the heart, ix. 169 ; this reverence must not drive us from, but draw us to the word, and make us tender of violating it, 170 ; God's stamp and impress upon, shown by its authority in searching the heart, 172 ; its mighty power and force, because of the Spirit that goeth along with it, 173 ; its authority in pronouncing sentence upon every person and every action, *ib.* ; profit of standing in awe of, 174 ; means to get an awful frame of heart, 175 ; trembling at, doth not hinder delight in, 177 ; God's people do greatly rejoice in, *ib.* ; they find glad tidings in it, suitable to their souls' necessities, 178 ; they have felt benefit by it, 179 ; they love God, and they have more of him in his word than anywhere else, *ib.* ; they who love, must hate sin, 181 ; and none hate sin unless from love of the word, 182 ; the more we hate sin, the more we will be prepared to love the word, and the more we love the word the more will we hate sin, *ib.*

Of God, keeping of, the greatest commendation Christ could give of his disciples, x. 217 ; to keep, is to feel the force of it in our hearts, *ib.* ; it must be expressed in our life, *ib.* ; there must be a perseverance to retain it in our conversations, *ib.*

Necessity of, to work faith, xi. 21 ; is the warrant of our faith, 22 ; is the power of God to produce it, *ib.* ; God has so appointed because it is most suitable to man's nature, *ib.* ; it is agreeable to his own counsels to try the reprobate by an outward rule and offer, wherein they have as much favour as the elect, 23 ; it commendeth his grace to the elect, *ib.*

The proper cure for soul diseases, xiii. 285 ; must not only be written, but preached, *ib.*

Of God, meaning of the term, xiii. 429.

Use of faith in hearing, xv. 154 ; a proper object of faith, 155 ; in order to profit, hearing must be accompanied by faith, *ib.* ; the necessity of this, 163 ; the efficacy of it, 169 ; reproof of divers sorts of hearers, 171 ; exhortation to entertaining the gospel with sound and lively faith, 171 ; how we may get this necessary faith, 172.

The relation of, to faith, xvii. 126 ; the acts of faith with respect to the word, 129 ; the effects these acts produce, 131 ; notes of a strong and grown faith in respect to the word, 133.

Of God, has a threefold sense, xvii. 151.

Of God, a more conduible means to persuade us to repentance than if one should come from the dead, xvii. 353 ; proof of this doctrine, 354.

- Word* of God, or doctrine of faith in Christ, convincing power of, xviii. 361.
Its power, xxi. 238; an argument of its divine authority, *ib.*; an encouragement to preaching, 239; must be soundly taught and closely applied, 240.
- Words* are but the female issue of our thoughts, works the male, vi. 138.
Christians should make great conscience of, xix. 201; our tongues are not our own, to speak what we please, *ib.*; our words and speeches will be brought into the judgment, *ib.*; words do much discover the temper of the heart, 202; our tongue is our glory, *ib.*; our speeches are regarded by God, 203; the well-ordering of our words is a great point of christianity, *ib.*
- Work*, not the matter maketh good, but the principles, v. 29.
Glorifieth God; not words and empty praises, but a holy conversation, x. 179; every man hath his own, *ib.*; given him by God, 181; by his word, *ib.*; by his providence, *ib.*; this must be finished and perfected, 182; to finish and perfect should be our great care, *ib.*; reasons, *ib.*; this is the end why we were made, *ib.*; from God's right and interest in us, *ib.*; we shall be called to our account, 183; because of the great benefit that cometh to us by it, *ib.*; the end ennobleth a man, *ib.*; God will have his glory upon us, if not from us, 184; it must be our last end, otherwise our mind will be distracted by a multiplicity of ends and objects, *ib.*
- Of faith, what it is, xx. 315; assent, consent, and dependence, *ib.*; confession and obedience, *ib.*; better discerned in the external than the internal acts, 316.
- Of glorification, God hath appointed that we should first glorify him before he glorify us, xx. 332; inconveniences which would otherwise follow, *ib.*; we must glorify him on earth before he glorify us in heaven, 333; reasons why, *ib.*; of whom Christ will say, 'I am glorified in them,' 334; it is a promised glory, *ib.*; the suitableness between our work and reward, 335; we may certainly and lawfully expect this glory, *ib.*; our work stated, 337; means prescribed, 340; motives, 341.
- Working* together for good, all things that befall God's children are directed by his providence to their eternal happiness, xii. 258; the nature and extent of this privilege, 259; doth not comprehend sin, *ib.*; the manner in which it is brought about, 261; its end and issue, *ib.*; the certainty of this privilege, 263; the grounds of it, *ib.*; is not to be determined by our fancies and conceits, but by the wisdom of God, and its respect to the chief happiness or true good, 264; not always the good of the body or of outward prosperity, nor presently enjoyed and felt, 265; a particular good must give way to a general, *ib.*; if true of individuals, is much more true of the church, 266.
- Workmanship*, christians are, of God, by natural creation, and by supernatural renovation, ii. 385.
- Works*, whether duties to God or man, not the first moving cause to incline God to show us favour, ii. 404; not our righteousness, *ib.*; not the first means to apply the grace of the Redeemer, *ib.*; follow the acceptance of Christ, as necessary to continue our right to freedom and life, 405.
- Judgment according to, iv. 221; of the wicked shall be produced as the merit of their ruin, of the godly as evidences of glory, *ib.*
- An evidence of true faith, iv. 239.
- Ratify the Spirit's witness, iv. 258.

Works without faith, a roof without a foundation; faith without works, a foundation without a building, v. 335.

Good, the reason of the sentence of absolution, x. 56; hence Papists infer their merit and causal influence upon eternal life, *ib.*; answer, *ib.*; it is one thing to give a reason of the sentence, another to express the cause of the benefit adjudged, *ib.*; works merit not the blessing, for they are due; they are imperfect; they are done by servants redeemed at an infinite price, 57; they are produced as undoubted evidences and fruits of a true and sound faith, *ib.*; faith is implied in all the works mentioned, 58.

Their room and place with respect to punishment and reward, xiii. 79.

Not a joint cause with faith of justification, xiii. 477.

Not the condition of justification, but the evidence of it, xiv. 5.

Only the works of those who are righteous are accepted with God, xiv. 22; reasons why, *ib.*

Not excluded by grace, xvi. 41; opinions of Chrysostom, Ambrose, Bernard, and Bellarmine, 43.

Of the Lord, both his works in the days of his flesh, and all his works of creation, redemption, and daily providence, are all good, xx. 364.

World is, as it were, the devil's chess-board, i. 237; men of, their evil influence upon christians, 238.

Good and evil things of, used by Satan as means of temptation, i. 265.

And worldly things are the bait and snare which the tempter offereth to Christ and his followers, i. 308; made use of to divert from God and heavenly things, *ib.*; and to draw to some open sin for the world's sake, 309; temptations from, may prevail with christians, *ib.*; all its glory should be an ineffectual and cold motive to a sanctified soul, 311.

Carnal, its opposition to the gospel, ii. 105.

Carnal, cries up a false happiness as its god, and a false righteousness as its Christ, ii. 181.

Think christians credulous fools, iii. 163.

Usual customs of, most opposite to christianity, iii. 225.

To seek the friendship of, the ready way to be God's enemy, iv. 345; and grace incompatible, *ib.*

Its false judgment of sins and graces, iv. 383.

Motives to wean the heart from, vii. 69; he that taketh up his rest in this world is but a higher kind of beast, *ib.*; none are of so noble and divine a spirit as those who seek the heavenly kingdom, *ib.*; worldlings choose a sorry immortality, a mock eternity, instead of the true, 70; when once our qualification is clear, every step of our remove out of this world is an approach to our abiding city, *ib.*; every degree of grace makes our qualification clearer, *ib.*; directions, *ib.*; entertain with delight the promises of the life to come, *ib.*; take heed of what may hinder the heavenly journey, *ib.*; be content with the provisions that God affordeth in the way, 71; if the world increase upon us, take the more care to have the comfort of it in the world to come, *ib.*

Who prefer it before the word, vii. 268; those who revolt from the profession of the truth for the world's sake, *ib.*; those that will not forsake anything for the word's sake, 269; in part by those who turn back on the word and ordinances for grace's sake, *ib.*; those who are drawn off by earthly things from the pursuit of heavenly, *ib.*

Its temptations generally either by terrors, ix. 212; or allurements, 213.

- World*, Christ's refusal to pray for, x. 241 ; Arminian explanations answered, *ib.* ; did not, could not, doth not, pray for the reprobate world, 243.
- Why God does not take his people from, immediately on their conversion, x. 284 ; for his own glory, that the sweetness and power of his grace may be discovered, *ib.* ; to try them, 285 ; to convince the world by their example, 286 ; to fit them for glory, *ib.* ; by weakening their desires to the world, *ib.* ; making them long for glory, *ib.*
- A christian must live in, as one who is not of, x. 381 ; there is a difference in the inward principles, *ib.* ; they are under different rulers, 382 ; there is a difference in their course and conversation, *ib.* ; and in their aims and ends, *ib.* ; reasons, *ib.* ; the example of Christ, *ib.* ; their new birth, 383 ; their great and glorious hopes, *ib.*
- Their general conviction of the truth of christianity, a very great blessing to the church, xi. 39. See *Conviction*, &c.
- Reprobate, can never have any true knowledge of God, xi. 124 ; objection answered, 126.
- Condition of, at the coming of the Lord, xii. 168.
- A book, God's power the hand that wrote it, his wisdom the pen, and the letters the creatures, xiii. 392.
- Compared to the body, a host, and a house, xiii. 415.
- Wherein the order and beauty of it consists, xiii. 416 ; the disorders in, the fruit of the fall, 420 ; whether made in six days, 431.
- What is meant by, xv. 112 ; in what sense we are said to have victory over, 113 ; the great hindrance from keeping the commandments, 116 ; the work of faith in overcoming, 117 ; how we may bring our hearts to such a frame that we may most easily obtain a victory over the world, 119.
- Meaning of the word in 1 John ii. 16, xvi. 93.
- This present, our abode in, the only time wherein we are to discharge the duties of our heavenly calling, xvi. 164 ; must be done speedily, earnestly, and constantly, *ib.* ; reasons why, 166.
- How Christ, as the Lamb of God, is said to take away the sins of, xviii. 486 ; how he takes them away, *ib.*
- What is meant by, xxi. 103 ; the hatred of, to the children of God, 106 ; not to be wondered at, 108.
- Worldliness* in christians is spiritual adultery, iv. 343.
- We can never be enough cautioned against, x. 406 ; because of our proneness to it, *ib.* ; the heinousness and danger of it, 407 ; the unsuitableness of it to the divine nature, *ib.* ; dissuasives from, 408 ; not a fault to enjoy the world, but to have a worldly spirit, *ib.*
- Worldly* things, reasons for contentment with the portion of them that God gives us, i. 164 ; God stands on his sovereignty, *ib.* ; nothing is deserved, *ib.* ; he knows what proportion is best for us, *ib.* ; he gives such a portion as his people are able to bear, *ib.* ; contentment is itself one of his best gifts, 165 ; there may be as much love in a lesser portion as in a greater, *ib.*
- Men, their care and industry in pursuit of wealth, a reproach to the lukewarmness of christians, iv. 73.
- Advantages and profession of the gospel, folly of attempting to reconcile, iv. 118.
- Estate, danger of, from the multiplicity of cares, x. 395 ; and our own weakness, 397.
- Honours and advantages, how far they are to be renounced and forsaken, xiv. 431 ; are to be entertained with holy jealousy and watch-

fulness, 432; must be renounced when sinful in themselves or when they cannot be kept and enjoyed without sin, 433; the influence of faith upon this renunciation, 434.

Worldly lusts, what they are, xvi. 91; how they are to be denied, 96; the difficulty of denying them, 98; how grace teaches us to deny them, 100; how unseemly and unsuitable they are to our condition, 101; reproof of those that do not deny, but feed and serve worldly lusts, 103; exhortation and arguments to a denial of, 105.

World's duration, in comparison with eternity, short, iv. 423.

Worm that never dieth, means the anguish of conscience; fire that is not quenched, the anger of God, ii. 222.

That never dieth, fitly representeth the gnawings of conscience, v. 225.

Worship, to suit with the nature of God, must be spiritual and holy, not pompous and theatrical, i. 34; of many is flat atheism, *ib.*

God to be sanctified in, i. 87.

The great end of, not so much the relief of man as the honour of God, i. 244; praise the noblest part of, 245.

Implieth an act of the judgment, an act of the will, and an external act of the body, i. 316; due to God, 317; and to God alone, 318; cannot be given to any creature without idolatry, *ib.*; from its nature, as a profession of dependence and subjection, cannot be terminated on any object but God, 319; to give to the creature, is without command, promise, or example, and therefore without faith, *ib.*; is against the express command of God, the threatening of scripture, and the examples recorded in the word, 320.

Heart, most seen in love and trust, i. 321.

To rest in outward duties of, a mark of pharisaism, ii. 12.

Internal, ii. 24; external, 25; reasons for, 26; reproof of those who neglect, 27; of those who perform it by halves, 28; of those who do not worship in the spirit, 29.

Controversies about, have ever been, are, and, for aught we can see, ever will be, vi. 290.

Must be done out of conscience and with respect to the institution, xiii. 440.

Carnal men may join with the people of God in external duties of, xiii. 445; yet in the performance there is a sensible and manifest difference, 452; why it is so, and wherein the difference consists, *ib.*; this sensible difference ariseth from the influence and efficacy of faith, 465; why faith occasions this difference between worship and worship, 466.

Natural conscience and custom will put men upon the duties of, xiii. 446; vainglory and secular advantage two carnal ends from which men act in such duties, 447; a bare performance of the outward duties of, not enough, 448; notes by which we may discern the working of natural conscience in the duties of religion, 450; wherein lies the difference between the worship of the godly and the carnal, 453; this difference the effect of faith, 466.

Cases of conscience—(1.) Whether it be not a mere natural act to perform duty with an eye to punishments and rewards? xiii. 457; (2.) Whether the children of God may not be surprised with perfunctory deadness, and wicked men by high impulses be raised to extraordinary quickness and zeal in duties of worship? 461; (3.) Whether the children of God may not sometimes reflect upon a carnal end in the duties of worship, and how far this is a note of insincerity? 464.

Worship, reverence a special qualification of, xiv. 403 ; gesture in, *ib.*

Duties of, how we may be said to do too much in, xv. 342 ; must not go beyond what is written, 344 ; love feasts, how far warranted, 345 ; ceremonies and gestures, how far they may be used, 346 ; how we may be said to do too little in duties of worship, 347 ; reasons why we must closely adhere to the commandment, 349 ; the scripture the only sure rule for the clearing of scruples and doubts as to duties of, 352 ; marks by which we may discover whether we take the word as the ground and rule of our duties, 355 ; what it is to use the ordinances in faith and obedience, *ib.*

A privilege ; not only the way to heaven, but the beginning of heaven, xix. 99.

The chief, consists in imitation, xix. 176.

Worthiness, three kinds of, xx. 213 ; *dignitas equalitatis, convenientiæ, dignationis, ib.*

Is of desert and proper merit, xx. 294 ; of meetness and suitableness, *ib.* ; of acceptance, 295.

Worthy to be counted of the calling and privilege of christians, an excellent benefit, xx. 296 ; the mere fruit of the Lord's grace, 297 ; shown by suitableness to our principle, rule, and end, 301.

Wrath, terribleness of God's, seen in the sufferings of Christ, iii. 405.

And passion, vain excuses for, v. 260.

Writing, great importance of, v. 98 ; abuse of, 99.

Youth the fit time for giving heed to holiness, vi. 83.

The great duty of, as soon as they come to the full use of reason, is to inquire and study how they may cleanse their hearts and ways from sin, vi. 87 ; the word of God is the only rule sufficient and effectual to accomplish this, *ib.* ; to have this efficacy, there needs much care and watchfulness, *ib.* ; why in youth, *ib.* ; it is reasonable, *ib.* ; it is necessary because of the bent of youth, and the abundance of temptations, 88 ; inconveniences that will follow if they do not, *ib.* ; lamentable that so few take to the ways of God, 89 ; exhortation to, 90.

May many times have more of heavenly wisdom than aged men, viii. 19 ; that God may show the freedom and sovereignty of his grace, 20 ; sometimes to manifest the power of his grace, *ib.* ; this not to be taken so but that there should be reverence shown to the aged, 21 ; nor to prejudice the general use of taking counsel of the aged, *ib.* ; not to be discouraged, *ib.* ; nor despised, *ib.* ; encouragement to, to betake themselves to the ways of God, *ib.* ; of those that have the education of, 22 ; caution to, *ib.*

Especially concerned to avoid evil company, viii. 185.

Zeal, partial, always the note of hypocrites, ii. 11.

Carnal, is a passion for our different interests and opinions which leads to detraction, ii. 277.

Envy and strife goeth often under the mask of, iv. 304.

Excellent and well-tempered when grief is mixed with anger, viii. 426.

Carnal is either that which comes from an ill cause and produceth ill effects, viii. 467 ; or that which hath an ill object, though it may be a good cause from which it proceeds, *ib.* ; or that which hath no ill object, but exceeds in the measure and degree, 468 ; spiritual, holy, proceeds from love to God and what belongs to God, *ib.* ; its objects, to preserve the truth of God inviolate, 469 ; his worship uncorrupted

and his institutions pure, 470 ; his servants free from injury and oppression, 471 ; its acts with respect to these objects, *ib.* ; quickens us to our duty, and makes us publicly active for God, *ib.* ; maketh us spare no cost, yea, judgeth that best done for God which costs us most, *ib.* ; vents itself by holy grief and anger when any of these are violated, 472 ; must be accompanied with knowledge and discretion, *ib.* ; must be mingled with compassion, that, as we mind the glory of God, so we may pity deluded souls, 473 ; must be constant, 474 ; we must seek for great and pure, if we have any love to God, his laws, and his ways, 475 ; notes by which it may be discerned, 476.

Zeal, true, not seen so much in fighting with antiquated errors, as in being established in the present truth, xi. 122.

Carnal men count the zealousness of God's servants to be madness, evidenced from scripture, xiii. 111 ; what it is in christianity which is thus reckoned, *ib.* ; why it is so, 112 ; reasons showing how justly this crimination might be retorted on the carnal world, 114.

In good works a note of God's people and a fruit of Christ's purchase, xvi. 275 ; what good works are, *ib.* ; the kinds of them, *ib.* ; the requisites of a good work, 278 ; what it is to be zealous of good works, 279 ; the place of zeal with respect to good works, 280 ; exhortation, 283.

INDEX OF TEXTS.

INDEX OF TEXTS.

Genesis.			Genesis.			Genesis.		
chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page
1.	2	... 13. 433	3.	15	... 10. 372	6.	22	... 14. 203
—	2	... 16. 267	—	15	... 12. 393	7.	19	... 14. 36
—	26	... 4. 90	—	15	... 17. 171	8.	21	... 19. 182
—	26	... 7. 271	—	15	... 17. 241	9.	1, 2	... 12. 159
—	26	... 12. 159	—	15	... 18. 18	—	2	... 4. 296
—	26	... 19. 78	—	15	... 18. 162	—	2	... 13. 106
—	28, 29	... 13. 404	—	15	... 21. 98	—	6	... 4. 296
2.	1	... 13. 415	—	16	... 19. 440	—	21	... 14. 53
—	4, 5	... 13. 431	—	16	... 19. 442	—	25-27	... 14. 381
—	7	... 7. 272	—	17, 18	... 12. 162	—	26	... 14. 390
—	7	... 13. 27	—	17, 18	... 12. 168	—	27	... 13. 284
—	7	... 19. 63	—	17	... 13. 421	—	27	... 14. 305
—	9	... 22. 16	—	19	... 14. 233	10.	21	... 14. 385
—	17	... 12. 11	—	19	... 16. 140	11.	4	... 1. 85
—	17	... 14. 184	—	19	... 19. 62	—	31	... 14. 225
—	17	... 16. 256	—	19	... 20. 169	12.	1	... 14. 224
—	17	... 17. 457	—	21	... 13. 156	—	3	... 14. 384
—	18	... 2. 391	—	22	... 22. 16	—	3	... 17. 169
—	18	... 19. 440	4.	3	... 13. 437	—	3	... 17. 180
—	24	... 19. 469	—	4	... 13. 474	—	17	... 12. 164
—	25	... 6. 322	—	4	... 14. 22	13.	2	... 14. 250
3.	3	... 1. 330	—	4	... 17. 429	—	7, 8	... 4. 60
—	4, 5	... 19. 226	—	7	... 13. 465	—	10	... 15. 370
—	4, 5	... 19. 281	—	8	... 13. 466	—	15	... 16. 318
—	5	... 2. 258	—	9	... 19. 124	—	17	... 13. 376
—	5	... 11. 424	—	10	... 14. 29	15.	1	... 14. 367
—	5	... 16. 116	—	10	... 22. 113	—	1	... 17. 180
—	5	... 17. 258	—	13	... 3. 288	—	1	... 21. 83
—	5	... 19. 50	—	20, 21	... 19. 174	—	13, 14	... 14. 409
—	5	... 19. 170	—	20, 21	... 21. 43	—	16	... 14. 251
—	7	... 19. 311	5.	22	... 12. 57	17.	1	... 1. 275
—	10	... 6. 322	—	24	... 14. 35	—	1	... 4. 34
—	10	... 11. 350	—	24	... 14. 37	—	1	... 12. 335
—	11, 14	... 10. 90	6.	3	... 17. 234	—	1	... 13. 171
—	11	... 12. 462	—	3	... 19. 225	—	1	... 15. 206
—	12	... 15. 321	—	3	... 19. 378	—	1	... 15. 467
—	12	... 19. 316	—	5	... 12. 63	—	1	... 17. 89
—	14	... 17. 458	—	5	... 17. 74	—	1	... 17. 154
—	15	... 3. 386	—	8, 9	... 14. 173	—	1	... 19. 51
—	15	... 6. 455	—	9	... 14. 52	—	1	... 21. 155

Genesis.			Genesis.			Exodus.		
chap. ver.	vol.	page	chap. ver.	vol.	page	chap. ver.	vol.	page
17. 1	...	21. 180	30. 30	...	19. 472	3. 12, 13	...	7. 83
— 1	...	22. 28	31. 7	...	14. 251	— 14	...	2. 321
— 7	...	17. 169	32. 10	...	11. 319	— 14	...	4. 114
— 7	...	18. 90	— 10	...	14. 402	4. 12	...	15. 138
— 8	...	14. 249	— 10	...	15. 336	— 13	...	14. 238
— 17	...	17. 168	— 10	...	17. 98	— 13	...	17. 89
— 20	...	14. 205	— 10	...	21. 436	— 14	...	14. 241
— 31	...	12. 302	— 26	...	14. 282	— 19	...	6. 247
18. 12-15	...	19. 54	— 30	...	5. 337	— 21	...	17. 221
— 13, 14	...	17. 87	— 33	...	16. 26	5. 1	...	17. 202
— 14	...	17. 82	34. 19	...	19. 468	— 2	...	10. 11
— 18	...	18. 34	— 30	...	5. 423	6. 3	...	11. 132
— 19	...	14. 206	35. 19-21	...	2. 431	7. 29	...	11. 69
— 19	...	14. 269	37. 11	...	14. 30	8. 11	...	8. 444
— 19	...	15. 470	38. 3, 4	...	14. 391	— 15	...	17. 221
— 19	...	17. 263	— 10	...	19. 467	— 18, 19	...	19. 62
— 25	...	1. 497	— 25	...	14. 308	— 25	...	17. 225
— 25	...	13. 52	39. 2	...	12. 324	9. 16	...	5. 126
— 25	...	20. 45	— 8, 9	...	13. 405	— 19	...	17. 223
— 26	...	18. 346	— 9	...	12. 70	— 27	...	7. 292
— 27	...	1. 61	— 9	...	12. 322	10. 3	...	14. 119
— 27	...	20. 171	— 9	...	14. 456	— 22, 23	...	17. 224
19. 9	...	14. 266	— 9	...	16. 70	12. 40, 41	...	14. 412
— 12	...	15. 465	— 9	...	17. 315	— 41	...	15. 20
— 13, 17	...	15. 370	— 9	...	19. 199	13. 21	...	8. 67
— 14	...	14. 178	— 9	...	19. 229	14. 3	...	14. 411
— 14	...	17. 370	— 9	...	19. 318	— 7	...	1. 32
— 16	...	14. 263	42. 18	...	2. 380	— 10, 18	...	9. 38
— 17, 18	...	8. 254	— 21, 22	...	20. 223	— 13	...	9. 279
— 19	...	14. 423	— 21	...	21. 312	— 30, 31	...	13. 88
— 26	...	15. 375	47. 7	...	12. 452	15. 1	...	20. 102
20. 16	...	19. 110	— 9	...	14. 324	— 11	...	10. 295
21. 19	...	6. 344	— 9	...	14. 383	— 11	...	19. 267
22. 1	...	1. 260	— 9	...	19. 359	16. 2	...	14. 353
— 1	...	17. 17	— 12	...	1. 39	— 3	...	12. 472
— 2	...	15. 6	49. 9	...	13. 83	— 4	...	14. 361
— 3, 14	...	14. 354	— 18	...	7. 350	18. 21	...	17. 20
— 5	...	13. 362	— 24	...	13. 340	19. 5	...	16. 265
— 12	...	14. 363	50. 16	...	21. 94	— 6	...	19. 90
— 12	...	19. 33	— 20	...	12. 261	20. 1	...	19. 226
— 12	...	19. 85	— 20	...	15. 128	— 2	...	14. 346
— 12	...	22. 85	— 20	...	17. 437	— 2	...	14. 386
— 17	...	13. 420				— 2	...	18. 35
— 24	...	17. 161				— 5, 6	...	18. 89
24. 63	...	17. 263	Exodus.			— 7	...	4. 435
25. 34	...	17. 325	1. 10	...	14. 413	— 19	...	18. 245
— 18	...	14. 388	— 17	...	14. 186	— 24	...	14. 170
27. 9	...	14. 389	— 17	...	14. 427	21. 32	...	10. 347
28. 16	...	12. 439	— 17, 18	...	19. 281	— 33, 34	...	7. 381
— 17	...	17. 290	3. 1	...	17. 264	— 33, 34	...	7. 381
— 20	...	2. 309	— 6	...	14. 339	23. 1	...	19. 282
— 22	...	5. 175	— 7	...	18. 157	— 2	...	20. 119
			— 7	...	21. 182	— 4	...	4. 476

Exodus.			Leviticus.			Deuteronomy.		
chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page
23.	20-23	... 1. 289	19.	17	... 21. 124	2.	3	... 5. 390
—	20-22	... 13. 259	—	18	... 21. 87	—	30	... 17. 227
—	20-22	... 14. 461	—	33, 34	... 2. 372	3.	27	... 16. 393
24.	8	... 22. 107	23.	42, 43	... 14. 265	4.	5, 6	... 6. 346
27.	20, 21	... 8. 67	25.	23	... 5. 51	—	5, 6	... 19. 347
28.	3	... 14. 236	—	23	... 10. 309	—	6	... 6. 261
—	35	... 19. 25	—	25	... 16. 251	—	23	... 18. 84
29.	9	... 19. 94	—	25, 26	... 18. 432	—	23, 24	... 19. 349
30.	12-15	... 16. 251	26.	25	... 20. 259	—	29	... 14. 162
—	20, 21	... 19. 97	—	41	... 2. 335	5.	23	... 1. 59
31.	3	... 14. 235	—	41	... 15. 250	—	29	... 6. 471
32.		... 21. 141				—	29	... 11. 313
—	1	... 9. 240				—	29	... 17. 233
—	7	... 7. 447				—	29	... 19. 151
—	10	... 4. 465				—	29	... 22. 47
32.	17	... 1. 44				6.	5	... 6. 27
—	25	... 12. 462				—	5	... 13. 169
33.	12	... 21. 181				—	5	... 15. 278
—	15	... 20. 258				—	6, 7	... 8. 165
—	18	... 14. 144				—	7	... 18. 93
34.	5, 6	... 5. 57				—	16	... 1. 287
—	5, 7	... 9. 465				—	24	... 15. 398
—	6	... 6. 441				7.	7, 8	... 2. 341
—	6, 7	... 21. 468				8.	2, 11	... 18. 46
—	7	... 14. 9				—	3	... 1. 272
—	13	... 16. 89				—	18	... 15. 88
—	21	... 22. 91				9.	4	... 16. 46
						10.	12	... 5. 75
						—	12	... 15. 400
						—	12	... 18. 144
						—	12	... 20. 505
						—	12-15	... 21. 466
						—	16, 17	... 17. 201
						—	20	... 1. 314
						12.	30	... 14. 138
						13.	3	... 14. 361
						15.	7	... 21. 145
						—	10	... 16. 478
						—	11	... 21. 146
						18.	8, 9	... 5. 260
						—	10-12	... 17. 359
						—	15	... 13. 288
						—	15-19	... 1. 481
						19.		... 16. 334
						20.	7	... 19. 488
						—	30	... 13. 156
						21.	15, 16	... 21. 123
						—	23	... 17. 460
						22.	4	... 4. 476
						23.	14	... 9. 111
						24.	18, 19	... 19. 253
						25.	2, 3	... 22. 34

Leviticus.

Numbers.

Job.			Job.			Job.		
chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page
3.	19	... 14. 446	10.	13	... 17. 163	19.	25, 26	... 12. 433
—	20, 21	... 12. 472	11.	6	... 17. 276	—	25, 26	... 14. 286
—	25	... 17. 8	—	12	... 6. 168	—	26	... 13. 24
4.	3-5	... 12. 228	—	12	... 15. 220	—	26	... 13. 359
—	16, 17	... 18. 345	—	12	... 15. 254	—	26	... 20. 460
—	18	... 5. 192	—	13, 14	... 9. 43	—	26, 27	... 20. 172
—	18	... 10. 293	12.	5	... 20. 274	20.	12	... 4. 98
—	19	... 12. 425	—	7	... 13. 394	—	12	... 21. 246
—	19	... 14. 38	—	7, 8	... 7. 187	—	12-14	... 12. 72
—	19	... 16. 204	—	7, 8	... 12. 180	21.	14	... 12. 359
5.	6	... 15. 123	—	7, 8	... 18. 448	—	14	... 14. 188
—	7	... 19. 126	—	7, 9	... 13. 399	—	14	... 16. 85
—	7	... 20. 188	—	7-9	... 14. 130	—	22	... 5. 304
—	12, 13	... 18. 21	—	8	... 7. 82	—	26	... 20. 171
—	12, 13	... 18. 471	—	8	... 7. 82	—	26	... 20. 171
—	13	... 17. 347	—	13	... 12. 327	22.	7	... 21. 148
—	14	... 2. 319	—	16	... 3. 88	—	12-14	... 14. 154
—	14	... 18. 51	13.	4	... 19. 282	—	12-14	... 16. 153
—	19	... 9. 133	—	15	... 12. 404	—	15, 16	... 14. 173
—	19, 20	... 12. 377	—	15	... 13. 358	—	21	... 13. 177
—	22	... 17. 480	—	15	... 15. 133	—	21	... 15. 299
—	23	... 5. 69	—	26, 27	... 12. 361	—	21	... 16. 31
—	27	... 16. 186	14.	1	... 20. 192	—	21	... 22. 27
—	27	... 17. 277	—	2	... 9. 35	—	27	... 18. 67
6.	4	... 13. 314	—	4	... 12. 298	—	27, 28	... 9. 108
—	4	... 21. 13	—	4	... 13. 243	23.	3-5	... 9. 136
—	4	... 22. 65	—	4	... 15. 459	—	8-10	... 18. 56
—	12	... 12. 190	—	4	... 17. 429	24.	13	... 19. 233
—	12	... 12. 469	—	4	... 18. 5	—	13	... 19. 301
—	25	... 17. 318	—	4	... 18. 162	—	15	... 19. 316
—	51	... 15. 483	—	4	... 19. 484	26.	7	... 17. 83
7.	1	... 13. 5	—	4	... 20. 291	—	13	... 11. 404
—	7	... 13. 203	—	4	... 20. 487	—	21	... 14. 458
—	17, 18	... 12. 282	—	14	... 15. 81	27.	6	... 13. 278
—	17, 18	... 15. 255	—	14	... 20. 23	—	8	... 2. 460
—	20	... 15. 121	—	17	... 1. 170	—	8	... 9. 381
8.	11-13	... 9. 149	—	2, 3	... 15. 255	—	8	... 12. 201
—	13	... 14. 311	15.	11	... 3. 173	—	8	... 14. 322
9.	4	... 13. 300	—	11	... 17. 133	—	8	... 14. 395
—	4	... 17. 203	—	11	... 17. 317	—	8	... 15. 240
—	4	... 17. 226	—	14	... 15. 458	—	8	... 17. 46
—	12	... 1. 225	—	14	... 19. 483	—	8	... 18. 149
—	12	... 2. 337	—	14	... 19. 483	—	8	... 18. 192
—	12	... 19. 11	—	15	... 3. 183	—	8	... 18. 192
—	14	... 1. 33	—	15	... 13. 491	—	8	... 18. 304
—	22	... 15. 250	—	15, 16	... 20. 481	—	8	... 19. 143
—	25	... 4. 390	—	16	... 6. 427	—	8	... 20. 39
—	25, 26	... 22. 9	16.	20	... 1. 13	—	8	... 20. 506
10.	2	... 22. 61	—	20	... 12. 274	—	10	... 2. 238
—	3	... 15. 124	—	20	... 21. 188	—	10	... 15. 303
—	3, 8	... 7. 275	17.	8	... 7. 264	—	10	... 17. 475
—	12	... 22. 16	—	9	... 5. 425	—	17	... 15. 239
			19.	8	... 8. 77	—	17	... 20. 138
			—	25, 26	... 1. 477	28.	14	... 13. 279

Job.			Job.			Psalms.		
chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page
28.	28	... 7. 491	36.	6	... 22. 21	4.	3	... 17. 446
29.	2-4	... 22. 137	37.	6	... 12. 163	—	4	... 16. 126
—	4	... 12. 152	—	6	... 13. 423	—	4	... 17. 268
—	4	... 12. 325	—	7	... 7. 79	—	4	... 17. 436
30.	8	... 16. 51	—	12	... 13. 423	—	4	... 20. 91
—	31	... 20. 300	38.	6	... 7. 411	—	6	... 5. 83
31.	1	... 6. 393	—	7	... 13. 394	—	6	... 6. 6
—	4	... 21. 176	—	7	... 20. 431	—	6	... 10. 457
—	10	... 13. 133	—	8, 9	... 13. 400	—	6	... 16. 273
—	13-15	... 21. 92	—	22, 23	... 13. 416	—	6	... 19. 164
—	14	... 20. 332	—	35	... 13. 423	—	6	... 19. 264
—	14	... 22. 11	—	35	... 13. 429	—	6, 7	... 2. 236
—	23	... 9. 172	40.	4	... 16. 427	—	6, 7	... 7. 114
—	23	... 14. 187	41.	5	... 15. 410	—	6, 7	... 12. 414
—	24	... 5. 137	—	8	... 17. 85	—	6, 7	... 17. 35
—	24	... 15. 232	42.	5, 6	... 15. 213	—	6, 7	... 17. 476
—	24	... 15. 234	—	5, 6	... 15. 435	—	6, 7	... 19. 72
—	24	... 16. 80	—	5, 6	... 16. 426	—	6, 7	... 19. 337
—	24, 25	... 17. 37	—	5, 6	... 20. 91	—	6, 7	... 20. 10
—	33	... 4. 84	—	6	... 4. 378	—	6, 7	... 20. 136
—	33	... 6. 245	—	6	... 15. 264	—	6, 7	... 20. 466
—	33	... 15. 322	—	6	... 18. 11	—	6, 7	... 21. 476
32.	7-9	... 20. 395	43.	5, 6	... 21. 423	—	7	... 6. 224
—	8	... 4. 40				—	8	... 18. 181
—	8	... 7. 283				5.	3	... 1. 30
—	23	... 21. 171				—	3	... 8. 388
33.	4	... 12. 21	1.	1	... 21. 361	—	3	... 14. 299
—	13	... 21. 430	—	1, 2	... 15. 15	—	3	... 15. 151
—	14	... 19. 162	—	1, 2	... 20. 492	—	3	... 13. 73
—	23	... 13. 286	—	2	... 6. 138	—	4	... 20. 217
—	23, 24	... 12. 351	—	2	... 16. 156	—	4	... 20. 217
—	24	... 2. 444	—	2	... 17. 270	—	7	... 2. 10
—	24	... 8. 443	—	2	... 22. 105	—	9	... 13. 381
—	24	... 13. 180	—	5	... 1. 469	—	11	... 17. 472
—	24	... 17. 174	—	5	... 14. 67	6.	7	... 15. 274
—	24	... 18. 224	—	5	... 16. 171	—	8	... 12. 239
—	24	... 18. 489	—	5	... 16. 213	7.	3-5	... 21. 438
—	26	... 21. 198	—	5	... 20. 161	—	11-13	... 1. 502
—	27	... 11. 346	—	5	... 20. 354	—	11, 12	... 13. 300
34.	18	... 19. 74	—	6	... 12. 252	8.	2	... 15. 29
—	21, 23	... 21. 180	—	6	... 12. 298	—	3	... 19. 369
—	23	... 18. 60	—	6	... 18. 141	—	3, 4	... 1. 404
—	29	... 3. 171	—	6	... 21. 176	—	3, 4	... 7. 187
—	29	... 18. 53	2.	3	... 17. 67	—	3, 4	... 12. 159
—	31, 32	... 12. 269	—	7	... 1. 467	—	3, 4	... 13. 407
—	31, 32	... 13. 294	—	8	... 22. 116	—	3-6	... 13. 127
—	32	... 15. 326	—	10	... 5. 17	—	5	... 19. 72
—	33	... 12. 270	—	10	... 16. 233	—	6	... 3. 206
35.	5, 6	... 16. 355	—	10	... 16. 415	—	6	... 7. 131
—	6-8	... 20. 347	—	10	... 19. 383	—	6	... 14. 263
—	11	... 19. 71	—	12	... 13. 62	—	6	... 14. 323
—	11	... 22. 5	3.	2	... 17. 155	9.	6	... 14. 132
			4.	3	... 1. 55	—	10	... 13. 97

Psalms.			Psalms.			Psalms.		
chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page
9.	10	... 14. 315	15.	4	... 21. 120	17.	14, 15	... 20. 151
—	12	... 19. 317	16.	2	... 6. 111	—	15	... 7. 100
—	15, 16	... 19. 244	—	2, 3	... 7. 177	—	15	... 8. 240
—	17	... 14. 163	—	3	... 12. 277	—	15	... 13. 11
—	17	... 19. 233	—	3	... 20. 142	—	15	... 14. 318
10.	2	... 15. 488	—	3	... 21. 88	—	15	... 16. 186
—	3	... 6. 385	—	3	... 21. 178	—	15	... 16. 198
—	3	... 20. 142	—	4	... 15. 358	—	15	... 19. 69
—	3, 4	... 21. 83	—	4	... 19. 192	—	15	... 19. 173
—	4	... 6. 195	—	5	... 8. 137	—	15	... 20. 84
—	4	... 7. 122	—	5	... 7. 107	—	15	... 20. 104
—	4	... 14. 127	—	5, 6	... 12. 135	—	15	... 21. 150
—	4	... 14. 168	—	5, 6	... 17. 478	18.	10	... 13. 418
—	4	... 17. 55	—	6, 7	... 15. 218	—	11	... 5. 387
—	4	... 20. 134	—	6, 7	... 18. 139	—	18	... 19. 195
—	4-6	... 7. 328	—	7	... 17. 314	—	23	... 8. 31
—	17	... 12. 236	—	7	... 21. 168	—	23	... 11. 265
—	17	... 12. 241	—	8	... 1. 230	—	23	... 14. 364
—	17	... 12. 257	—	8	... 7. 79	—	23	... 15. 248
—	17	... 14. 20	—	8	... 14. 169	—	23	... 15. 461
—	17	... 17. 491	—	8	... 15. 110	—	23	... 16. 73
11.	4	... 1. 58	—	9, 10	... 12. 202	—	23	... 21. 74
—	5	... 15. 92	—	11	... 9. 455	—	27	... 21. 416
—	6	... 19. 4	—	11	... 12. 474	—	30	... 6. 403
—	6, 7	... 12. 44	—	11	... 14. 469	—	30	... 8. 265
—	6, 7	... 19. 70	—	11	... 15. 400	—	30	... 14. 301
—	7	... 19. 134	—	11	... 16. 192	—	30	... 20. 53
—	7	... 19. 176	—	11	... 19. 236	—	30	... 20. 414
—	7	... 21. 224	—	11	... 20. 465	19.	1	... 10. 153
12.	3	... 6. 405	—	11	... 22. 19	—	1	... 13. 401
—	4	... 5. 11	17.	4	... 14. 219	—	1	... 17. 279
—	4	... 11. 444	—	5	... 19. 100	—	1, 2	... 7. 82
—	4	... 11. 475	—	7	... 6. 262	—	1-4	... 13. 392
—	4	... 12. 28	—	14	... 8. 145	—	7, 8	... 16. 203
—	4	... 15. 199	—	14	... 8. 222	—	7-9	... 10. 423
—	4	... 19. 201	—	14	... 10. 183	—	8	... 7. 6
—	4	... 19. 236	—	14	... 10. 409	—	8	... 8. 68
—	4	... 20. 69	—	14	... 12. 161	—	8	... 20. 26
—	4	... 20. 500	—	14	... 14. 159	—	10	... 13. 467
—	26	... 21. 88	—	14	... 14. 160	—	12	... 13. 71
13.	5	... 14. 308	—	14	... 16. 110	—	12	... 21. 166
14.	1	... 1. 15	—	14	... 16. 147	—	13	... 11. 225
—	1	... 8. 163	—	14	... 16. 204	—	13	... 11. 295
—	1	... 13. 256	—	14	... 17. 31	—	13	... 17. 232
—	1	... 13. 297	—	14	... 19. 79	—	13	... 19. 315
—	1	... 14. 126	—	14	... 20. 137	—	13	... 21. 337
—	1	... 16. 90	—	14	... 21. 139	22.	3	... 7. 284
—	1	... 17. 500	—	14, 15	... 7. 112	—	3	... 17. 258
—	1, 4	... 15. 302	—	14, 15	... 7. 249	—	3	... 19. 91
—	3	... 15. 454	—	14, 15	... 18. 382	—	4, 5	... 20. 368
—	3, 4	... 5. 139	—	14, 15	... 19. 127	—	6	... 14. 476
15.	4	... 20. 142	—	14, 15	... 20. 40	—	6	... 17. 458

Psalms.			Psalms.			Psalms.		
chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page
22.	6	... 18. 126	27.	4	... 14. 398	32.	2	... 4. 457
—	7, 8	... 12. 220	—	4	... 17. 69	—	2	... 13. 263
—	7, 8	... 13. 17	—	4	... 18. 64	—	3	... 17. 501
—	9	... 14. 85	—	4	... 18. 154	—	3, 4	... 15. 104
—	16	... 3. 252	—	4	... 20. 104	—	3, 4	... 21. 49
—	22	... 10. 198	—	4	... 20. 144	—	3, 4	... 21. 57
—	26	... 14. 170	—	8	... 1. 18	—	5	... 1. 177
—	26	... 15. 431	—	8	... 5. 21	—	5	... 6. 245
—	26	... 15. 497	—	8	... 5. 185	—	5	... 7. 151
—	26	... 16. 15	—	8	... 5. 339	—	5	... 7. 204
—	26, 29	... 14. 407	—	8	... 12. 96	—	5	... 13. 328
—	27	... 19. 59	—	8	... 12. 237	—	5	... 14. 51
23.	1	... 7. 116	—	8	... 16. 249	—	5	... 14. 113
—	1	... 14. 312	—	8	... 19. 364	—	5	... 14. 368
—	4	... 12. 333	—	13	... 12. 489	—	5	... 15. 35
—	4	... 13. 14	—	13	... 14. 259	—	5	... 17. 488
—	4	... 13. 98	—	14	... 11. 358	—	5	... 21. 266
—	4	... 14. 358	—	14	... 12. 229	—	9	... 13. 441
—	4	... 15. 11	—	14	... 18. 179	33.	1	... 6. 668
—	5	... 15. 428	29.	9	... 18. 87	—	5	... 20. 368
—	5	... 22. 96	30.	2, 3	... 16. 28	—	6	... 13. 415
24.		... 12. 436	—	6	... 12. 206	—	6	... 13. 430
—	1	... 1. 150	—	6	... 13. 13	—	9	... 13. 430
—	3, 4	... 20. 480	—	6	... 17. 18	—	9	... 16. 294
—	6	... 1. 12	—	6	... 17. 122	—	9	... 17. 152
25.	1	... 10. 111	—	6, 7	... 15. 235	—	9	... 17. 341
—	1	... 14. 258	—	6, 7	... 17. 42	—	11	... 12. 264
—	3	... 12. 408	—	6, 7	... 18. 182	—	13-15	... 21. 179
—	4, 5	... 12. 93	—	6, 7	... 20. 156	—	13-16	... 13. 66
—	5	... 17. 493	31.	1	... 17. 486	—	18	... 12. 199
—	6	... 14. 27	—	5	... 17. 465	34.	6	... 1. 162
—	6, 7	... 1. 179	—	19	... 13. 344	—	6	... 6. 253
—	7	... 16. 448	—	19	... 16. 200	—	6	... 17. 348
—	7	... 21. 345	—	19	... 19. 423	—	6	... 22. 26
—	8	... 7. 186	—	19, 20	... 7. 101	—	7	... 5. 258
—	10	... 15. 218	—	20	... 6. 207	—	8	... 15. 366
—	10	... 15. 485	—	20	... 9. 137	—	8	... 20. 52
—	10	... 18. 84	—	20	... 12. 152	—	8	... 20. 140
—	10	... 20. 91	—	20	... 20. 455	—	8	... 21. 450
—	12	... 6. 233	—	22	... 14. 310	—	9	... 15. 89
—	14	... 11. 121	—	22	... 15. 122	—	12, 13	... 15. 90
—	14	... 14. 179	—	22	... 15. 131	—	15	... 14. 95
—	14	... 14. 421	—	22	... 16. 301	—	15	... 15. 399
—	14	... 22. 28	32.	1	... 4. 480	—	15	... 16. 70
—	14	... 22. 100	—	1	... 12. 414	—	18	... 21. 479
26.	8	... 20. 20	—	1	... 13. 280	—	19	... 15. 121
—	9	... 8. 226	—	1	... 19. 130	35.	3	... 16. 239
27.	3	... 4. 50	—	1	... 19. 245	—	12	... 21. 126
—	4	... 2. 237	—	1, 2	... 2. 177	—	13	... 9. 51
—	4	... 12. 274	—	1, 2	... 15. 62	—	15	... 6. 411
—	4	... 13. 24	—	1, 2	... 15. 439	—	27	... 3. 399
—	4	... 14. 172	—	1, 2	... 17. 169	—	27	... 5. 32

Psalms.		Psalms.		Psalms.			
chap.	ver.	vol.	page	chap.	ver.	vol.	page
36.	1	...	19. 222	39.	11	...	7. 453
—	4	...	20. 317	—	11	...	8. 199
—	6	...	16. 59	—	11	...	13. 314
—	6	...	17. 345	—	11	...	19. 55
—	6, 7	...	7. 189	—	12	...	6. 175
—	7	...	8. 415	—	12	...	13. 3
—	8	...	15. 368	—	12	...	14. 269
—	8	...	16. 14	—	12	...	14. 325
—	9	...	11. 365	40.	4	...	22. 74
37.	1, 2	...	8. 223	—	5	...	17. 283
—	3, 4	...	12. 418	—	5	...	22. 15
—	4	...	9. 107	—	6-8	...	12. 362
—	4	...	17. 483	—	7, 8	...	3. 405
—	4	...	21. 209	—	7, 8	...	10. 469
—	5	...	14. 290	—	7, 8	...	17. 4
—	5	...	15. 95	—	8	...	11. 199
—	5	...	22. 24	—	12	...	12. 470
—	5-7	...	6. 417	—	12	...	13. 281
—	6	...	13. 379	—	12	...	17. 287
—	7	...	12. 188	—	12	...	17. 327
—	7	...	15. 133	—	12	...	21. 13
—	12, 13	...	8. 4	—	12	...	21. 362
—	12, 13	...	8. 129	—	17	...	17. 150
—	12, 13	...	18. 45	41.	1	...	2. 374
—	21	...	21. 149	—	3	...	14. 285
—	24	...	15. 125	42.	1	...	3. 236
—	24, 25	...	15. 469	—	1	...	13. 484
—	25, 26	...	15. 91	—	1	...	14. 114
—	26	...	15. 470	—	1	...	15. 359
—	28	...	15. 464	—	1, 2	...	12. 274
—	30, 31	...	19. 202	—	2	...	13. 24
—	31	...	7. 341	—	5	...	12. 206
—	31	...	20. 424	—	5	...	12. 322
—	34	...	15. 26	—	5	...	15. 61
38.	4	...	12. 470	—	5	...	19. 12
—	4	...	13. 281	—	7, 8	...	21. 159
—	4	...	13. 314	—	11	...	14. 315
—	9	...	12. 252	43.	3	...	8. 65
39.	1	...	4. 281	—	5	...	14. 348
—	4	...	20. 37	—	5	...	17. 290
—	5	...	15. 118	44.	7	...	12. 311
—	5	...	17. 48	—	12	...	7. 184
—	5	...	17. 393	—	12	...	15. 234
—	5	...	18. 185	—	17	...	12. 378
—	5, 6	...	12. 158	—	17	...	20. 232
—	5, 6	...	14. 436	—	18, 19	...	15. 14
—	6	...	15. 239	45.	1	...	12. 239
—	6	...	19. 382	—	1	...	17. 273
—	9	...	17. 4	—	1	...	20. 58
—	10	...	15. 249	—	1	...	22. 93
—	10	...	15. 256	—	1, 2	...	4. 162
—	11	...	7. 374	—	3-5	...	15. 21
45.	4	...	1. 17	—	7	...	13. 306
—	7	...	13. 306	—	10	...	14. 243
—	11	...	19. 448	—	11	...	20. 28
—	11	...	20. 28	—	13	...	9. 333
—	13	...	20. 454	—	13	...	16. 21
—	14	...	12. 333	—	14	...	7. 474
46.	7	...	12. 333	—	12, 13	...	13. 379
48.	2, 3	...	7. 474	—	12, 13	...	14. 313
—	2, 3	...	7. 474	49.	6	...	17. 44
—	8	...	18. 5	—	8	...	19. 188
—	8	...	19. 188	—	8	...	4. 69
—	11	...	7. 70	—	11	...	12. 180
—	11	...	17. 39	—	11	...	5. 194
—	12	...	9. 301	—	12	...	19. 77
—	12	...	19. 77	—	12	...	6. 9
—	13	...	7. 490	—	13	...	20. 411
—	13	...	20. 411	—	13	...	21. 446
—	15	...	17. 33	—	15	...	19. 150
—	18	...	20. 276	—	18	...	19. 146
—	18	...	19. 146	—	18	...	1. 14
—	20	...	1. 14	—	20	...	20. 245
—	32	...	20. 245	50.	3	...	13. 259
50.	3	...	13. 259	—	5	...	14. 487
—	5	...	14. 487	—	5	...	16. 15
—	5	...	16. 15	—	5	...	18. 74
—	5	...	18. 74	—	5	...	12. 231
—	15	...	15. 364	—	15	...	17. 96
—	15	...	17. 96	—	15	...	15. 161
—	15-17	...	15. 161	—	15-17	...	7. 17
—	16, 17	...	7. 17	—	16, 17	...	21. 385
—	16, 17	...	21. 385	—	16, 17	...	7. 180
—	18	...	2. 278	—	18	...	1. 88
—	18	...	1. 88	—	20	...	2. 182
—	20	...	2. 182	—	20	...	8. 211
—	21	...	8. 211	—	21	...	12. 44
—	21	...	12. 44	—	21	...	13. 66
—	21	...	13. 66	—	21	...	17. 202
—	21	...	17. 202	—	21	...	17. 368
—	21	...	17. 368	—	21	...	19. 223
—	21	...	19. 223	—	21	...	

Psalms.			Psalms.			Psalms.		
chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page
50.	21	... 20. 45	56.	8	... 1. 36	65.	2	... 15. 147
—	21	... 21. 248	—	8	... 3. 137	—	2	... 17. 496
—	22	... 7. 230	—	8	... 12. 328	—	4	... 16. 15
—	22	... 19. 239	—	8	... 16. 380	66.	1, 2	... 16. 157
—	23	... 13. 425	57.	1	... 6. 449	—	2	... 17. 213
—	23	... 19. 91	—	1	... 22. 29	—	16	... 7. 283
—	23	... 19. 176	—	7	... 19. 419	—	16	... 19. 418
—	23	... 19. 414	58.	3	... 14. 49	—	18	... 1. 127
—	23	... 20. 325	—	4, 5	... 17. 194	—	18	... 13. 463
51.	4	... 10. 19	—	4, 5	... 19. 236	—	18	... 19. 357
—	4	... 13. 56	—	5	... 15. 242	—	19	... 12. 253
—	4	... 13. 65	—	11	... 7. 48	67.	5	... 1. 244
—	4	... 15. 323	—	11	... 14. 155	—	5, 6	... 17. 280
—	5	... 18. 156	—	11	... 19. 241	—	5, 6	... 17. 387
—	5	... 20. 188	59.	11	... 4. 278	—	5, 6	... 17. 97
—	5	... 21. 421	—	11	... 6. 365	68.	17	... 20. 241
—	6	... 4. 397	60.	8	... 14. 390	—	19	... 13. 156
—	6	... 19. 287	—	29	... 13. 186	—	19-21	... 7. 242
—	6	... 19. 345	62.	5	... 21. 455	—	19-21	... 11. 303
—	6	... 20. 498	—	5, 6	... 22. 29	—	19-21	... 21. 40
—	8	... 17. 434	—	8	... 15. 146	—	20, 21	... 19. 224
—	8	... 17. 488	—	8	... 15. 298	—	21	... 6. 203
—	8	... 21. 378	—	8	... 22. 30	—	21	... 16. 342
—	8, 12	... 1. 179	—	9	... 5. 137	—	21	... 20. 123
—	10	... 7. 348	—	10	... 14. 333	—	21	... 20. 123
—	10	... 12. 8	—	10	... 14. 408	—	21	... 20. 123
—	10	... 21. 71	—	10	... 15. 233	—	21	... 20. 123
—	10-12	... 11. 204	—	10	... 17. 23	—	21	... 20. 123
—	10-12	... 12. 81	—	10	... 17. 38	—	21	... 20. 123
—	10-12	... 20. 19	—	10	... 17. 43	—	21	... 20. 123
—	10-12	... 21. 17	—	10	... 17. 43	—	21	... 20. 123
—	10-12	... 21. 49	—	12	... 9. 159	—	21	... 20. 123
—	12	... 12. 119	63.	1	... 6. 432	—	21	... 19. 30
—	12	... 16. 321	—	1, 2	... 6. 188	—	22	... 9. 148
—	15	... 6. 331	—	1, 2	... 13. 11	—	22	... 17. 98
—	17	... 15. 327	—	1, 2	... 13. 305	71.	14	... 22. 88
—	18	... 1. 107	—	1, 2	... 19. 106	—	16	... 13. 473
—	18	... 18. 37	—	2	... 15. 312	72.	10	... 20. 144
52.	6	... 19. 230	—	3	... 8. 412	—	14	... 22. 113
—	7	... 15. 275	—	3	... 19. 164	—	25	... 14. 345
—	7	... 16. 202	—	3	... 19. 177	73.	1	... 19. 131
—	7	... 22. 31	—	5	... 17. 101	—	3	... 18. 378
53.	5	... 17. 432	—	5	... 19. 209	—	11-13	... 19. 241
55.	2	... 15. 489	—	6	... 5. 345	—	12, 23	... 14. 253
—	17	... 17. 492	—	6	... 13. 161	—	13	... 12. 209
—	19	... 17. 30	—	6	... 13. 164	—	13	... 15. 123
—	22	... 14. 239	—	8	... 5. 73	—	13, 14	... 15. 104
56.	3	... 4. 440	—	8	... 13. 141	—	14	... 16. 61
—	3	... 14. 122	—	8	... 13. 455	—	17	... 8. 213
—	4	... 14. 197	—	8	... 14. 52	—	17	... 12. 267
—	4	... 13. 21	—	8	... 14. 161	—	22	... 14. 134
—	4	... 22. 24	64.	3, 4	... 13. 379	—	24	... 7. 251
			—	8, 9	... 13. 325	—	25	... 2. 471

Psalms.			Psalms.			Psalms.		
chap.	ver.	page	chap.	ver.	page	chap.	ver.	page
73.	25	3. 412	81.	10	13. 468	88.	3	14. 277
—	25	10. 204	—	10	15. 50	—	7	18. 314
—	25	12. 279	—	11	1. 157	—	12	18. 283
—	25	13. 62	—	11	14. 350	—	34-37	9. 338
—	25	13. 173	—	11, 12	17. 115	89.	7	19. 100
—	25	13. 237	—	11, 12	19. 50	—	17	1. 407
—	25	14. 465	—	11, 12	21. 18	—	19	3. 377
—	25	15. 277	—	12	12. 172	—	27	1. 93
—	25	15. 401	—	12	13. 215	—	27	13. 438
—	25	20. 16	—	12	15. 190	—	32	12. 174
—	25	20. 144	—	12	15. 245	—	32, 33	12. 408
—	25	20. 462	—	12	17. 227	—	32, 33	21. 17
—	26	7. 109	—	13	21. 470	90.	1	12. 282
—	26	12. 450	—	19	20. 258	—	1	14. 265
—	27, 28	1. 238	82.	9	13. 401	—	1	14. 296
—	26	16. 430	84.	4	12. 428	—	1	14. 347
—	28	6. 352	—	4	19. 103	—	1	18. 181
—	28	8. 325	—	6	7. 97	—	3	4. 280
—	28	13. 467	—	7	14. 55	—	4	15. 127
—	28	16. 83	—	7	17. 443	—	11	13. 94
—	28	17. 278	—	10	13. 455	—	11	13. 365
74.	9	18. 52	—	10	14. 442	—	11	17. 276
—	19	4. 194	—	10	15. 197	—	12	12. 184
76.	6, 7	8. 234	—	10	15. 273	—	12	12. 427
—	10	12. 266	—	10	19. 105	—	12	14. 316
—	10	18. 16	—	10	20. 104	—	12	16. 170
77.	1-3	6. 78	—	10	20. 414	—	12	18. 470
—	3	19. 416	—	11	4. 174	91.	1	15. 359
—	7-10	12. 227	—	11	8. 171	—	1	15. 361
—	10	18. 49	—	11	10. 165	—	1	18. 177
78.	18, 19	15. 98	—	11	12. 329	—	3	1. 281
—	20	17. 391	—	11	15. 89	—	9	7. 122
—	21	2. 310	—	11	17. 92	—	9	8. 173
—	22	9. 278	—	11	18. 188	—	9	14. 151
—	22-24	13. 287	—	11	19. 163	—	9	18. 180
—	34, 35	9. 398	—	11	19. 422	—	9	22. 27
—	34-37	9. 271	—	11	21. 85	—	9, 10	15. 90
—	36	6. 280	—	11	21. 159	—	11	13. 67
—	37	15. 309	—	11	21. 207	—	16	6. 155
—	38	7. 301	—	11	22. 26	92.	13	13. 201
—	41	1. 293	85.	8	13. 185	—	13, 14	20. 414
—	41	13. 366	—	8	13. 464	—	19	15. 208
—	41	14. 373	—	8	14. 17	93.	1	15. 347
—	41	15. 425	—	8	14. 21	—	5	19. 481
—	41	17. 88	86.	5	12. 277	94.	7	13. 66
—	41	17. 151	—	11	2. 243	—	9, 10	12. 244
79.	8	6. 440	—	11	4. 56	—	9, 10	21. 179
—	8	7. 311	—	11	5. 453	—	10	12. 245
—	9	1. 68	—	11	19. 56	—	12	8. 418
80.	19	10. 7	87.	3	14. 271	—	12	15. 326
—	19	21. 477	—	3	14. 340	—	12	18. 52
81.	10	9. 488	—	6	15. 387	—	12	22. 67

Psalms.			Psalms.			Psalms.		
chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page
94.	19	... 3. 210	103.	20, 21	... 12. 34	110.	3	... 19. 429
—	19	... 6. 221	—	23	... 15. 243	—	3	... 19. 460
—	19	... 7. 29	—	118	... 13. 80	111.	1, 2	... 9. 191
—	19	... 14. 8	104.	1	... 13. 398	—	4, 5	... 18. 477
—	19	... 16. 322	—	9	... 13. 420	—	10	... 13. 350
—	19	... 16. 350	—	10, 11	... 13. 418	—	10	... 14. 455
—	19	... 17. 133	—	14	... 19. 62	112.	1	... 13. 175
—	19	... 17. 300	—	14	... 20. 170	—	3	... 17. 26
—	19	... 20. 136	—	14	... 20. 189	—	5	... 13. 426
—	20-22	... 6. 216	—	15	... 15. 496	—	7	... 12. 487
95.	1	... 12. 276	—	15	... 19. 391	—	7	... 17. 42
—	6	... 15. 407	—	19	... 13. 420	—	9	... 21. 86
—	10	... 16. 85	—	19	... 14. 130	113.	6	... 17. 215
—	10	... 16. 128	—	24	... 13. 416	—	40	... 14. 387
—	10	... 19. 28	—	29, 30	... 12. 327	114.	15	... 14. 320
—	10	... 21. 391	—	33, 34	... 19. 414	115.	1	... 1. 67
—	22	... 22. 216	—	34	... 2. 41	—	1	... 13. 329
97.	10	... 8. 34	—	34	... 12. 275	—	3	... 13. 390
—	10	... 13. 228	—	34	... 16. 326	—	8	... 20. 139
—	10	... 20. 485	—	34	... 17. 284	—	9-13	... 21. 451
—	10	... 21. 70	—	34	... 20. 465	—	16	... 1. 150
—	18	... 11. 276	105.	4	... 6. 21	—	16	... 12. 159
98.	2, 3	... 7. 349	—	4	... 15. 18	—	16	... 13. 390
99.	6-8	... 1. 353	—	11-13	... 14. 250	—	16	... 13. 404
100.	3	... 13. 214	106.	3	... 13. 80	116.	1	... 17. 98
—	5	... 16. 432	—	3	... 19. 271	—	1, 2	... 14. 18
101.	1	... 15. 422	—	3	... 21. 41	—	1, 2	... 17. 338
—	2	... 9. 241	—	3	... 21. 86	—	7	... 4. 51
—	2	... 21. 203	—	3	... 21. 160	—	11	... 16. 300
102.	2	... 17. 365	—	4	... 5. 54	—	12-14	... 14. 488
—	9	... 13. 117	—	4	... 14. 382	—	13	... 19. 4
—	11, 12	... 3. 396	—	4, 5	... 16. 271	—	14	... 15. 471
—	25-27	... 7. 392	—	13	... 19. 420	—	15, 16	... 7. 448
—	26	... 12. 155	—	15	... 15. 97	—	24, 25	... 20. 70
—	26, 27	... 4. 114	—	24	... 1. 378	118.	8, 9	... 11. 330
—	28	... 14. 393	—	24	... 6. 7	—	8, 9	... 18. 185
103.	1, 2	... 15. 436	—	24	... 15. 391	119.	3	... 14. 304
—	1-3	... 14. 488	—	24, 25	... 15. 96	—	6	... 4. 214
—	2	... 18. 46	—	32	... 16. 390	—	6	... 14. 131
—	8, 9	... 15. 126	107.	8, 43	... 7. 239	—	6	... 16. 75
—	11	... 16. 28	—	33, 34	... 12. 162	—	6	... 16. 445
—	13	... 7. 303	—	43	... 17. 339	—	6	... 17. 374
—	13	... 19. 9	109.	4	... 6. 407	—	9	... 16. 446
—	13	... 20. 433	110.	1	... 12. 370	—	9	... 19. 5
—	13	... 21. 448	—	1	... 15. 21	—	9	... 20. 480
—	17	... 5. 75	—	1	... 18. 31	—	11	... 14. 306
—	17	... 9. 7	—	2	... 17. 254	—	11	... 17. 122
—	17	... 15. 469	—	3	... 3. 343	—	13	... 20. 117
—	19	... 10. 112	—	3	... 12. 291	—	14	... 20. 136
—	19	... 14. 272	—	3	... 13. 283	—	18	... 2. 76
—	20	... 16. 47	—	3	... 15. 27	—	18	... 4. 130
—	20	... 19. 103	—	3	... 17. 115	—	18	... 10. 145

Psalms.			Psalms.			Psalms.		
chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page
119.	19	... 13. 8	119.	75	... 2. 338	119.	161	... 11. 346
—	19	... 14. 256	—	75	... 12. 268	—	161	... 17. 121
—	24	... 17. 132	—	75	... 13. 489	—	164	... 14. 57
—	26	... 12. 241	—	75	... 16. 328	—	165	... 11. 434
—	27	... 17. 288	—	75	... 22. 65	—	165	... 20. 492
—	32	... 15. 231	—	89-91	... 19. 141	—	166	... 15. 386
—	32	... 20. 86	—	90, 91	... 13. 401	—	166	... 16. 22
—	32	... 20. 108	—	91	... 6. 405	—	168	... 22. 8
—	32	... 21. 353	—	91	... 12. 160	120.	5	... 12. 480
—	33	... 12. 93	—	91	... 17. 86	—	7	... 16. 296
—	33	... 19. 383	—	92	... 13. 358	121.	1	... 17. 464
—	34, 35	... 12. 94	—	92	... 16. 313	—	4	... 21. 24
—	36	... 17. 57	—	92	... 17. 270	122.	1	... 7. 476
—	36	... 18. 65	—	93	... 18. 50	—	6	... 19. 269
—	37	... 1. 305	—	94	... 1. 491	—	9	... 20. 121
—	37	... 12. 52	—	94	... 20. 36	123.	1, 2	... 8. 268
—	37	... 12. 71	—	96	... 15. 396	—	4	... 7. 322
—	37	... 15. 229	—	103	... 15. 54	124.	8	... 13. 391
—	37	... 15. 434	—	104	... 16. 75	—	8	... 13. 399
—	45	... 13. 328	—	105	... 3. 131	—	8	... 14. 375
—	45	... 17. 283	—	105	... 5. 496	125.	2	... 18. 174
—	49	... 3. 161	—	105	... 8. 383	—	5	... 14. 54
—	49	... 13. 472	—	105	... 12. 95	—	5	... 17. 9
—	49	... 14. 294	—	105	... 15. 352	126.	5	... 2. 427
—	49	... 15. 93	—	105	... 15. 425	—	5	... 22. 20
—	49	... 16. 308	—	105	... 19. 293	127.	1, 2	... 15. 101
—	49	... 19. 143	—	105	... 19. 380	—	2	... 4. 74
—	49, 66	... 14. 184	—	108	... 12. 74	—	2	... 18. 149
—	50	... 14. 304	—	111	... 2. 142	—	2	... 19. 373
—	50	... 16. 352	—	111	... 17. 477	—	2, 10	... 18. 193
—	54	... 14. 260	—	113	... 16. 73	—	3	... 2. 166
—	59	... 13. 135	—	113	... 20. 494	—	3	... 14. 157
—	59	... 13. 176	—	119	... 14. 195	—	3	... 14. 275
—	59	... 18. 11	—	119	... 19. 229	128.	1, 3, 4,	... 18. 86
—	59	... 21. 313	—	126	... 22. 63	—	2	... 14. 280
—	63	... 19. 473	—	126	... 20. 112	—	6	... 15. 415
—	66	... 14. 107	—	128	... 16. 159	129.	1	... 9. 16
—	66	... 15. 6	—	133	... 11. 262	—	1, 2	... 12. 326
—	66	... 15. 139	—	133	... 12. 94	130.	3	... 13. 64
—	66	... 15. 156	—	133	... 17. 16	—	3, 4	... 1. 178
—	66	... 17. 427	—	133	... 20. 14	—	3, 4	... 11. 388
—	67	... 12. 263	—	133	... 20. 498	—	3, 4	... 12. 365
—	68	... 13. 151	—	133	... 21. 56	—	3, 4	... 13. 313
—	68	... 15. 404	—	136	... 13. 157	—	3, 4	... 20. 46
—	68	... 17. 344	—	140	... 12. 87	—	4	... 5. 56
—	68	... 17. 470	—	140	... 13. 454	—	4	... 5. 150
—	68	... 19. 263	—	140	... 17. 410	—	4	... 12. 107
—	71	... 12. 262	—	140	... 19. 196	—	4	... 13. 185
—	71	... 12. 271	—	140	... 20. 483	—	4	... 14. 198
—	71	... 15. 129	—	147	... 16. 123	—	4	... 15. 57
—	71	... 16. 355	—	148.	... 17. 266	—	4	... 15. 447
—	73	... 19. 7	—	160	... 15. 155	—	4	... 16. 42

Psalms.			Psalms.			Psalms.		
chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page
130.	5, 6	... 7. 364	139.	15, 16	... 7. 272	148.	4-6	... 7. 403
—	5-7	... 21. 451	—	15, 16	... 12. 424	—	6	... 6. 35
—	6	... 3. 199	—	17, 18	... 19. 420	—	6	... 13. 401
—	6	... 8. 416	—	18	... 9. 71	149.	6	... 6. 9
—	6	... 13. 484	—	21, 22	... 21. 124			
—	7	... 12. 210	—	23	... 5. 37			
132.	1, 2	... 20. 382	—	23, 24	... 16. 74			
133.	1	... 14. 432	140.	3	... 17. 455	1.	17	... 14. 185
—	1	... 20. 234	141.	4	... 14. 458	—	22	... 5. 325
—	1-3	... 21. 95	—	5	... 15. 411	—	22, 23	... 21. 404
134.	1	... 19. 99	—	5	... 19. 109	—	23	... 17. 382
135.	3	... 9. 192	—	5	... 19. 123	—	23, 24	... 18. 427
—	3	... 17. 470	—	5	... 19. 123	—	23	... 19. 363
—	3, 4	... 16. 272	—	5	... 21. 408	—	23	... 19. 407
—	8	... 19. 217	143.	2	... 8. 274	—	23	... 21. 17
136.	5	... 13. 390	—	2	... 13. 75	—	24-26	... 12. 292
—	25	... 1. 154	—	2	... 13. 313	—	24-26	... 20. 97
137.	4	... 7. 65	—	2	... 13. 487	—	24, 25	... 21. 351
—	6	... 20. 121	—	2	... 19. 242	—	25, 26	... 5. 17
138.	1	... 14. 149	—	2	... 21. 158	—	25, 30	... 6. 232
—	2	... 1. 83	—	10	... 12. 93	—	25	... 19. 338
—	2	... 5. 176	—	10	... 15. 401	—	32	... 15. 421
—	2	... 7. 464	—	10	... 19. 260	2.	2, 3	... 3. 198
—	2	... 11. 131	144.	15	... 2. 32	—	2, 3	... 14. 99
—	2	... 14. 371	—	15	... 14. 342	—	3, 4	... 22. 100
—	2	... 15. 388	—	15	... 15. 273	—	4	... 9. 156
—	3	... 6. 77	145.	4	... 12. 413	—	10	... 19. 381
—	3	... 8. 194	—	5, 6	... 13. 391	—	10	... 20. 21
—	3	... 12. 332	—	9	... 16. 431	—	19	... 19. 197
—	3	... 15. 130	—	9	... 22. 25	3.	5	... 6. 91
—	3	... 21. 198	—	10	... 2. 27	—	5	... 15. 214
—	6	... 21. 411	—	10	... 5. 78	—	5, 6	... 4. 41
139.	2	... 12. 249	—	10	... 6. 67	—	5, 6	... 15. 426
—	2	... 13. 70	—	10	... 11. 174	—	5, 6	... 18. 62
—	2	... 14. 154	—	10	... 13. 393	—	5, 6	... 22. 30
—	2	... 14. 154	—	15	... 1. 42	—	6	... 15. 221
—	2	... 21. 176	—	15, 16	... 15. 101	—	6	... 15. 218
—	4	... 19. 203	—	15, 16	... 15. 152	—	6	... 16. 82
—	4	... 21. 177	—	17	... 17. 446	—	7	... 15. 221
—	6	... 21. 425	—	17	... 19. 171	—	9	... 14. 447
—	7	... 11. 66	—	18	... 13. 128	—	12	... 19. 109
—	7, 8	... 9. 103	146.	3, 4	... 12. 427	—	17	... 6. 484
—	8	... 8. 165	—	4	... 12. 334	—	17	... 15. 365
—	10	... 21. 179	147.	1	... 12. 276	—	17	... 15. 403
—	12	... 7. 65	—	1	... 19. 415	—	17	... 21. 77
—	13-16	... 18. 86	—	3	... 14. 111	—	27	... 16. 150
—	14	... 5. 79	—	11	... 7. 280	—	19, 20	... 5. 368
—	14	... 6. 261	—	11	... 15. 17	—	31, 32	... 18. 376
—	14	... 13. 397	—	11	... 18. 61	—	31, 33	... 20. 23
—	14	... 13. 402	—	19, 20	... 9. 194	4.	3, 4	... 6. 122
—	14	... 13. 417	—	19, 20	... 12. 311	—	7	... 7. 249
—	14	... 17. 376	—	19, 20	... 13. 283	—	7	... 22. 6
—	14, 15	... 7. 270	—	20	... 20. 291	—	7	... 18. 138

Proverbs.			Proverbs.			Proverbs.		
chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page
4.	7	... 17. 139	8.	34	... 13. 486	12.	36	... 20. 505
—	7	... 19. 382	—	34	... 14. 98	13.	4	... 12. 73
—	12, 13	... 20. 509	—	34, 35	... 18. 150	—	5	... 3. 289
—	14, 15	... 21. 375	—	34	... 22. 14	—	5	... 19. 285
—	18	... 12. 65	—	35, 36	... 9. 273	—	6	... 8. 244
—	18	... 20. 85	—	36	... 12. 46	—	8	... 17. 38
—	18, 19	... 5. 208	—	36	... 13. 297	—	10	... 19. 185
—	18, 19	... 19. 302	9.	3	... 13. 76	—	12	... 12. 187
—	21	... 6. 153	—	7	... 19. 120	—	12	... 15. 127
—	23	... 9. 414	—	8	... 19. 108	—	13	... 1. 103
—	23	... 11. 293	—	16, 17	... 12. 72	—	13	... 5. 255
—	26	... 15. 326	10.	2	... 8. 243	—	13	... 6. 41
—	23	... 18. 69	—	4	... 18. 425	—	13	... 8. 483
5.	3, 4	... 3. 255	—	5	... 19. 340	—	13	... 18. 102
—	8	... 19. 198	—	7	... 13. 383	—	13	... 9. 169
—	8	... 21. 375	—	9	... 7. 485	—	18	... 19. 117
—	11	... 12. 49	—	12	... 18. 311	—	20	... 1. 342
—	11	... 19. 74	—	12	... 21. 125	—	22	... 20. 138
—	11, 12	... 21. 251	—	19	... 1. 24	14.	1	... 21. 103
—	12, 13	... 19. 123	—	20	... 6. 123	—	2	... 2. 230
—	19	... 4. 59	—	20	... 18. 387	—	3	... 4. 280
—	19	... 19. 471	—	20	... 18. 395	—	5	... 19. 296
6.	6-8	... 13. 361	—	20	... 19. 202	—	9	... 19. 443
—	6-8	... 19. 375	—	20, 21	... 9. 254	—	13	... 16. 129
—	6-8	... 22. 3	—	22	... 17. 46	—	14	... 8. 144
—	9, 10	... 19. 340	—	29	... 2. 291	—	14	... 18. 464
—	16, 17	... 16. 96	—	29	... 11. 357	—	15	... 9. 325
—	17	... 19. 285	—	29	... 12. 35	—	16	... 14. 192
—	21, 22	... 6. 471	—	29	... 17. 107	—	20	... 13. 297
—	22	... 12. 364	—	31	... 19. 206	—	24	... 17. 47
7.	12	... 19. 445	11.	2	... 4. 301	—	31	... 19. 435
—	14	... 17. 201	—	4	... 8. 316	—	34	... 19. 277
—	21, 22	... 19. 232	—	4	... 16. 323	15.	2	... 19. 199
—	21	... 21. 377	—	7	... 16. 174	—	3	... 17. 340
—	22	... 11. 259	—	8	... 15. 4	—	3	... 21. 174
8.	10	... 14. 307	—	18	... 15. 426	—	5	... 17. 434
—	11	... 11. 454	—	18	... 20. 222	—	7	... 19. 202
—	12	... 10. 230	—	20	... 15. 68	—	8	... 14. 25
—	13	... 8. 59	—	21	... 14. 216	—	8	... 14. 26
—	13	... 8. 331	—	24	... 13. 360	—	9	... 17. 409
—	13	... 13. 298	—	25	... 6. 125	—	9	... 19. 275
—	13	... 21. 381	—	28	... 17. 45	—	9	... 19. 275
—	22	... 13. 430	—	28	... 17. 45	—	14	... 19. 205
—	22-31	... 1. 445	—	31	... 3. 117	—	16, 17	... 14. 450
—	30	... 12. 338	—	31	... 18. 419	—	21	... 19. 271
—	30	... 14. 221	—	31	... 20. 208	—	24	... 11. 372
—	30	... 17. 324	12.	10	... 12. 185	—	24	... 19. 339
—	30, 31	... 10. 245	—	12	... 18. 381	—	24	... 19. 405
—	31	... 1. 115	—	12	... 22. 13	—	24	... 22. 10
—	31	... 3. 408	—	15	... 13. 116	—	26	... 20. 486
—	31	... 13. 10	—	26	... 11. 329	—	27	... 17. 20
—	31	... 16. 462	—	26	... 16. 268	—	33	... 3. 459
—	31	... 16. 462	—	26	... 19. 130	16.	1	... 4. 146

Proverbs.			Proverbs.			Proverbs.		
chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page
16.	2	... 1. 126	18.	14	... 12. 143	22.	6	... 20. 290
—	2	... 13. 110	—	14	... 13. 281	—	6	... 20. 393
—	2	... 13. 449	—	14	... 20. 37	—	15	... 16. 459
—	2	... 14. 430	—	22	... 2. 165	—	24, 25	... 7. 181
—	2	... 15. 262	—	23	... 17. 43	23.	1, 2	... 16. 133
—	2	... 15. 322	19.	2	... 16. 89	—	4	... 17. 43
—	2	... 16. 453	—	2	... 19. 356	—	4	... 20. 86
—	2	... 18. 396	—	3	... 9. 467	—	5	... 1. 152
—	2	... 19. 226	—	7	... 13. 358	—	5	... 7. 455
—	3	... 14. 367	—	11	... 19. 22	—	5	... 13. 368
—	3	... 15. 95	—	14	... 2. 165	—	5	... 14. 350
—	3	... 15. 87	—	14	... 18. 87	—	5	... 16. 113
—	4	... 5. 130	—	16	... 2. 230	—	17	... 14. 58
—	4	... 13. 126	—	17	... 10. 76	—	17	... 16. 84
—	4	... 15. 281	—	17	... 14. 380	—	23	... 19. 359
—	4	... 17. 307	—	17	... 18. 350	—	26	... 5. 82
—	4	... 20. 332	—	17	... 21. 151	—	26	... 8. 328
—	7	... 7. 485	—	21	... 11. 116	—	27	... 19. 194
—	7	... 8. 124	—	22	... 6. 279	—	29, 30	... 19. 393
—	7	... 17. 85	—	22	... 18. 96	—	31	... 4. 98
—	7	... 18. 121	20.	7	... 15. 91	24.	7	... 13. 112
—	7	... 18. 45	—	17	... 15. 94	—	10	... 12. 71
—	7	... 18. 452	—	21	... 17. 44	—	10	... 12. 403
—	8	... 15. 94	—	21	... 17. 144	—	10	... 16. 324
—	8	... 16. 141	—	24	... 15. 219	—	13, 14	... 6. 257
—	8	... 16. 152	—	29	... 20. 422	—	13, 14	... 16. 194
—	19	... 5. 244	21.	3	... 19. 275	—	13, 14	... 18. 370
—	14	... 13. 95	—	4	... 14. 94	—	13, 14	... 19. 384
—	23	... 6. 125	—	15	... 15. 403	—	13, 14	... 20. 26
—	19	... 14. 432	—	18	... 21. 153	—	14	... 6. 130
—	20	... 14. 237	—	24	... 21. 424	—	17	... 15. 423
—	20	... 21. 483	—	25	... 14. 100	—	24	... 12. 352
—	21	... 9. 258	—	25	... 17. 282	—	29	... 2. 377
—	26	... 19. 470	—	27	... 1. 67	—	29	... 16. 148
—	29	... 15. 216	—	27	... 4. 464	25.	17	... 15. 300
—	32	... 1. 185	—	27	... 6. 406	—	21, 22	... 19. 22
—	32	... 2. 376	—	27	... 11. 481	—	26	... 14. 213
—	33	... 17. 343	—	27	... 14. 91	—	27	... 14. 444
17.	4	... 6. 421	—	27	... 13. 442	—	28	... 12. 90
—	5	... 21. 147	—	30	... 7. 387	—	28	... 15. 201
—	14	... 19. 475	—	30	... 7. 485	—	28	... 16. 112
—	15	... 19. 276	—	30	... 12. 327	26.	1	... 19. 70
18.	8	... 2. 279	—	30	... 22. 74	—	1	... 19. 134
—	9	... 16. 289	22.	1	... 13. 386	—	4, 5	... 5. 261
—	10, 11	... 22. 27	—	1	... 16. 145	—	7	... 8. 386
—	10, 11	... 18. 184	—	2	... 1. 161	—	9	... 16. 69
—	10, 11	... 17. 38	—	2	... 16. 146	—	12	... 15. 223
—	11	... 21. 433	—	2	... 21. 146	—	12	... 20. 93
—	11	... 21. 483	—	3	... 19. 242	—	13	... 2. 123
—	13	... 5. 266	—	3	... 20. 126	—	16	... 7. 141
—	14	... 3. 483	—	6	... 6. 83	—	18	... 20. 509
—	14	... 6. 265	—	6	... 18. 98	—	26	... 9. 381

Proverbs.			Proverbs.			Ecclesiastes.		
chap. ver.	vol.	page	chap. ver.	vol.	page	chap. ver.	vol.	page
26. 26	...	13. 384	31. 30	...	14. 424	5. 16	...	19. 303
— 26	...	16. 19	— 30	...	19. 475	— 18, 19	...	20. 137
— 26	...	17. 17	— 30	...	20. 171	6. 7	...	21. 483
27. 1	...	14. 66	34. 11, 12	...	19. 115	7. 1	...	20. 188
— 18	...	14. 19	37. 10	...	14. 394	— 1	...	6. 208
— 18	...	15. 368				— 1	...	2. 276
28. 8	...	20. 138				— 1	...	6. 411
— 9	...	1. 127				— 4	...	16. 129
— 9	...	20. 502				— 4, 5	...	19. 207
— 13	...	12. 212				— 5	...	19. 117
— 13	...	18. 12				— 11	...	13. 221
— 13	...	19. 218				— 11	...	18. 150
— 14	...	8. 203				— 14	...	12. 271
— 14	...	8. 396				— 16	...	5. 89
— 14	...	11. 286				— 16, 17	...	19. 349
— 14	...	20. 80				— 16-18	...	15. 219
— 20	...	18. 190				— 21, 22	...	2. 375
29. 1	...	17. 192				— 20	...	4. 275
— 1	...	18. 366				— 20	...	6. 32
— 11	...	19. 205				— 20	...	13. 269
— 21	...	12. 47				— 20	...	16. 424
— 25	...	12. 335				— 20	...	21. 59
— 25	...	16. 353				— 20	...	21. 340
— 25	...	19. 273				— 29	...	12. 57
— 26	...	15. 88				— 29	...	14. 74
— 27	...	2. 99				— 29	...	16. 206
— 27	...	2. 205				— 29	...	19. 49
— 27	...	11. 439				— 29	...	22. 17
— 27	...	11. 471				— 29	...	21. 114
— 27	...	13. 296				8. 11	...	5. 149
— 27	...	13. 298				— 5, 6	...	7. 486
— 27	...	17. 246				— 6	...	19. 375
— 27	...	18. 39				— 11	...	12. 366
— 27	...	19. 126				— 11	...	13. 88
— 27	...	21. 124				— 11	...	17. 199
30. 2	...	6. 97				— 11	...	20. 383
— 2	...	15. 196				— 14	...	13. 357
— 2	...	20. 92				9. 1	...	18. 379
— 8	...	14. 313				— 1	...	19. 86
— 8	...	18. 194				— 1	...	19. 266
— 8, 9	...	1. 237				— 1, 2	...	9. 147
— 8, 9	...	10. 395				— 1, 2	...	17. 100
— 8, 9	...	17. 26				— 1, 2	...	18. 299
— 8, 9	...	17. 56				— 3	...	13. 117
— 9	...	1. 160				— 7	...	13. 41
— 9	...	4. 399				— 10	...	12. 236
— 9	...	17. 24				— 10	...	14. 65
— 9	...	17. 29				10. 3	...	13. 117
31. 4, 5	...	16. 131				— 7	...	13. 126
— 6	...	19. 31				— 16, 17	...	16. 131
— 20	...	19. 441				— 20	...	14. 134
— 30	...	12. 426				11. 1	...	4. 323

Ecclesiastes.			Canticles.			Isaiah.		
chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page
11.	1	... 14. 309	3.	4	... 22. 18	5.	3, 4	... 15. 242
—	1	... 21. 151	4.	1	... 17. 209	—	8	... 4. 402
—	4	... 13. 363	—	6	... 17. 265	—	8	... 14. 323
—	7	... 13. 459	—	6	... 17. 291	—	8	... 16. 114
—	7	... 19. 320	—	7	... 19. 487	—	8	... 17. 34
—	7	... 20. 189	—	9	... 22. 35	—	8	... 18. 196
—	9	... 2. 368	—	16	... 15. 436	—	10	... 13. 241
—	9	... 6. 394	—	16	... 16. 357	—	11	... 19. 389
—	9	... 9. 449	5.	1	... 17. 295	—	11	... 19. 392
—	9	... 11. 454	—	1, 2, 6	... 1. 411	—	12	... 17. 30
—	9	... 12. 49	—	2	... 3. 34	—	12	... 19. 373
—	9	... 13. 89	—	2	... 19. 331	—	16	... 1. 84
—	9	... 22. 11	—	2, 3,	... 17. 238	—	19	... 16. 284
—	11	... 13. 422	—	2, 3, 6	... 5. 22	—	20	... 4. 382
12.	1	... 12. 277	—	4	... 11. 146	—	20	... 19. 293
—	1	... 13. 203	—	7	... 13. 382	—	20	... 19. 305
—	1	... 13. 443	6.	3	... 14. 345	—	20	... 19. 322
—	1	... 14. 70	—	3	... 14. 486	—	20, 21	... 15. 217
—	1	... 19. 361	7.	11	... 6. 143	—	22	... 19. 393
—	2-6	... 19. 61	8.	6, 7	... 13. 145	6.	1-3	... 19. 103
—	7	... 13. 27	—	7	... 13. 275	—	2	... 1. 148
—	7	... 14. 437	—	7	... 17. 159	—	2	... 17. 456
—	7	... 19. 61	—	14	... 3. 7	—	2, 3	... 15. 408
—	7	... 20. 102	—	14	... 16. 208	—	2, 3, 5	... 14. 148
—	7	... 20. 170	—	14	... 20. 163	—	3	... 13. 153
—	13	... 18. 466				—	3	... 14. 143
—	13, 14	... 22. 11				—	5	... 1. 238
—	13	... 16. 84				—	5	... 7. 92
—	13	... 17. 309	1.	3	... 7. 200	—	5	... 7. 241
—	14	... 13. 65	—	3	... 13. 186	—	5	... 16. 99
—	14	... 16. 403	—	3	... 15. 251	—	5	... 19. 101
—	14	... 19. 350	—	3	... 17. 363	—	5	... 19. 101
			—	12	... 15. 342	—	5	... 19. 239
			—	12	... 15. 351	—	16	... 20. 116
			—	16	... 15. 461	7.	13	... 14. 451
			—	16	... 22. 50	—	13	... 17. 195
			—	16, 17	... 10. 413	—	14-16	... 18. 117
			—	16, 17	... 20. 5	8.	9, 10	... 5. 422
			—	19, 20	... 20. 251	—	10	... 18. 45
			2.	3	... 14. 54	—	12, 13	... 14. 426
			—	3	... 19. 380	—	12, 13	... 17. 90
			—	9	... 19. 47	—	13	... 14. 118
			—	11-22	... 3. 243	—	13	... 15. 389
			—	22	... 12. 426	—	13	... 15. 441
			3.	9	... 19. 198	—	17	... 8. 269
			—	9	... 19. 204	—	17	... 18. 58
			—	9	... 19. 313	—	20	... 5. 497
			—	10, 11	... 18. 57	—	20	... 8. 75
			—	16	... 16. 138	—	20	... 8. 134
			—	18-25	... 16. 135	—	20	... 13. 292
			4.	1	... 22. 32	—	20	... 17. 371
			—	5	... 18. 45	—	20	... 19. 151
			—	11	... 20. 206	—	20	... 19. 294

Isaiah.			Isaiah.			Isaiah.		
chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page
9.	2	... 19. 330	27.	8	... 15. 125	40.	12	... 13. 400
—	6	... 1. 40	—	9	... 12. 59	—	12	... 13. 422
—	6	... 14. 342	—	9	... 20. 476	—	13	... 5. 371
—	6	... 16. 231	—	11	... 21. 307	—	15	... 14. 149
—	6	... 20. 403	28.	15	... 22. 32	—	17	... 7. 84
10.	5	... 3. 60	—	16	... 2. 252	—	17	... 12. 327
—	7	... 14. 413	—	16	... 13. 338	—	17	... 18. 279
—	12	... 8. 445	—	16	... 15. 151	—	18	... 14. 146
—	12	... 8. 493	—	24-29	... 14. 235	—	26	... 13. 390
11.	1, 2	... 6. 408	—	27	... 5. 358	—	27	... 18. 141
—	4	... 3. 63	29.	9	... 12. 404	—	28	... 17. 332
—	6, 8	... 13. 232	—	13	... 15. 354	—	29	... 17. 81
—	11	... 16. 25	—	13	... 19. 413	—	29	... 17. 92
12.	3	... 22. 39	—	15	... 6. 244	—	30, 31	... 15. 313
13.	13, 14	... 12. 158	30.	10	... 21. 241	—	31	... 12. 230
14.	10	... 17. 460	—	15	... 3. 471	—	31	... 17. 106
—	12, 13	... 5. 191	—	15	... 17. 4	—	31	... 18. 317
—	14	... 20. 463	—	18	... 10. 118	41.	2	... 14. 230
17.	9	... 13. 68	—	18	... 15. 64	—	2	... 14. 232
22.	12-14	... 17. 479	—	21	... 12. 92	—	2	... 17. 188
24.	4-6	... 12. 165	—	21	... 20. 299	—	11	... 2. 322
25.	4	... 15. 361	—	22	... 12. 91	42.	1	... 3. 397
—	6	... 16. 14	—	22	... 15. 462	—	1	... 14. 104
—	9	... 15. 133	—	33	... 10. 78	—	4	... 3. 379
26.	1	... 18. 174	32.	17	... 7. 98	—	9	... 2. 218
—	3	... 12. 487	33.	9	... 12. 158	—	9	... 13. 328
—	3	... 17. 116	—	14	... 7. 345	—	9	... 14. 293
—	4	... 21. 460	—	14	... 14. 127	—	9	... 17. 128
—	8	... 12. 283	—	14	... 14. 190	43.	2	... 15. 4
—	8	... 13. 486	—	14	... 17. 370	—	3, 4	... 7. 449
—	8	... 14. 3	—	14	... 20. 344	—	3, 4	... 16. 271
—	8	... 15. 61	—	15, 16	... 8. 241	—	10	... 19. 78
—	8	... 15. 352	—	22	... 18. 115	—	10	... 20. 117
—	9	... 13. 141	34.	4	... 12. 158	—	12	... 14. 209
—	9	... 17. 502	35.	10	... 9. 7	—	13	... 17. 90
—	10	... 7. 224	—	10	... 12. 402	—	21-24	... 9. 473
—	10	... 14. 334	37.	23	... 12. 332	—	22	... 15. 297
—	10	... 19. 237	38.	3	... 7. 104	—	22	... 17. 501
—	11	... 16. 81	—	3	... 13. 133	—	24	... 4. 342
—	11	... 17. 210	—	3	... 16. 20	—	24, 25	... 3. 323
—	13	... 1. 101	—	3	... 21. 172	—	25	... 1. 195
—	16	... 12. 271	—	14	... 8. 248	—	25	... 12. 350
—	16	... 15. 299	—	15	... 2. 336	—	25	... 15. 445
—	16	... 15. 303	—	17	... 6. 157	—	25	... 16. 67
—	19	... 12. 26	—	17	... 12. 351	44.	3	... 14. 86
—	20	... 15. 126	39.	8	... 15. 249	—	5	... 1. 492
27.	4	... 13. 71	40.	1	... 13. 265	—	5	... 15. 387
—	4	... 13. 271	—	1, 2	... 13. 399	45.	7	... 15. 423
—	4	... 18. 21	—	1, 2	... 18. 223	—	7	... 17. 152
—	4	... 20. 246	—	3	... 14. 487	—	7	... 18. 53
—	5	... 13. 301	—	6	... 17. 311	—	8	... 20. 117
—	5	... 16. 233	—	11	... 2. 72	—	9	... 16. 27

Isaiah.			Isaiah.			Isaiah.		
chap. ver.	vol.	page	chap. ver.	vol.	page	chap. ver.	vol.	page
45. 9	...	16. 349	53. 1	...	17. 149	54. 16	...	4. 282
— 9	...	20. 504	— 2	...	12. 154	— 16	...	13. 403
— 12	...	17. 465	— 2	...	18. 125	55. 1	...	4. 42
— 15	...	13. 358	— 3	...	20. 275	— 1	...	12. 363
— 15	...	15. 418	— 4	...	4. 455	— 1	...	14. 108
— 15	...	18. 56	— 4	...	19. 44	— 1	...	14. 121
— 19	...	14. 163	— 4	...	22. 65	— 1	...	18. 157
— 21	...	17. 408	— 4, 5	...	19. 182	— 2	...	11. 71
— 23	...	5. 212	— 4, 5	...	22. 115	— 2	...	17. 310
— 23	...	16. 223	— 4-6	...	12. 368	— 3	...	12. 484
— 23	...	18. 252	— 4-6	...	19. 187	— 3	...	14. 477
— 23	...	20. 238	— 4-6	...	21. 469	— 5	...	16. 265
— 24	...	14. 231	— 5	...	20. 36	— 6	...	7. 139
— 24	...	22. 40	— 5	...	21. 19	— 6	...	17. 233
46. 3, 4	...	1. 155	— 6	...	7. 223	— 6	...	18. 159
— 3, 4	...	6. 158	— 6	...	8. 31	— 6	...	19. 363
— 3, 4	...	16. 414	— 6	...	9. 301	— 6	...	21. 313
— 8	...	9. 265	— 6	...	12. 57	— 6	...	22. 8
— 8	...	14. 466	— 6	...	13. 184	— 7	...	4. 191
— 8	...	15. 488	— 6	...	14. 11	— 7	...	15. 34
— 8	...	19. 77	— 6	...	14. 51	— 7	...	16. 72
48. 7	...	2. 321	— 6	...	15. 200	— 7	...	21. 18
— 7	...	5. 389	— 6	...	16. 421	— 7	...	21. 265
— 7	...	13. 362	— 7	...	19. 34	— 7	...	21. 350
— 7	...	14. 378	— 8	...	17. 378	— 7, 8	...	13. 278
— 9	...	3. 451	— 8	...	19. 38	56. 4	...	9. 264
— 9, 10	...	4. 31	— 8	...	19. 183	— 4	...	12. 126
— 10	...	7. 227	— 9	...	14. 418	— 4	...	13. 42
— 11	...	9. 281	— 10	...	10. 208	— 4	...	15. 9
49. 4	...	16. 386	— 10	...	10. 317	— 4	...	16. 158
— 7	...	3. 380	— 10	...	13. 313	— 4	...	19. 291
— 15	...	7. 303	— 10	...	16. 246	— 6	...	14. 171
— 15	...	12. 264	— 10	...	17. 248	— 7	...	15. 429
— 15	...	18. 446	— 10	...	19. 476	— 16	...	12. 347
— 16	...	1. 46	— 10	...	20. 260	— 20	...	20. 392
— 23	...	5. 236	— 10	...	21. 136	57. 2	...	14. 286
— 23	...	6. 219	— 10, 11	...	20. 88	— 2	...	19. 43
50. 6	...	4. 418	— 11	...	13. 311	— 15	...	17. 473
— 10	...	4. 250	— 11	...	13. 477	— 15	...	21. 223
— 10	...	13. 14	— 11	...	13. 481	— 16	...	12. 230
— 10	...	18. 51	— 11	...	14. 106	— 17	...	17. 488
— 11	...	2. 428	— 11	...	14. 472	— 17, 18	...	8. 275
— 11	...	19. 58	— 11	...	19. 160	— 19	...	10. 359
51. 2	...	14. 229	— 11	...	21. 6	58. 7	...	21. 148
— 12, 13	...	18. 53	— 12	...	19. 46	— 7, 8	...	21. 84
— 12, 13	...	22. 30	54. 1	...	14. 275	— 9	...	14. 14
— 16	...	12. 158	— 7	...	2. 270	— 9	...	16. 270
52. 3	...	20. 384	— 7	...	4. 423	— 11	...	15. 131
— 7	...	10. 490	— 7, 8	...	18. 447	— 13	...	18. 152
— 7	...	13. 290	— 9	...	14. 176	— 13, 14	...	12. 282
— 7	...	13. 302	— 10	...	16. 313	— 13, 14	...	18. 179
— 11	...	5. 112	— 11	...	14. 411	— 13, 14	...	19. 99

Isaiah.			Isaiah.			Jeremiah.		
chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page
58.	13, 14	... 22. 22	66.	1	... 1. 57	3.	7	... 17. 329
59.	2	... 2. 204	—	2	... 13. 365	—	10	... 15. 320
—	2	... 12. 324	—	2	... 15. 412	—	13	... 13. 269
—	2	... 13. 299	—	2	... 17. 193	—	13	... 13. 294
—	2	... 14. 50	—	2	... 18. 360	—	13	... 18. 83
—	2	... 14. 349	—	2, 3	... 2. 9	—	19	... 1. 34
—	2	... 15. 439	—	3	... 15. 351	—	19	... 1. 50
—	2	... 16. 189	—	5	... 12. 155	—	22	... 16. 26
—	2	... 17. 236	—	5	... 21. 100	—	22	... 20. 95
—	2	... 18. 165				4.	1	... 16. 29
—	2	... 19. 493				—	2	... 20. 140
—	2	... 21. 186	1.	5	... 21. 175	—	10	... 5. 153
—	4	... 8. 162	2.	2	... 12. 406	—	10	... 5. 434
—	10	... 18. 51	—	3	... 16. 269	—	10	... 6. 120
—	16	... 3. 417	—	5	... 14. 202	—	14	... 16. 32
—	16	... 16. 238	—	5	... 17. 330	—	22	... 19. 53
—	17	... 5. 142	—	5	... 20. 109	5.	3	... 13. 94
—	20	... 2. 294	—	9	... 6. 266	—	3	... 17. 193
60.	8	... 20. 111	—	9-13	... 18. 36	—	5	... 14. 445
61.	1, 2	... 18. 6	—	13	... 12. 163	—	19	... 15. 324
—	1, 2	... 18. 166	—	13	... 12. 273	—	22	... 13. 408
—	1, 2	... 20. 11	—	13	... 16. 90	—	22	... 17. 84
—	7	... 1. 333	—	13	... 17. 40	—	22	... 20. 507
—	10	... 16. 21	—	13	... 17. 65	6.	6	... 17. 228
62.	1	... 17. 165	—	13	... 18. 232	—	9, 10	... 17. 240
—	1	... 20. 121	—	13	... 18. 380	—	16	... 3. 18
—	4	... 4. 259	—	13	... 19. 57	—	16	... 6. 295
—	6	... 7. 24	—	13	... 20. 6	—	16	... 13. 374
—	6	... 9. 131	—	13	... 21. 477	—	16	... 15. 447
63.	1, 5	... 9. 282	—	13, 31	... 15. 317	—	16	... 19. 58
—	5	... 3. 492	—	15-19	... 5. 221	—	16	... 20. 24
—	8	... 19. 284	—	19	... 1. 197	7.	4	... 14. 116
—	9	... 14. 462	—	19	... 12. 162	—	8	... 6. 125
—	9	... 18. 59	—	19	... 13. 426	—	9, 10	... 14. 117
—	16	... 1. 28	—	19	... 17. 323	—	24	... 3. 308
—	17	... 17. 198	—	19	... 19. 58	8.	6	... 9. 427
—	17	... 17. 217	—	19	... 20. 103	—	7	... 19. 375
—	17	... 17. 236	—	19	... 20. 385	—	7	... 22. 3
64.	6	... 15. 417	—	19	... 21. 21	—	7, 8	... 13. 87
—	6	... 15. 462	—	19	... 21. 243	—	8, 9	... 17. 108
—	6	... 20. 300	—	19	... 21. 394	—	9	... 20. 500
—	7	... 8. 103	—	25	... 17. 69	—	18	... 12. 229
—	7	... 12. 236	—	25	... 17. 235	—	20	... 20. 374
—	7	... 13. 462	—	26	... 15. 376	9.	3	... 5. 114
—	7	... 15. 304	—	26	... 19. 315	—	23, 24	... 2. 46
—	7	... 15. 311	—	27	... 12. 241	—	23, 24	... 20. 139
—	7	... 15. 348	—	31	... 13. 460	—	23, 24	... 20. 253
—	7	... 22. 12	—	31	... 15. 241	—	24	... 9. 250
—	8	... 1. 36	—	31	... 17. 77	—	25, 26	... 5. 165
—	8	... 1. 42	—	31, 32	... 15. 298	—	29	... 15. 404
—	8, 9	... 10. 254	—	36, 37	... 15. 425	10.	11, 12	... 13. 389
65.	6, 7	... 18. 90	3.	5, 6	... 1. 48	—	24	... 18. 343

Hosea.			Hosea.			Amos.		
chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page
2.	21, 22	... 2. 318	10.	11	... 19. 447	6.	3	... 13. 337
—	21, 22	... 4. 472	—	11	... 13. 153	—	3	... 14. 435
—	21, 22	... 6. 112	11.	4	... 2. 365	—	3	... 16. 126
—	21, 22	... 13. 419	—	4	... 13. 248	—	3	... 17. 197
—	23	... 17. 185	—	4	... 14. 165	—	5	... 4. 19
3.	4	... 14. 196	—	4	... 19. 265	—	5	... 4. 415
—	5	... 5. 255	—	9	... 16. 28	—	11	... 5. 395
—	5	... 6. 26	—	9	... 17. 182	—	12	... 7. 194
—	5	... 17. 388	—	12	... 14. 330	—	13	... 2. 323
4.	4	... 11. 206	—	12	... 19. 279	7.	4	... 5. 385
—	8	... 8. 432	12.	3, 4	... 17. 161	—	10	... 7. 383
—	11	... 16. 111	—	4	... 5. 337	8.	5	... 2. 417
—	11	... 17. 32	—	7	... 4. 388	—	5	... 15. 272
—	11	... 19. 394	13.	6	... 5. 149	—	10	... 19. 411
—	11	... 21. 249	—	14	... 2. 441	—	11, 12	... 6. 189
—	11, 12	... 19. 198	14.	2	... 16. 43	—	12	... 4. 132
—	12, 13	... 4. 477	—	3	... 1. 50	9.	9	... 17. 396
—	14	... 13. 283	—	3	... 12. 129	—	16	... 13. 416
—	16	... 9. 300	—	4	... 19. 85	Obadiah.		
—	17	... 6. 376	—	5	... 12. 483	15.	2	... 3. 81
—	17	... 7. 230	—	8	... 2. 394	21.	19	... 4. 55
—	17	... 17. 223	—	8	... 9. 183	Jonah.		
—	18	... 15. 181	—	8	... 13. 197	1.	5	... 14. 129
5.	2	... 17. 328	—	8	... 13. 239	—	5	... 14. 346
—	11	... 6. 39	—	8	... 15. 228	—	12	... 21. 142
—	11	... 14. 425	—	8	... 15. 359	2.	4	... 12. 251
—	15	... 13. 451	—	8	... 19. 208	—	7	... 12. 231
—	15	... 15. 321	Joel.			—	7	... 12. 231
—	16	... 15. 303	2.	13	... 16. 30	—	7	... 13. 360
6.	3	... 10. 144	—	14	... 21. 197	—	8	... 2. 38
—	3	... 19. 387	—	19	... 1. 154	—	8	... 12. 438
—	4	... 17. 226	—	28-30	... 8. 15	—	8	... 18. 473
—	5	... 14. 192	Amos.			—	8	... 19. 50
—	7	... 13. 71	2.	6	... 17. 316	—	8	... 19. 55
7.	4	... 19. 280	3.	2	... 14. 53	—	11	... 4. 405
—	5	... 19. 392	—	2	... 14. 59	3.	5	... 15. 59
—	9	... 14. 191	—	2	... 15. 326	—	9	... 14. 122
—	12	... 14. 174	—	2	... 22. 68	—	9	... 21. 258
—	12	... 15. 323	—	3	... 13. 238	4.	2	... 5. 57
—	14	... 5. 30	—	3	... 19. 482	—	3	... 12. 457
—	14	... 6. 93	—	3	... 14. 267	—	6, 7	... 19. 6
—	14	... 13. 453	—	5	... 14. 267	—	10	... 16. 326
—	14	... 14. 92	—	6	... 14. 453	Micah.		
—	14	... 14. 92	—	6	... 15. 124	2.	1	... 11. 242
—	16	... 19. 279	—	8	... 15. 124	—	1	... 17. 43
8.	2	... 20. 280	4.	1	... 16. 23	—	2	... 6. 383
—	7	... 19. 303	—	4, 5	... 16. 24	—	7	... 5. 420
—	12	... 6. 43	—	10	... 12. 178	—	7	... 6. 131
—	12	... 13. 285	5.	6	... 14. 170	—	7	... 7. 52
10.	1	... 13. 211	—	14	... 12. 335	—	7	... 7. 52
—	1	... 20. 340	—	15	... 9. 180	—	10	... 6. 176
—	2	... 6. 357	6.	1, 6	... 6. 220			
—	11	... 6. 427						

Micah.			Habakkuk.			Haggai.		
chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page
2.	10	... 12. 181	1.	2	... 14. 141	1.	2	... 5. 147
—	10	... 12. 453	—	12	... 9. 29	—	2	... 19. 142
—	10	... 13. 5	—	12	... 15. 68	—	6	... 17. 272
—	10	... 14. 262	—	12, 13	... 7. 367	2.	7	... 3. 240
—	10	... 14. 317	—	12, 13	... 18. 377	—	13, 14	... 18. 442
3.	11	... 14. 115	—	13	... 1. 496	Zechariah.		
—	11	... 15. 161	—	13	... 8. 271			
4.	5	... 5. 390	—	13	... 15. 452	1.	15	... 5. 249
—	5	... 14. 136	—	13	... 19. 195	—	15	... 8. 303
—	5	... 18. 37	—	13	... 20. 481	2.	5	... 8. 170
—	11, 12	... 13. 359	—	16	... 6. 135	—	12	... 7. 116
5.	2	... 20. 401	—	16	... 15. 262	3.	1	... 1. 21
—	6	... 13. 273	—	16	... 17. 392	—	1	... 5. 449
6.	3	... 9. 274	—	16	... 20. 137	—	1, 2	... 1. 218
—	3	... 15. 313	2.	3	... 14. 410	—	1, 2	... 9. 111
—	3	... 17. 485	—	3	... 18. 229	—	2	... 3. 465
—	3-5	... 18. 37	—	3, 4	... 8. 299	—	2	... 6. 95
—	6, 7	... 1. 389	—	5	... 2. 314	—	2	... 7. 275
—	6, 7	... 3. 375	—	5	... 21. 419	—	2	... 19. 176
—	6, 7	... 4. 125	—	6	... 17. 34	—	4	... 12. 461
—	6, 7	... 6. 84	—	11	... 12. 165	—	3, 4	... 14. 13
—	6, 7	... 19. 39	—	11	... 12. 183	—	5	... 7. 294
—	6, 7	... 21. 276	—	17, 18	... 15. 198	—	10	... 1. 15
—	6, 7	... 22. 92	—	21	... 14. 359	—	12	... 3. 232
—	6-8	... 5. 31	3.	2	... 20. 374	4.	7	... 6. 467
—	6-8	... 15. 349	—	17, 18	... 2. 44	7.	1, 2, 10	... 2. 16
—	6-8	... 22. 120	—	17, 18	... 13. 366	—	3	... 15. 339
—	7	... 15. 442	—	17, 18	... 15. 238	—	3	... 19. 230
—	8	... 12. 30	—	17, 18	... 17. 177	—	5, 6	... 1. 8
—	8	... 14. 73	—	17, 18	... 18. 54	—	7	... 5. 432
—	8	... 17. 448	—	18	... 2. 311	—	11, 12	... 19. 237
—	8	... 20. 490	—	18	... 12. 273	—	11, 12	... 21. 247
—	8	... 20. 499	—	18	... 14. 357	—	12	... 17. 204
7.	5	... 12. 252	Zephaniah.			8.	6	... 14. 278
—	7	... 9. 46				1.	8	... 16. 137	—	6	... 17. 81
—	8	... 18. 54	—	12	... 16. 20	—	6	... 20. 173
—	8	... 18. 341	—	12	... 19. 70	—	16, 17	... 19. 275
—	9	... 7. 33	—	12	... 19. 137	9.	9	... 19. 32
—	9	... 15. 134	—	12	... 19. 222	—	11	... 18. 81
—	18	... 1. 194	—	12	... 19. 315	10.	3	... 17. 385
—	18	... 2. 187	—	12	... 21. 349	11.	5	... 17. 389
—	18	... 3. 291	—	18	... 15. 240	12.	1	... 14. 129
—	18	... 3. 409	2.	3	... 7. 101	—	5	... 5. 439
—	18	... 9. 159	—	9	... 15. 372	—	8	... 14. 310
—	18	... 16. 232	—	9	... 19. 129	—	8	... 16. 55
—	18	... 18. 242	—	5	... 19. 256	—	8	... 16. 55
—	18	... 19. 178	3.	5	... 19. 238	—	10	... 11. 282
—	18	... 21. 468	—	7	... 18. 139	—	10	... 12. 250
—	18	... 22. 53	—	17	... 18. 354	—	10	... 13. 452
—	18, 19	... 14. 459	—	17	... 21. 352	—	10	... 14. 457
—	19	... 2. 450	—	17	...	—	10	... 15. 435
—	20	... 15. 473	—	17	...	—	10	... 17. 216
						—	10	... 17. 462

Matthew.				Matthew.				Matthew.			
chap.	ver.	vol.	page	chap.	ver.	vol.	page	chap.	ver.	vol.	page
5.	29, 30	...	16. 73	6.	22	...	4. 286	6.	33	...	16. 411
—	29, 30	...	17. 50	—	22	...	18. 152	—	33	...	18. 70
—	29, 30	...	20. 72	—	22	...	20. 100	—	33	...	18. 301
—	32	...	12. 124	—	24	...	11. 268	—	33	...	19. 212
—	43, 44	...	19. 110	—	24	...	11. 311	—	33	...	20. 19
—	44	...	7. 375	—	24	...	15. 280	—	33	...	20. 105
—	44	...	19. 262	—	24	...	16. 421	—	33	...	20. 135
—	44	...	19. 23	—	24	...	17. 19	—	33	...	20. 508
—	44	...	21. 92	—	24	...	20. 106	—	33	...	21. 257
—	44, 45	...	19. 170	—	24	...	20. 124	—	34	...	16. 114
—	44, 45	...	21. 84	—	24	...	20. 144	—	34	...	19. 360
—	45	...	3. 488	—	24	...	21. 369	—	37	...	15. 237
—	45	...	15. 421	—	24, 33	...	18. 190	7.	1, 6	...	19. 121
—	46	...	15. 293	—	25	...	6. 253	—	3	...	15. 262
—	46	...	19. 21	—	25	...	16. 142	—	3-5	...	19. 123
—	46, 47	...	16. 461	—	25	...	19. 75	—	6	...	21. 403
—	46, 47	...	18. 308	—	25	...	22. 25	—	7	...	17. 159
—	48	...	15. 398	—	25, 26	...	20. 145	—	7	...	18. 68
—	48	...	20. 83	—	25, 26	...	18. 451	—	7	...	21. 262
—	6. 1	...	16. 481	—	25, 32	...	6. 453	—	7, 8	...	21. 194
—	1, 2	...	21. 146	—	26	...	16. 142	—	9-11	...	12. 408
—	2	...	5. 30	—	27	...	15. 101	—	11	...	14. 146
—	2	...	18. 298	—	27	...	16. 142	—	12	...	15. 289
—	2	...	18. 469	—	28-30	...	7. 189	—	12	...	16. 149
—	2	...	19. 152	—	29	...	16. 139	—	12	...	19. 269
—	2-16	...	14. 92	—	30	...	18. 177	—	12	...	20. 277
—	3	...	12. 198	—	31, 32	...	14. 238	—	14	...	12. 223
—	4	...	12. 118	—	31, 34	...	16. 140	—	14	...	17. 63
—	6	...	9. 67	—	32	...	7. 332	—	14	...	22. 15
—	6	...	9. 240	—	32	...	12. 248	—	16	...	5. 280
—	6	...	18. 153	—	32	...	13. 411	—	16-18	...	19. 307
—	7	...	12. 240	—	32	...	15. 492	—	17	...	1. 46
—	11	...	15. 93	—	32	...	16. 141	—	20-22	...	6. 19
—	11	...	16. 160	—	32	...	18. 71	—	21	...	15. 160
—	11	...	17. 494	—	32	...	20. 369	—	21	...	16. 484
—	12	...	2. 188	—	32	...	22. 24	—	21	...	19. 452
—	12	...	13. 269	—	33	...	1. 380	—	21	...	21. 371
—	13	...	17. 404	—	33	...	5. 53	—	21-23	...	16. 17
—	14, 15	...	1. 184	—	33	...	8. 359	—	22	...	13. 34
—	19, 20	...	15. 84	—	33	...	12. 333	—	22	...	13. 92
—	19, 20	...	15. 418	—	33	...	12. 340	—	22	...	18. 281
—	19, 20	...	16. 481	—	33	...	13. 7	—	22, 23	...	10. 64
—	19-21	...	2. 141	—	33	...	13. 213	—	22, 23	...	16. 268
—	19-21	...	12. 330	—	33	...	14. 218	—	22, 23	...	21. 290
—	20	...	12. 492	—	33	...	14. 223	—	22, 23	...	21. 297
—	20, 21	...	13. 36	—	33	...	14. 447	—	23	...	15. 484
—	20, 21	...	18. 316	—	33	...	15. 85	—	26, 27	...	15. 171
—	20, 21	...	21. 261	—	33	...	15. 99	8.	2	...	1. 249
—	21	...	8. 392	—	33	...	15. 276	—	2	...	15. 69
—	21	...	13. 342	—	33	...	15. 403	—	2	...	17. 91
—	21	...	15. 85	—	33	...	16. 125	—	2	...	17. 164
—	21	...	15. 377	—	33	...	16. 142	—	2	...	20. 488

Matthew.			Matthew.			Matthew.		
chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page
8.	8	13. 454	10.	33	5. 164	12.	20	16. 462
—	9	1. 187	—	37	2. 125	—	20	18. 494
—	9	14. 356	—	37	12. 281	—	25	2. 69
—	9	16. 87	—	37	18. 140	—	29	21. 52
—	10	22. 48	—	38	19. 371	—	31	15. 35
—	11	20. 233	—	40	21. 101	—	31	20. 410
—	12	11. 119	—	42	10. 68	—	31	21. 398
—	17	3. 262	—	42	13. 79	—	34	12. 239
—	20	18. 127	—	42	19. 136	—	36	4. 224
—	21	2. 121	—	42	22. 82	—	36	9. 257
—	23, 26	15. 120	11.	8	15. 435	—	36	18. 391
—	24	14. 412	—	8	16. 137	—	36	20. 495
—	26	12. 489	—	11	16. 50	—	36, 37	12. 352
—	26	14. 118	—	12	12. 401	—	36, 37	13. 92
—	27	19. 464	—	13	15. 34	—	36, 37	19. 201
—	29	14. 74	—	13	17. 420	—	37	18. 393
—	29	20. 35	—	17	16. 342	—	41	14. 47
—	29	20. 159	—	19	13. 118	—	41, 42	13. 67
—	29	20. 260	—	19	18. 39	—	41, 42	14. 208
—	29	21. 191	—	21	14. 82	—	42	20. 118
—	31	8. 175	—	22	16. 468	—	43-45	1. 101
9.	2	13. 265	—	25	12. 295	—	45	15. 378
—	2	16. 15	—	25, 26	3. 214	—	50	14. 384
—	2	18. 369	—	26	4. 116	13.	6, 21	15. 360
—	3, 4	10. 17	—	26	14. 387	—	12	9. 489
—	12, 13	18. 157	—	26	11. 128	—	13	14. 97
—	13	21. 268	—	27	15. 381	—	14	14. 112
—	15	20. 19	—	27	20. 281	—	16, 17	16. 54
—	15, 16	4. 377	—	28	5. 16	—	19	15. 171
—	17	8. 121	—	28	14. 61	—	19	15. 385
—	17	19. 343	—	28	15. 64	—	19	17. 298
—	24	19. 333	—	28	17. 150	—	19	19. 335
—	25	17. 239	—	28	19. 55	—	19	19. 379
—	44	11. 465	—	28	20. 232	—	19	20. 283
10.	11	14. 64	—	28, 29	13. 149	—	20-22	3. 81
—	15	5. 227	—	28, 29	15. 383	—	22, 23	15. 117
—	16	8. 7	—	28, 29	16. 407	—	25, 26	22. 14
—	16	12. 385	—	28, 29	18. 241	—	39-41	13. 64
—	16	18. 476	—	28, 29	20. 25	—	41	5. 213
—	28	4. 151	—	28, 29	20. 49	—	41, 42	20. 161
—	28	14. 405	—	29	2. 98	—	41, 42	20. 241
—	28	14. 426	—	29	6. 199	—	42	13. 88
—	28	15. 55	—	29	15. 17	—	43	10. 23
—	28	17. 141	—	29	16. 228	—	45, 46	2. 146
—	28	19. 63	—	29	17. 52	—	45, 46	2. 158
—	29	5. 126	—	29	18. 108	—	45, 46	11. 310
—	29	2. 391	—	29	21. 58	—	45, 46	15. 15
—	29, 30	17. 345	—	29	21. 412	—	45, 46	15. 39
—	29-31	7. 188	—	30	17. 64	—	45, 46	17. 123
—	29-31	12. 328	—	30	18. 109	—	45, 46	18. 215
—	30	15. 100	12.	11, 12	21. 152	—	45, 46	19. 334
—	32	11. 260	—	20	14. 122	—	45, 46	20. 19

Matthew.			Matthew.			Matthew.		
chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page
13.	49, 50	... 13. 48	16.	26	... 18. 193	19.	28	... 19. 90
—	52	... 17. 286	—	26	... 18. 282	—	28	... 19. 95
14.	9	... 17. 22	—	26	... 19. 155	—	28	... 20. 160
—	15	... 14. 247	—	26	... 19. 371	—	29	... 14. 314
—	21, 26	... 14. 241	—	26	... 20. 103	—	30	... 22. 41
—	23	... 1. 11	—	26	... 21. 482	20.	12	... 17. 91
—	28-30	... 14. 109	—	26-28	... 7. 22	—	15	... 20. 285
15.	3	... 15. 344	—	27	... 13. 72	—	16	... 22. 47
—	7-9	... 19. 119	—	28	... 12. 372	—	19	... 3. 251
—	8	... 12. 248	17.	2	... 10. 25	—	19-21	... 21. 485
—	10	... 15. 386	—	2	... 16. 193	—	22	... 8. 117
—	19	... 9. 229	—	4	... 14. 271	—	22	... 12. 226
—	22	... 17. 156	—	5	... 15. 165	—	23	... 9. 408
—	23	... 9. 41	18.	3	... 15. 215	—	23	... 11. 91
—	26, 27	... 15. 153	—	3	... 17. 412	—	23	... 12. 480
—	38	... 21. 45	—	3	... 18. 14	—	28	... 2. 453
16.	3	... 17. 13	—	6	... 14. 86	—	28	... 16. 489
—	16	... 2. 350	—	6	... 21. 100	—	28	... 18. 160
—	16	... 16. 406	—	6	... 21. 395	—	28	... 19. 78
—	16, 17	... 3. 211	—	7	... 16. 20	—	28	... 19. 188
—	16, 17	... 10. 220	—	10	... 5. 247	—	28	... 19. 476
—	16, 17	... 20. 22	—	10	... 9. 216	—	28	... 21. 136
—	16-18	... 15. 114	—	10	... 19. 101	21.	15, 16	... 18. 13
—	17	... 22. 97	—	15	... 19. 114	—	21	... 15. 150
—	18	... 12. 174	—	15	... 19. 123	—	21, 22	... 15. 145
—	18	... 17. 395	—	15-17	... 19. 110	—	28	... 15. 246
—	22	... 17. 51	—	18	... 21. 355	—	28-30	... 11. 50
—	23	... 15. 267	—	19	... 1. 8	—	29, 30	... 1. 134
—	23	... 19. 3	—	19	... 21. 95	—	30	... 16. 248
—	24	... 6. 73	—	24	... 19. 21	—	31	... 15. 33
—	24	... 12. 132	—	24	... 21. 122	—	41-45	... 19. 153
—	24	... 12. 223	—	24, 28	... 1. 171	22.	3	... 20. 94
—	24	... 15. 27	—	24, 28	... 19. 171	—	3, 4	... 16. 11
—	24	... 15. 179	—	35	... 20. 383	—	4, 5	... 19. 233
—	24	... 16. 472	19.	14	... 14. 88	—	5	... 10. 263
—	24	... 17. 5	—	17	... 14. 349	—	5	... 15. 272
—	24	... 17. 50	—	19	... 16. 437	—	5	... 16. 63
—	24	... 17. 116	—	20	... 14. 123	—	5, 6	... 16. 12
—	24	... 17. 124	—	21	... 2. 59	—	7	... 16. 12
—	24	... 18. 111	—	21	... 14. 229	—	9, 10	... 16. 12
—	24	... 20. 17	—	24	... 4. 67	—	11-13	... 16. 11
—	24	... 20. 472	—	24	... 15. 224	—	12	... 19. 325
—	24	... 21. 161	—	24	... 20. 146	—	14	... 20. 353
—	24	... 21. 481	—	26	... 4. 349	—	21	... 18. 97
—	24	... 22. 84	—	26	... 14. 440	—	30	... 20. 172
—	24-27	... 14. 434	—	27	... 5. 211	—	30	... 20. 195
—	25	... 20. 68	—	27	... 6. 414	—	31	... 14. 331
—	26	... 1. 310	—	27	... 14. 430	—	31, 32	... 20. 174
—	26	... 12. 322	—	27, 28	... 10. 261	—	32	... 1. 157
—	26	... 14. 469	—	28	... 5. 349	—	32	... 2. 447
—	26	... 15. 191	—	28	... 15. 42	—	32	... 12. 142
—	26	... 17. 305	—	28	... 16. 212	—	32	... 14. 339

Matthew.				Matthew.				Matthew.			
chap.	ver.	vol.	page	chap.	ver.	vol.	page	chap.	ver.	vol.	page
22.	32	...	15. 86	24.	46	...	20. 165	26.	26, 27	...	14. 477
—	32	...	20. 148	—	51	...	10. 3	—	28	...	13. 275
—	35	...	13. 170	—	51	...	16. 20	—	28	...	15. 448
—	36	...	5. 74	—	51	...	16. 30	—	28	...	15. 478
—	37	...	6. 27	25.	5	...	19. 331	—	28	...	19. 187
—	37	...	13. 169	—	5	...	19. 343	—	29	...	15. 494
—	37	...	19. 358	—	8	...	2. 110	—	30	...	4. 442
—	37-39	...	13. 140	—	19	...	5. 13	—	30	...	19. 412
—	37-39	...	18. 137	—	23	...	17. 476	—	33	...	9. 351
—	37-40	...	13. 171	—	16, 17	...	16. 373	—	33	...	19. 346
—	38	...	2. 7	—	19	...	14. 233	—	33	...	21. 20
—	38, 39	...	21. 149	—	21, 23	...	13. 38	—	35	...	20. 200
23.	2, 3	...	8. 10	—	24	...	14. 101	—	38	...	13. 313
—	10	...	1. 488	—	24, 25	...	7. 172	—	39	...	3. 486
—	13	...	20. 220	—	24, 25	...	12. 109	—	39	...	12. 249
—	13-33	...	4. 105	—	26	...	9. 56	—	39	...	15. 149
—	14	...	15. 286	—	26	...	12. 155	—	39	...	19. 15
—	23	...	18. 102	—	26	...	12. 155	—	39	...	19. 15
—	23	...	22. 91	—	30	...	16. 381	—	40	...	13. 352
—	25, 26	...	9. 231	—	30	...	22. 12	—	41	...	12. 90
—	25, 28	...	2. 14	—	31	...	16. 226	—	41	...	13. 462
—	29, 30	...	13. 229	—	31, 32	...	16. 221	—	41	...	17. 401
—	30	...	2. 356	—	32	...	12. 151	—	41	...	19. 343
—	30	...	12. 388	—	32	...	12. 151	—	41	...	19. 343
—	35	...	13. 436	—	34	...	12. 447	—	41	...	21. 48
—	35	...	14. 30	—	34	...	12. 478	—	48, 49	...	19. 109
—	37	...	10. 487	—	34	...	14. 341	—	52, 53	...	2. 268
—	37	...	13. 427	—	34	...	16. 224	—	53	...	19. 17
—	37	...	18. 164	—	34	...	18. 107	—	54, 55	...	19. 44
—	37	...	21. 332	—	34	...	19. 214	—	70, 74	...	19. 54
—	37	...	21. 470	—	34	...	19. 211	—	73	...	14. 326
—	45, 46	...	20. 4	—	34	...	19. 211	—	73	...	14. 326
24.	9, 10	...	9. 212	—	34	...	20. 213	—	74	...	15. 231
—	12	...	13. 159	—	34	...	20. 213	—	74	...	15. 231
—	12	...	13. 166	—	34, 41	...	5. 215	27.	18	...	4. 303
—	13	...	13. 55	—	34, 41	...	13. 86	—	18	...	13. 436
—	14	...	6. 17	—	35	...	15. 37	—	40	...	1. 271
—	14	...	13. 68	—	37	...	15. 210	—	40, 42	...	19. 41
—	14	...	15. 385	—	40	...	12. 328	—	42	...	17. 359
—	14	...	20. 283	—	40, 45	...	21. 151	—	43	...	22. 66
—	16-18	...	15. 369	—	41	...	2. 191	—	46	...	15. 253
—	20	...	8. 400	—	41	...	5. 251	—	54	...	17. 463
—	22	...	15. 127	—	41	...	12. 359	28.	10	...	10. 73
—	24	...	4. 474	—	41	...	13. 24	—	18	...	19. 81
—	30	...	5. 213	—	41	...	13. 84	—	18	...	20. 28
—	30	...	16. 219	—	41	...	7. 394	—	19	...	9. 274
—	30	...	16. 220	—	41	...	11. 367	—	19	...	12. 99
—	30	...	20. 161	—	46	...	13. 81	—	19	...	15. 498
—	31	...	5. 212	—	46	...	14. 175	—	19	...	19. 164
—	31	...	20. 241	26.	8	...	20. 119	—	19	...	21. 279
—	42	...	9. 414	—	11	...	4. 201	—	19, 20	...	13. 282
—	46	...	12. 465	—	11	...	16. 477	—	20	...	8. 12
				—	11	...	17. 110	—	20	...	13. 10
				—	18	...	14. 474	—	20	...	15. 25
				—	22	...	15. 335	—	20	...	15. 138
				—	24	...	13. 81	—	20	...	19. 471

Mark.			Mark.			Luke.		
chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page
1.	4	... 5. 468	10.	29, 30	... 18. 173	1.	46	... 20. 324
—	12	... 1. 260	—	29, 30	... 19. 136	—	51	... 15. 261
—	14, 15	... 22. 109	—	29, 30	... 20. 17	—	51	... 21. 416
—	35	... 9. 70	—	29, 30	... 20. 39	—	68-76	... 17. 250
—	35	... 16. 491	—	29, 30	... 20. 100	—	70	... 10. 455
2.	5	... 9. 297	—	29, 30	... 22. 41	—	74	... 13. 454
3.	21	... 13. 111	—	29, 30	... 22. 82	—	74, 75	... 1. 322
—	37	... 20. 93	—	30	... 13. 169	—	74, 75	... 11. 337
4.	24	... 12. 78	—	31	... 15. 203	—	74, 75	... 12. 174
—	24	... 14. 98	—	38	... 20. 215	—	74, 75	... 13. 42
—	24	... 15. 429	—	38-52	... 13. 223	—	74, 75	... 13. 274
—	39	... 12. 149	—	48	... 9. 58	—	74, 75	... 15. 67
5.	7	... 2. 350	—	49	... 20. 357	—	74, 75	... 15. 102
—	18, 19	... 13. 223	11.	24	... 21. 196	—	74, 75	... 15. 397
6.	3	... 3. 230	12.	34	... 21. 311	—	74, 75	... 18. 26
—	5, 6	... 4. 54	13.	13	... 21. 109	—	74, 75	... 19. 230
—	20	... 8. 327	—	37	... 9. 421	—	74, 75	... 19. 336
—	20	... 8. 485	—	58	... 15. 50	—	74, 75	... 20. 493
—	20	... 19. 276	14.	3	... 15. 429	—	74, 75	... 21. 205
—	48	... 9. 58	15.	28	... 17. 82	—	75	... 9. 238
—	48	... 17. 158	—	28	... 19. 24	—	75	... 13. 106
—	52	... 17. 217	16.	6	... 18. 9	—	75	... 15. 411
7.	7, 8	... 2. 13	—	7	... 3. 355	—	75	... 19. 151
—	21, 23	... 8. 150	—	15	... 12. 148	—	75	... 19. 362
—	25	... 17. 156	—	15	... 15. 53	—	75	... 20. 278
—	25	... 17. 162	—	16	... 12. 42	—	77-79	... 18. 76
8.	34	... 15. 185	—	16	... 12. 363	2.	9	... 22. 72
9.	24	... 21. 423	—	16	... 13. 312	—	10	... 17. 173
—	29	... 15. 412	—	16	... 14. 43	—	14	... 12. 466
—	44	... 1. 425	—	16	... 14. 85	—	14	... 19. 366
—	44	... 2. 191	—	16	... 14. 102	—	19	... 17. 280
—	44	... 3. 290	—	16	... 15. 170	—	34	... 20. 457
—	44	... 5. 225	—	16	... 17. 123	—	51	... 16. 492
—	44	... 5. 288	—	16	... 19. 66	—	52	... 16. 492
—	44	... 13. 264	—	16	... 19. 215	3.	8	... 16. 151
—	44	... 14. 453	—	16	... 20. 247	4.	6	... 1. 303
—	44	... 17. 204	—	16	... 20. 279	—	19	... 1. 173
—	50	... 4. 316	—	16	... 20. 356	5.	5	... 15. 356
10.	17, 22	... 14. 440	—	16	... 21. 280	—	8	... 5. 185
—	18	... 7. 236	17.	20	... 14. 110	6.	10	... 17. 25
—	21	... 20. 14	26.	16	... 17. 229	—	12	... 17. 493
—	21, 29	... 13. 21				—	22	... 21. 129
—	23	... 16. 80				—	23	... 12. 446
—	23, 24	... 4. 67				—	23	... 17. 131
—	23, 24	... 15. 232				—	24	... 18. 296
—	23-26	... 15. 238				—	24	... 18. 467
—	23-27	... 18. 297				—	24, 25	... 4. 402
—	24	... 18. 184				—	35	... 21. 92
—	27	... 12. 204				—	36	... 19. 19
—	27	... 15. 69				—	36	... 19. 170
—	29, 30	... 7. 156				—	45	... 19. 261
—	29, 30	... 15. 191				—	46	... 16. 18

Luke.

1.	4	... 12. 321
—	4	... 17. 112
—	6	... 21. 381
—	15	... 14. 89
—	31	... 13. 306
—	35	... 12. 308
—	35	... 21. 10
—	43	... 14. 7
—	46	... 13. 154

Luke.			Luke.			Luke.		
chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page
6.	46	... 18. 113	10.	29	... 19. 109	12.	17, 18	... 18. 200
—	46	... 19. 92	—	29	... 19. 117	—	17, 20	... 12. 213
—	46	... 20. 30	—	33, 34	... 19. 121	—	18	... 16. 176
7.	5	... 13. 155	—	39-41	... 19. 206	—	19	... 15. 237
—	29	... 5. 176	—	41, 42	... 16. 171	—	19	... 16. 115
—	30	... 15. 159	—	42	... 7. 138	—	19	... 17. 41
—	30	... 16. 56	—	42	... 7. 489	—	19	... 19. 57
—	37	... 15. 70	—	42	... 9. 251	—	19	... 20. 136
—	37	... 17. 414	—	42	... 11. 457	—	19, 20	... 12. 39
—	47	... 2. 261	—	42	... 12. 293	—	20	... 4. 69
—	47	... 12. 281	—	42	... 14. 464	—	20	... 12. 427
—	47	... 15. 33	—	42	... 15. 276	—	20	... 15. 61
—	47	... 15. 67	—	42	... 15. 402	—	20	... 15. 402
—	47	... 17. 482	—	42	... 18. 300	—	20	... 16, 171
8.	3	... 19. 441	—	42	... 19. 55	—	20	... 17. 59
—	13	... 17. 15	—	42	... 19. 369	—	20	... 20. 264
—	13	... 17. 487	—	42	... 20. 38	—	20, 21	... 20. 39
—	14	... 11. 449	11.	1-13	... 19. 407	—	21	... 13. 157
—	14	... 17. 15	—	8	... 5. 483	—	21	... 15. 236
—	14	... 17. 28	—	8	... 15. 153	—	21	... 17. 59
—	14	... 19. 395	—	13	... 18. 493	—	21	... 20. 145
—	14	... 20. 126	—	13	... 21. 448	—	24	... 15. 89
—	14	... 20. 133	—	20	... 17. 259	—	24	... 17. 114
—	15	... 19. 138	—	21	... 21. 193	—	24	... 22. 3
—	15	... 19. 151	—	21, 22	... 15. 108	—	29	... 16. 114
—	15	... 20. 430	—	21, 22	... 16. 257	—	32	... 7. 332
—	18	... 4. 145	—	21, 22	... 20. 184	—	32	... 14. 46
—	18	... 9. 484	—	24	... 9. 390	—	32	... 15. 14
—	18	... 13. 377	—	27, 28	... 13. 223	—	32	... 15. 82
—	18	... 13. 454	—	27-28	... 21. 41	—	32	... 15. 100
—	24	... 13. 41	—	41	... 6. 382	—	32	... 17. 134
9.	13	... 9. 445	—	41	... 16. 479	—	32	... 18. 71
—	23	... 2. 116	—	41	... 17. 24	—	32	... 21. 456
—	23	... 9. 127	—	41	... 21. 144	—	33	... 2. 150
—	26	... 14. 433	—	41	... 21. 153	—	33	... 14. 195
—	29	... 19. 102	12.	4, 5	... 12. 141	—	33	... 15. 78
—	31	... 13. 376	—	4, 5	... 12. 391	—	33	... 15. 238
—	49	... 19. 377	—	4, 5	... 19. 128	—	33	... 17. 47
—	54, 55	... 20. 115	—	4, 5	... 19. 229	—	33	... 17. 125
—	54, 55	... 20. 365	—	4, 5	... 20. 71	—	35	... 9. 420
—	55	... 17. 245	—	4, 5	... 20. 168	—	36	... 16. 215
—	59	... 16. 168	—	8	... 2. 111	—	43	... 15. 412
—	62	... 15. 377	—	8	... 16. 270	—	47	... 19. 350
—	62	... 20. 108	—	8	... 20. 266	—	47	... 21. 339
10.	16	... 13. 292	—	8, 9	... 14. 193	—	47, 48	... 8. 293
—	18	... 17. 248	—	10	... 21. 344	—	48	... 12. 35
—	19, 20	... 2. 37	—	15	... 2. 309	—	48	... 15. 37
—	20	... 15. 41	—	15	... 15. 99	—	48	... 16. 116
—	20	... 16. 317	—	15	... 16. 115	—	48	... 16. 363
—	24	... 17. 168	—	15	... 17. 46	—	48	... 17. 53
—	27	... 12. 438	—	15	... 18. 198	—	48	... 18. 429
—	27	... 13. 169	—	15-21	... 15. 233	—	50	... 3. 639

Luke.				Luke.				Luke.			
chap.	ver.	vol.	page	chap.	ver.	vol.	page	chap.	ver.	vol.	page
12.	59	...	2. 185	15.	20	...	14. 177	16.	30, 31	...	12. 218
13.	2, 5	...	19. 243	—	22	...	12. 466	—	30, 31	...	13. 287
—	5	...	15. 373	—	29	...	22. 45	—	30, 31	...	17. 353
—	7	...	17. 97	—	30	...	14. 274	—	30, 31	...	18. 246
—	7	...	19. 367	—	30	...	19. 120	17.	3	...	1. 190
—	24	...	16. 291	—	32	...	19. 336	—	3	...	19. 108
—	24	...	17. 13	16.	2	...	9. 401	—	5	...	17. 105
—	24	...	17. 67	—	2	...	9. 426	—	10	...	12. 33
—	24	...	18. 321	—	2	...	16. 473	—	10	...	13. 75
—	25	...	14. 172	—	3, 4	...	21. 259	—	10	...	14. 158
—	25, 26	...	13. 34	—	8	...	10. 369	—	10	...	15. 408
—	29, 30	...	22. 42	—	8	...	16. 35	—	10	...	18. 384
14.	12-14	...	3. 225	—	8	...	17. 269	—	15-18	...	13. 150
—	12-14	...	16. 477	—	8	...	17. 310	—	15-19	...	7. 164
—	14	...	16. 481	—	8	...	19. 256	—	18	...	17. 96
—	14	...	20. 62	—	9	...	3. 397	—	20	...	11. 401
—	18	...	12. 390	—	9	...	13. 31	—	21	...	15. 22
—	18-20	...	2. 124	—	9	...	14. 324	—	28	...	5. 228
—	20	...	16. 124	—	9	...	18. 285	—	32	...	19. 317
—	20	...	19. 197	—	9	...	20. 145	18.	7, 8	...	12. 323
—	26	...	7. 154	—	9	...	20. 195	—	8	...	13. 159
—	26	...	12. 385	—	11	...	6. 133	—	8	...	15. 231
—	26	...	13. 32	—	11	...	9. 435	—	9	...	15. 212
—	26	...	13. 157	—	11	...	14. 96	—	9	...	21. 409
—	26	...	13. 172	—	12	...	2. 307	—	9-11	...	15. 211
—	26	...	14. 230	—	14	...	17. 21	—	11	...	6. 37
—	26	...	14. 429	—	15	...	14. 93	—	11	...	8. 29
—	26	...	14. 439	—	15	...	16. 117	—	11	...	12. 308
—	26	...	15. 266	—	15	...	16. 455	—	11	...	16. 71
—	26	...	20. 14	—	15	...	18. 99	—	11	...	16. 451
—	26	...	21. 123	—	15	...	21. 167	—	11	...	17. 79
—	26	...	21. 369	—	15	...	21. 385	—	11	...	18. 309
—	26	...	21. 392	—	17	...	19. 40	—	11, 12	...	14. 6
—	26, 33	...	2. 146	—	19	...	16. 133	—	11, 12	...	16. 439
—	27	...	9. 265	—	19	...	16. 136	—	13	...	15. 60
—	27-29	...	15. 192	—	19-21	...	6. 386	—	13	...	21. 417
—	28	...	17. 70	—	22	...	13. 31	—	13, 14	...	12. 365
—	28	...	17. 183	—	22	...	14. 164	—	13, 14	...	18. 83
—	28, 29	...	20. 17	—	22, 23	...	10. 83	—	13, 14	...	22. 59
—	33	...	16. 384	—	22, 23	...	19. 65	—	32	...	3. 339
—	33	...	16. 474	—	23	...	2. 450	19.	8	...	16. 147
—	33	...	17. 140	—	23, 24	...	13. 30	—	8, 9	...	13. 341
15.	2	...	2. 18	—	24	...	15. 366	—	10	...	16. 63
—	7	...	20. 11	—	25	...	12. 145	—	10	...	18. 155
—	11	...	10. 354	—	25	...	12. 183	—	10	...	21. 48
—	13	...	16. 124	—	25	...	13. 86	—	13	...	16. 371
—	17	...	6. 338	—	25	...	18. 295	—	14	...	15. 241
—	17	...	17. 306	—	26	...	12. 473	—	16	...	1. 147
—	17, 18	...	7. 227	—	27, 28	...	13. 99	—	16-19	...	9. 459
—	17, 18	...	21. 244	—	27, 28	...	19. 64	—	16-19	...	14. 67
—	18, 19	...	12. 130	—	30	...	5. 187	—	22	...	21. 168
—	20	...	7. 147	—	30, 31	...	10. 9	—	23	...	12. 30

Luke.				John				John.			
chap.	ver.	vol.	page	chap.	ver.	vol.	page	chap.	ver.	vol.	page
19.	27	...	1. 95	22.	53	...	2. 268	1.	12	...	15. 9
—	40	...	13. 428	—	53	...	3. 267	—	12	...	15. 40
—	41	...	8. 421	23.	4-14	...	3. 263	—	12	...	15. 48
—	42	...	16. 128	—	13	...	8. 287	—	12	...	15. 114
—	43, 44	...	4. 401	—	28	...	4. 440	—	12	...	15. 163
20.	35, 36	...	12. 22	—	28	...	13. 223	—	12	...	15. 436
—	36	...	5. 257	—	28-31	...	18. 327	—	12	...	17. 115
—	36	...	20. 62	—	31	...	3. 346	—	12	...	18. 77
—	37, 38	...	13. 20	—	42	...	13. 369	—	12	...	18. 106
—	37, 38	...	19. 65	—	43	...	2. 461	—	12	...	19. 175
—	38	...	19. 105	—	43	...	11. 94	—	12	...	19. 215
21.	1-4	...	6. 356	—	43	...	13. 29	—	12	...	20. 33
—	4	...	16. 385	—	43	...	20. 191	—	12	...	20. 66
—	16-18	...	12. 404	—	45	...	20. 231	—	12	...	20. 95
—	33	...	16. 294	—	46	...	17. 367	—	12	...	20. 432
—	34	...	1. 163	24.	6	...	17. 275	—	12	...	20. 451
—	34	...	2. 415	—	25	...	14. 365	—	12	...	21. 80
—	34	...	5. 332	—	26	...	16. 287	—	12	...	21. 85
—	34	...	6. 277	—	32	...	7. 435	—	12	...	22. 18
—	34	...	8. 103	—	32	...	14. 262	—	12, 13	...	2. 37
—	34	...	12. 66	—	45	...	15. 216	—	12, 13	...	12. 97
—	34	...	12. 213	—	47	...	13. 266	—	12, 13	...	12. 123
—	34	...	15. 98	—	47	...	15. 444	—	12, 13	...	14. 42
—	34	...	16. 122	—	47	...	19. 234	—	12, 13	...	19. 173
—	34	...	16. 131	—	47	...	20. 385	—	12, 13	...	20. 495
—	34	...	16. 141	—	47	...	21. 281	—	12, 13	...	21. 305
—	34	...	17. 198	—	50, 51	...	10. 271	—	14	...	1. 267
—	34	...	17. 237	31.	34	...	16. 111	—	14	...	1. 428
—	34	...	21. 249	—	34	...	16. 120	—	14	...	10. 189
—	36	...	9. 414					—	14	...	12. 154
—	36	...	17. 497					—	14	...	14. 150
—	36	...	20. 296					—	14	...	16. 359
22.	20	...	14. 481	1.	1	...	17. 413	—	14	...	17. 243
—	20	...	15. 431	—	1, 2	...	20. 401	—	14	...	18. 125
—	20	...	16. 157	—	3	...	1. 436	—	14	...	19. 161
—	20	...	18. 81	—	3	...	20. 343	—	14	...	19. 161
—	20	...	18. 81	—	4	...	1. 41	—	14, 16	...	19. 37
—	24	...	17. 61	—	4	...	7. 183	—	16	...	6. 434
—	29	...	13. 327	—	4	...	13. 83	—	16	...	15. 71
—	29, 30	...	15. 478	—	4	...	19. 68	—	16	...	15. 364
—	30	...	13. 26	—	4	...	19. 249	—	16	...	16. 51
—	30	...	15. 85	—	4	...	16. 368	—	16	...	22. 99
—	31	...	21. 51	—	5	...	12. 118	—	18	...	12. 218
—	32	...	5. 44	—	5	...	19. 330	—	18	...	16. 234
—	32	...	13. 138	—	9	...	13. 410	—	29	...	18. 475
—	32	...	14. 360	—	11	...	3. 249	—	29	...	21. 5
—	32	...	15. 23	—	12	...	1. 102	—	47	...	3. 367
—	32	...	18. 392	—	12	...	11. 145	—	47	...	12. 1
—	32	...	19. 324	—	12	...	12. 129	—	48, 49	...	17. 129
—	42	...	15. 144	—	12	...	13. 62	—	51	...	1. 480
—	44	...	12. 237	—	12	...	13. 312	2.	1	...	12. 371
—	46	...	10. 303	—	12	...	13. 485	—	17	...	8. 470
—	52	...	14. 358	—	12	...	14. 351	—	19	...	10. 465

John.			John.			John.		
chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page
2.	22	... 14. 416	3.	18	... 6. 62	4.	22	... 3. 78
—	23-25	... 13. 53	—	18	... 10. 86	—	22	... 3. 264
—	24, 25	... 10. 18	—	18	... 14. 207	—	22	... 14. 144
—	25	... 21. 182	—	18	... 15. 448	—	22	... 16. 153
3.	3	... 2. 392	—	18	... 16. 438	—	23, 24	... 9. 229
—	3	... 12. 170	—	18	... 22. 19	—	23, 24	... 13. 230
—	3	... 12. 478	—	18, 19	... 12. 360	—	24	... 5. 445
—	3	... 13. 199	—	19	... 12. 41	—	24	... 9. 335
—	3	... 13. 238	—	19	... 12. 291	—	24	... 19. 30
—	3	... 22. 15	—	19	... 15. 22	—	32	... 13. 201
—	3-5	... 12. 437	—	19	... 19. 332	—	34	... 16. 241
—	4	... 19. 386	—	19	... 19. 342	—	34	... 17. 266
—	5	... 21. 115	—	19	... 20. 298	—	42	... 13. 230
—	5	... 21. 315	—	19	... 20. 361	—	42	... 17. 274
—	6	... 13. 233	—	19, 20	... 18. 104	5.	4	... 13. 327
—	6	... 17. 142	—	20	... 14. 81	—	14	... 12. 268
—	6	... 18. 170	—	20	... 16. 454	—	14	... 21. 251
—	6	... 19. 398	—	20	... 17. 421	—	18	... 12. 338
—	6	... 21. 78	—	20	... 19. 113	—	19	... 1. 490
—	8	... 18. 494	—	20	... 19. 301	—	19	... 16. 243
—	9	... 17. 184	—	20, 21	... 9. 179	—	19, 30	... 3. 317
—	11	... 14. 56	—	20, 21	... 15. 460	—	19, 44	... 18. 120
—	11	... 21. 23	—	21	... 18. 61	—	22	... 12. 381
—	12	... 17. 301	—	24	... 12. 6	—	22	... 15. 26
—	13	... 18. 239	—	24	... 12. 128	—	22	... 15. 53
—	13	... 20. 192	—	24	... 19. 390	—	22	... 17. 254
—	16	... 5. 80	—	33	... 8. 267	—	23	... 5. 42
—	16	... 11. 76	—	33	... 14. 119	—	23	... 19. 160
—	16	... 12. 285	—	34, 35	... 12. 380	—	23	... 20. 16
—	16	... 12. 296	—	36	... 12. 431	—	24	... 12. 362
—	16	... 12. 337	—	36	... 15. 7	—	24	... 12. 365
—	16	... 12. 341	—	36	... 18. 166	—	24	... 12. 431
—	16	... 13. 141	—	36	... 18. 487	—	24	... 14. 4
—	16	... 13. 155	—	36	... 19. 228	—	24	... 14. 46
—	16	... 14. 152	—	36	... 20. 308	—	24	... 15. 57
—	16	... 15. 41	—	36	... 20. 357	—	24	... 17. 101
—	16	... 15. 432	—	36	... 21. 115	—	24	... 19. 333
—	16	... 16. 238	4.	4	... 17. 78	—	24	... 20. 78
—	16	... 16. 245	—	4	... 17. 10	—	24	... 21. 171
—	16	... 17. 458	—	10	... 13. 176	—	24	... 22. 117
—	16	... 18. 19	—	10	... 14. 466	—	27	... 18. 118
—	16	... 19. 83	—	10	... 17. 138	—	28	... 13. 46
—	16	... 19. 157	—	10	... 18. 134	—	28, 29	... 10. 35
—	16	... 19. 479	—	10	... 18. 210	—	28, 29	... 13. 48
—	16	... 20. 279	—	10	... 19. 402	—	28, 29	... 20. 172
—	16	... 20. 355	—	10	... 20. 405	—	30	... 15. 243
—	16	... 21. 51	—	11	... 13. 375	—	35	... 18. 154
—	16	... 21. 96	—	13	... 21. 227	—	39	... 15. 382
—	16, 17	... 17. 52	—	14	... 16. 491	—	40	... 2. 365
—	16-18	... 20. 47	—	18	... 15. 33	—	44	... 1. 85
—	17	... 19. 453	—	18, 20	... 16. 159	—	44	... 12. 492
—	17	... 20. 366	—	21	... 15. 287	—	44	... 15. 173

John.			John.			John.		
chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page
5.	44	... 15. 197	6.	40	... 17. 172	8.	31	... 13. 224
—	44	... 15. 273	—	40	... 20. 467	—	33	... 16. 452
—	44	... 16. 420	—	44	... 12. 288	—	34	... 8. 389
—	44	... 18. 99	—	44	... 14. 101	—	34	... 21. 368
—	44	... 19. 147	—	44	... 14. 124	—	36	... 1. 131
—	44	... 20. 133	—	44	... 17. 74	—	36	... 6. 325
—	44	... 20. 336	—	44	... 18. 160	—	37	... 15. 390
—	44	... 21. 434	—	44, 45	... 2. 240	—	37	... 19. 233
—	45	... 13. 67	—	44, 45	... 2. 262	—	37	... 20. 425
6.	4-6	... 15. 91	—	44, 45	... 12. 289	—	44	... 5. 313
—	5, 6	... 1. 201	—	44, 45	... 13. 284	—	44	... 14. 329
—	5, 6	... 13. 365	—	44, 45	... 21. 326	—	44	... 17. 242
—	6	... 14. 355	—	45	... 20. 23	—	44	... 17. 245
—	11	... 19. 421	—	46	... 9. 249	—	44	... 17. 319
—	11, 23	... 2. 95	—	51	... 9. 85	—	44	... 18. 32
—	11, 23	... 15. 96	—	51	... 18. 145	—	44	... 19. 283
—	14, 15	... 3. 196	—	53	... 18. 483	—	44	... 19. 301
—	20	... 2. 339	—	56	... 15. 483	—	44	... 21. 370
—	23	... 1. 163	—	56	... 21. 219	—	46	... 16. 493
—	26	... 17. 14	—	56, 57	... 11. 25	—	48	... 1. 445
—	27	... 2. 416	—	56, 57	... 15. 141	—	48	... 3. 250
—	27	... 8. 319	—	57	... 13. 199	—	50	... 17. 448
—	27	... 10. 164	—	57	... 16. 235	—	56	... 1. 119
—	27	... 12. 442	—	60	... 17. 69	—	56	... 13. 325
—	27	... 14. 114	—	60, 61	... 17. 63	—	56	... 13. 344
—	27	... 14. 121	—	63	... 15. 430	—	56	... 14. 273
—	27	... 17. 71	—	66, 67	... 8. 309	—	56	... 14. 303
—	27	... 19. 78	—	69	... 17. 147	—	56	... 14. 420
—	27	... 19. 149	—	69	... 20. 22	—	57	... 3. 251
—	27	... 20. 134	—	69	... 21. 213	9.	1-3	... 16. 365
—	27	... 20. 218	—	69	... 22. 101	—	4	... 15. 424
—	28	... 13. 152	—	70	... 17. 14	—	4	... 16. 165
—	28	... 15. 207	7.	17	... 1. 131	—	21	... 16. 486
—	29	... 13. 120	—	17	... 20. 409	—	25	... 19. 254
—	29	... 14. 117	—	17	... 22. 100	—	35, 36	... 11. 119
—	29	... 16. 359	—	24	... 2. 112	—	35, 36	... 13. 347
—	29	... 20. 33	—	38	... 20. 318	—	39	... 8. 357
—	29	... 21. 201	—	38, 39	... 12. 6	10.	3	... 5. 17
—	31, 32	... 14. 256	—	39	... 15. 169	—	3	... 19. 298
—	34, 66	... 6. 6	—	46	... 8. 335	—	10	... 15. 72
—	37	... 16. 65	—	48, 49	... 13. 221	—	10	... 15. 74
—	37-39	... 11. 93	—	49	... 6. 494	—	11	... 10. 41
—	39	... 10. 305	—	49	... 8. 356	—	11	... 21. 23
—	39	... 12. 398	—	52	... 2. 82	—	12	... 14. 245
—	39	... 14. 418	8.	4	... 21. 45	—	14	... 12. 153
—	39	... 20. 114	—	7	... 18. 163	—	15	... 3. 333
—	39, 40	... 20. 72	—	24	... 10. 37	—	17	... 2. 267
—	40	... 12. 15	—	24	... 20. 248	—	17, 18	... 21. 133
—	40	... 12. 198	—	24	... 21. 114	—	18	... 10. 187
—	40	... 12. 436	—	28	... 17. 454	—	18	... 22. 35
—	40	... 13. 16	—	28	... 21. 253	—	20	... 13. 111
—	40	... 15. 167	—	29	... 19. 291	—	28	... 17. 256

John.			John.			John.		
chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page
10.	28	... 18. 22	12.	48	... 13. 67	14.	6	... 1. 393
—	28	... 21. 64	13.	1	... 10. 171	—	6	... 5. 160
—	28, 29	... 10. 302	—	1	... 10. 286	—	6	... 21. 319
—	28, 29	... 12. 397	—	1	... 10. 287	—	13	... 18. 68
—	28, 29	... 12. 397	—	1	... 17. 404	—	13	... 19. 160
—	28, 29	... 15. 111	—	1	... 21. 12	—	13	... 21. 196
—	29	... 17. 379	—	2	... 14. 489	—	13, 14	... 21. 194
—	34, 35	... 3. 39	—	3-5	... 19. 434	—	14	... 18. 67
11.	3	... 4. 450	—	6, 7	... 12. 261	—	15	... 12. 279
—	8-10	... 8. 5	—	7	... 9. 346	—	15	... 13. 174
—	9	... 19. 361	—	7	... 14. 379	—	16	... 21. 274
—	24	... 12. 446	—	7	... 16. 157	—	16, 17	... 21. 295
—	24, 25	... 14. 376	—	8	... 11. 170	—	17	... 11. 485
—	25	... 12. 15	—	8	... 20. 484	—	17	... 12. 8
—	25	... 19. 155	—	10	... 6. 34	—	19	... 11. 223
—	25	... 20. 103	—	10	... 11. 261	—	19	... 12. 370
—	25, 26	... 12. 436	—	10	... 15. 458	—	19	... 13. 206
—	25, 26	... 13. 204	—	10	... 20. 93	—	20	... 20. 461
—	25, 26	... 14. 279	—	10	... 20. 477	—	21	... 8. 417
—	25, 26	... 18. 462	—	10	... 21. 61	—	21	... 13. 104
—	26	... 13. 207	—	13	... 9. 404	—	21	... 13. 173
—	26	... 15. 6	—	13, 14	... 18. 436	—	21	... 15. 385
—	26	... 22. 78	—	23-25	... 19. 473	—	21	... 17. 139
—	35	... 15. 274	—	34	... 5. 95	—	21	... 17. 430
—	42	... 3. 494	—	34	... 10. 326	—	21	... 19. 307
—	51, 52	... 13. 183	—	34	... 15. 290	—	21	... 21. 208
12.	4	... 20. 119	—	34	... 16. 490	—	21-23	... 12. 383
—	6	... 19. 274	—	34	... 19. 469	—	21-23	... 13. 155
—	13, 16	... 6. 103	—	34	... 21. 93	—	21, 23	... 20. 17
—	19	... 15. 194	—	34, 35	... 21. 87	—	21, 23	... 21. 82
—	20-23	... 13. 222	—	35	... 21. 112	—	22	... 10. 251
—	26	... 12. 136	—	37	... 19. 186	—	22	... 16. 48
—	26	... 13. 10	14.	1	... 11. 18	—	23	... 12. 12
—	26	... 13. 23	—	1	... 18. 266	—	23	... 21. 221
—	26	... 13. 229	—	1	... 21. 212	—	23	... 21. 29
—	26	... 20. 375	—	2	... 10. 273	—	27	... 16. 348
—	27	... 13. 184	—	2	... 12. 371	—	28	... 1. 41
—	27, 28	... 1. 77	—	2	... 12. 428	—	28	... 2. 475
—	27, 28	... 4. 341	—	2	... 13. 227	15.	1-5	... 15. 365
—	27, 28	... 13. 136	—	2	... 14. 37	—	2	... 8. 95
—	27, 28	... 21. 12	—	2	... 14. 340	—	2	... 12. 59
—	27, 28	... 21. 442	—	2	... 18. 247	—	2	... 13. 236
—	28	... 20. 329	—	2	... 19. 65	—	3	... 19. 88
—	35	... 19. 364	—	2	... 20. 150	—	5	... 12. 12
—	39, 40	... 3. 86	—	2, 3	... 20. 159	—	5	... 12. 418
—	40	... 17. 199	—	3	... 2. 468	—	5	... 13. 247
—	42	... 15. 112	—	3	... 11. 226	—	5	... 15. 49
—	42	... 20. 10	—	3	... 12. 215	—	5	... 15. 75
—	42, 43	... 20. 275	—	3	... 14. 220	—	5	... 17. 74
—	43	... 1. 71	—	3	... 15. 497	—	6	... 21. 220
—	43	... 21. 435	—	3	... 16. 227	—	9	... 20. 454
—	47	... 16. 231	—	3	... 20. 237	—	10	... 11. 355

John.			John.			John.		
chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page
15.	10	... 13. 175	16.	21, 22	... 12. 182	17	24	... 19. 492
—	10, 11	... 17. 487	—	22	... 17. 484	—	24	... 20. 235
—	10, 11	... 21. 31	—	23, 27	... 15. 152	—	24	... 21. 273
—	11	... 18. 371	—	27	... 10. 259	—	24	... 22. 72
—	11	... 19. 395	—	27	... 12. 346	18.	8, 9	... 10. 339
—	12	... 21. 139	—	31, 32	... 17. 402	—	11	... 12. 120
—	12, 13	... 21. 211	—	33	... 15. 118	—	11	... 13. 224
—	13	... 12. 347	—	33	... 17. 11	—	11	... 15. 250
—	13	... 15. 291	—	33	... 18. 178	—	11	... 17. 6
—	13	... 19. 186	—	33	... 20. 200	—	11	... 18. 328
—	13	... 21. 135	17.	2	... 19. 213	—	11	... 19. 42
—	14	... 9. 202	—	2	... 20. 30	—	28	... 6. 54
—	14	... 9. 235	—	2, 6	... 5. 41	—	30	... 19. 46
—	14	... 13. 227	—	3	... 3. 96	—	36	... 10. 468
—	15	... 20. 23	—	3	... 12. 484	—	37	... 9. 440
—	17, 18	... 21. 103	—	3	... 14. 77	—	37	... 13. 42
—	18	... 21. 110	—	3	... 18. 261	—	37	... 13. 134
—	18, 19	... 10. 364	—	3	... 18. 455	—	37	... 16. 371
—	19	... 12. 377	—	3	... 19. 385	—	37	... 18. 292
—	19	... 13. 112	—	3	... 20. 26	—	37	... 20. 102
—	19	... 17. 7	—	3	... 20. 253	—	37	... 20. 338
—	19	... 20. 170	—	3	... 22. 15	19.	11	... 3. 372
—	20	... 12. 303	—	4	... 14. 443	—	34-37	... 22. 33
—	20	... 17. 6	—	4	... 14. 445	20.	7	... 12. 211
—	22	... 3. 429	—	4	... 19. 48	—	17	... 18. 71
—	22	... 19. 239	—	4	... 19. 365	—	17	... 18. 437
—	26	... 12. 2	—	4, 5	... 19. 495	—	23	... 1. 192
—	26	... 12. 19	—	4, 5	... 20. 333	—	25	... 1. 271
16.	1	... 20. 202	—	6	... 3. 389	—	25	... 13. 361
—	1	... 21. 109	—	6	... 12. 295	—	28	... 1. 485
—	1, 2	... 9. 168	—	6	... 14. 417	—	28	... 15. 433
—	1, 4	... 17. 9	—	8	... 15. 386	—	29	... 13. 12
—	2	... 2. 70	—	8	... 20. 22	—	29	... 17. 120
—	6, 7	... 1. 379	—	10	... 15. 25	—	29	... 17. 463
—	6, 7	... 12. 264	—	10	... 20. 334	—	29	... 19. 290
—	7	... 20. 235	—	15	... 17. 398	—	31	... 12. 442
—	8	... 4. 157	—	16	... 14. 322	—	31	... 15. 75
—	8	... 5. 22	—	17	... 14. 182	—	31	... 15. 477
—	8	... 9. 139	—	17	... 19. 266	—	31	... 19. 66
—	8	... 10. 151	—	17	... 20. 53	—	31	... 21. 211
—	8	... 10. 458	—	20	... 17. 127	21.	10	... 17. 267
—	8	... 14. 79	—	20	... 17. 397	—	15	... 11. 296
—	8	... 17. 303	—	20	... 22. 104	—	15	... 21. 20
—	8	... 19. 325	—	21, 23	... 18. 34	—	15, 16	... 17. 398
—	8-11	... 11. 40	—	21-23	... 21. 25	—	15-19	... 13. 173
—	11	... 18. 20	—	22	... 20. 336	—	17	... 21. 190
—	11	... 21. 53	—	23	... 5. 386	—	20-22	... 5. 195
—	14	... 11. 403	—	24	... 1. 115	—	21, 22	... 21. 427
—	14	... 12. 257	—	24	... 12. 134			
—	15	... 10. 255	—	24	... 12. 212			
—	18	... 20. 344	—	24	... 18. 204	1.	6	... 17. 61
—	20	... 4. 376	—	24	... 18. 214	—	7	... 15. 415

Acts.

Acts.			Acts.			Acts.		
chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page
1.	8	... 20. 281	3.	19	... 18. 109	5.	31	... 18. 262
—	10, 11	... 20. 159	—	19	... 18. 490	—	31	... 19. 213
2.	6, 7	... 15. 419	—	19	... 19. 234	—	31	... 19. 447
—	7	... 15. 9	—	19	... 19. 491	—	31	... 19. 459
—	14	... 14. 106	—	19	... 20. 257	—	31	... 21. 21
—	20	... 5. 218	—	19	... 20. 467	—	31, 32	... 19. 457
—	21	... 16. 156	—	19-21	... 13. 277	—	31, 32	... 22. 96
—	22, 24	... 19. 38	—	21	... 19. 98	—	32	... 12. 7
—	23	... 3. 371	—	25, 26	... 11. 431	—	32	... 19. 183
—	23	... 12. 312	—	25, 26	... 18. 91	—	32	... 21. 230
—	23	... 17. 10	—	25, 26	... 21. 287	—	41	... 10. 265
—	24	... 3. 269	—	26	... 6. 113	—	41	... 14. 448
—	24	... 3. 348	—	26	... 15. 66	—	41	... 14. 470
—	25	... 14. 60	—	26	... 18. 6	—	41	... 20. 20
—	25	... 17. 118	—	26	... 20. 249	—	41	... 20. 51
—	32	... 15. 381	—	26	... 21. 7	6.	1	... 16. 398
—	33	... 10. 193	—	26	... 21. 21	—	2	... 6. 65
—	33	... 12. 6	—	32	... 13. 303	—	14	... 20. 9
—	33	... 12. 372	4.	11	... 18. 127	—	15	... 1. 348
—	33	... 21. 229	—	12	... 10. 149	—	27	... 18. 284
—	36	... 15. 160	—	12	... 11. 147	7.	5, 6	... 14. 226
—	36	... 17. 249	—	12	... 14. 10	—	17	... 7. 27
—	36	... 19. 388	—	12	... 16. 239	—	39	... 5. 446
—	36	... 20. 9	—	12	... 18. 422	—	51	... 17. 195
—	36	... 20. 47	—	12	... 21. 274	—	51	... 20. 359
—	36	... 20. 307	—	18, 19	... 6. 465	—	51, 52	... 21. 241
—	37	... 7. 126	—	20	... 12. 219	—	54	... 21. 243
—	37	... 16. 63	—	24, 31	... 15. 24	—	55	... 4. 80
—	37	... 17. 175	—	27	... 22. 96	—	55	... 14. 287
—	37	... 17. 462	—	28	... 1. 121	—	55	... 14. 298
—	37	... 19. 208	—	28	... 18. 175	—	56	... 1. 64
—	37, 38	... 16. 57	—	28	... 19. 404	—	56	... 13. 355
—	38	... 15. 430	—	30, 31	... 21. 289	—	59	... 14. 282
—	38	... 15. 483	—	31	... 14. 13	—	59	... 19. 140
—	38	... 18. 6	—	32	... 9. 285	8.	2	... 2. 452
—	38	... 21. 18	—	32	... 21. 89	—	8	... 17. 474
—	38, 41	... 19. 18	—	33	... 15. 308	—	20	... 7. 264
—	39	... 14. 83	5.	3	... 6. 279	—	21	... 15. 452
—	40	... 10. 386	—	3	... 16. 19	—	22	... 14. 24
—	41	... 17. 130	—	3	... 19. 280	—	22	... 14. 100
—	41	... 17. 474	—	3, 4	... 21. 400	—	22	... 14. 431
—	41	... 20. 304	—	4	... 1. 52	—	22	... 18. 7
—	47	... 14. 204	—	5	... 14. 182	—	26	... 16. 61
3.	12	... 13. 137	—	13, 14	... 5. 122	—	28	... 16. 155
—	19	... 1. 117	—	29	... 6. 349	—	30, 31	... 13. 286
—	19	... 1. 178	—	29	... 19. 433	—	32	... 15. 216
—	19	... 2. 251	—	30, 31	... 11. 41	—	35	... 20. 308
—	19	... 13. 23	—	31	... 12. 77	—	36	... 14. 443
—	19	... 13. 268	—	31	... 13. 265	—	36	... 22. 110
—	19	... 15. 65	—	31	... 15. 66	—	37	... 6. 26
—	19	... 15. 478	—	31	... 17. 73	—	37	... 14. 108
—	19	... 17. 364	—	31	... 18. 163	—	37	... 15. 115

Acts.			Acts.			Acts.		
chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page
8.	37	... 16. 483	13.	26	... 13. 180	16.	26	... 9. 152
—	37, 38	... 17. 137	—	26	... 12. 292	—	30	... 21. 255
9.	6	... 14. 197	—	26	... 16. 61	—	31	... 14. 44
—	6	... 16. 419	—	36	... 14. 61	—	31	... 18. 90
—	6	... 17. 213	—	38, 39	... 13. 266	—	31	... 21. 263
—	6	... 19. 235	—	38, 39	... 12. 351	17.	5	... 21. 107
—	6	... 21. 260	—	38, 39	... 21. 269	—	11	... 17. 149
—	11	... 1. 36	—	38, 39	... 22. 53	—	11, 12	... 15. 159
—	11	... 3. 137	—	39	... 12. 354	—	16	... 21. 91
—	11	... 12. 248	—	40	... 9. 5	—	18	... 15. 229
—	11	... 15. 99	—	41	... 8. 434	—	18	... 17. 147
—	13, 15	... 19. 245	—	41	... 14. 191	—	23	... 16. 79
—	31	... 8. 404	—	45	... 2. 87	—	24	... 13. 389
—	31	... 12. 10	—	46	... 18. 233	—	25	... 20. 348
—	31	... 12. 378	—	46	... 18. 364	—	26	... 11. 279
10.	2	... 14. 77	—	46	... 20. 358	—	26	... 15. 88
—	10	... 17. 294	—	46	... 21. 473	—	26	... 16. 117
—	33	... 14. 145	—	48	... 2. 42	—	26	... 16. 364
—	33	... 15. 204	—	48	... 17. 173	—	26	... 21. 125
—	34	... 14. 78	—	52	... 21. 234	—	26, 27	... 13. 407
—	34	... 18. 47	14.	1	... 10. 221	—	26, 27	... 19. 57
—	34, 35	... 18. 405	—	7	... 13. 395	—	27	... 13. 273
—	35	... 15. 144	—	15	... 13. 137	—	27	... 14. 55
—	35	... 17. 27	—	16, 17	... 17. 99	—	27	... 14. 160
—	36	... 5. 158	—	17	... 7. 87	—	27	... 14. 162
—	36	... 20. 28	—	17	... 7. 188	—	27	... 14. 169
—	38	... 16. 491	—	17	... 10. 431	—	27	... 16. 83
—	38	... 18. 17	—	17	... 13. 405	—	27	... 19. 69
—	38	... 20. 364	—	17	... 13. 413	—	27	... 19. 132
—	42, 43	... 13. 277	—	17	... 16. 49	—	27, 28	... 18. 159
—	42, 43	... 18. 362	—	17	... 19. 86	—	28	... 4. 91
—	43	... 13. 266	—	17	... 19. 171	—	28	... 9. 88
—	43	... 15. 52	—	17	... 19. 223	—	28	... 12. 245
—	43	... 15. 60	—	17	... 19. 264	—	28	... 17. 308
—	43	... 15. 444	—	17	... 19. 426	—	30	... 13. 277
—	43	... 20. 265	—	22	... 17. 68	—	30	... 16. 265
—	43	... 21. 277	—	22	... 20. 204	—	30	... 18. 231
—	43	... 22. 55	15.	7	... 14. 236	—	30, 31	... 16. 397
—	44	... 21. 329	—	9	... 3. 439	—	30, 31	... 20. 496
—	44, 45	... 21. 289	—	9	... 12. 491	—	31	... 2. 298
11.	18	... 17. 104	—	9	... 15. 42	—	31	... 10. 225
—	18	... 17. 361	—	9	... 16. 262	—	31	... 13. 59
—	26	... 6. 66	—	9	... 20. 484	—	31	... 19. 133
—	31	... 15. 17	—	18	... 12. 311	—	31	... 20. 207
12.	15	... 1. 284	—	18	... 21. 175	18.	9, 10	... 13. 103
13.	2	... 10. 474	16.	7	... 10. 483	—	10	... 18. 158
—	2, 3	... 14. 237	—	7	... 12. 297	20.	9	... 15. 171
—	10	... 1. 313	—	14	... 12. 293	—	21	... 1. 458
—	10	... 19. 174	—	14	... 12. 320	—	21	... 2. 192
—	10	... 21. 45	—	14	... 15. 170	—	21	... 2. 353
—	26	... 2. 203	—	14	... 15. 167	—	21	... 9. 336
—	26	... 5. 108	—	25	... 19. 415	—	21	... 17. 135

Acts.			Acts.			Romans.		
chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page
20.	21	... 18. 219	24.	25	... 8. 340	1.	16	... 10. 228
—	21	... 20. 277	—	25	... 12. 50	—	16	... 15. 155
—	21	... 20. 387	—	25	... 16. 324	—	16	... 16. 56
—	21	... 21. 216	—	25	... 17. 68	—	16-18	... 21. 37
—	21	... 22. 108	—	25	... 17. 436	—	17	... 4. 263
—	22, 24	... 20. 70	—	25	... 18. 357	—	17	... 14. 82
—	24	... 3. 19	26.	6, 7	... 20. 153	—	17	... 15. 56
—	24	... 13. 21	—	6, 7	... 20. 474	—	17	... 15. 56
—	24	... 14. 363	—	7	... 4. 463	—	17	... 17. 107
—	24	... 15. 83	—	6-8	... 19. 140	—	17, 18	... 13. 308
—	24	... 17. 137	—	7	... 12. 200	—	17, 18	... 20. 42
—	24	... 17. 485	—	7	... 15. 77	—	18	... 2. 180
—	24	... 20. 74	—	7	... 17. 70	—	18	... 8. 29
—	24	... 20. 184	—	7	... 19. 363	—	18	... 12. 220
—	27	... 16. 64	—	7	... 20. 135	—	18	... 13. 299
—	28	... 10. 162	—	7	... 20. 177	—	18	... 16. 76
—	28	... 12. 247	—	9	... 17. 438	—	18	... 18. 339
—	28	... 19. 182	—	18	... 5. 463	—	18	... 19. 221
—	28	... 20. 24	—	18	... 12. 315	—	18	... 19. 240
—	28	... 22. 104	—	18	... 12. 353	—	18	... 20. 218
—	32	... 7. 470	—	18	... 13. 274	—	19	... 15. 395
—	35	... 2. 35	—	18	... 13. 303	—	19, 20	... 3. 22
—	35	... 2. 374	—	18	... 15. 363	—	19, 20	... 13. 411
—	35	... 16. 478	—	18	... 17. 231	—	20	... 8. 336
21.	13	... 15. 252	—	18	... 17. 251	—	20	... 10. 200
—	13	... 20. 72	—	18	... 18. 10	—	20	... 12. 286
—	13	... 21. 143	—	18	... 18. 26	—	20	... 13. 389
—	14	... 15. 95	—	18	... 19. 227	—	20	... 13. 433
22.	16	... 15. 457	—	18	... 19. 250	—	20	... 17. 82
—	16	... 19. 194	—	18	... 21. 281	—	20	... 17. 356
—	16	... 21. 286	—	18	... 20. 86	—	20	... 17. 432
—	20	... 2. 382	—	27	... 17. 421	—	20	... 18. 212
23.	6	... 5. 399	—	29	... 15. 290	—	20	... 21. 119
24.	10	... 9. 327	27.	20	... 17. 71	—	20, 21	... 4. 123
—	14	... 6. 205	—	22, 31	... 3. 105	—	20, 21	... 6. 390
—	14	... 15. 48	—	22, 31	... 3. 124	—	20, 21	... 13. 409
—	14	... 17. 110	—	22, 31	... 5. 489	—	21	... 1. 27
—	14	... 17. 127	—	23	... 7. 197	—	21	... 3. 310
—	14, 15	... 12. 434	—	24-26	... 8. 463	—	21	... 6. 169
—	14-16	... 15. 162	—	31	... 14. 202	—	21	... 12. 287
—	14-16	... 15. 172	28.	20	... 5. 11	—	21	... 19. 28
—	15, 16	... 12. 201	—	23	... 12. 416	—	21	... 19. 51
—	15, 16	... 12. 204	—	26, 27	... 17. 197	—	21, 22	... 3. 126
—	15, 16	... 20. 67	—	28	... 16. 62	—	21, 22	... 5. 491
—	15, 16	... 20. 153				—	21, 22	... 13. 411
—	16	... 6. 46				—	21-23	... 17. 328
—	16	... 16. 276				—	22	... 11. 123
—	16	... 18. 411				—	22, 23	... 10. 428
—	16	... 20. 473				—	26	... 4. 106
—	16	... 21. 80				—	28	... 14. 128
—	16	... 21. 173				—	28	... 17. 285
—	24, 25	... 16. 119				—	28	... 19. 220

Romans.				Romans.				Romans.			
chap.	ver.	vol.	page	chap.	ver.	vol.	page	chap.	ver.	vol.	page
1.	30	...	19. 52	2.	15	...	19. 293	3.	24	...	13. 477
—	32	...	13. 47	—	15	...	19. 327	—	24	...	15. 64
—	32	...	14. 73	—	15	...	20. 359	—	24	...	16. 40
—	32	...	14. 157	—	15	...	21. 239	—	24	...	16. 253
—	32	...	19. 69	—	15, 16	...	19. 135	—	24	...	19. 158
—	32	...	19. 135	—	18	...	19. 60	—	24	...	20. 343
—	32	...	19. 240	—	18	...	20. 13	—	24	...	20. 349
—	32	...	19. 305	—	18, 20	...	19. 339	—	24, 25	...	13. 260
—	32	...	19. 312	—	19, 20	...	20. 250	—	24, 25	...	14. 10
—	32	...	19. 478	—	20	...	17. 274	—	24, 25	...	18. 256
—	32	...	20. 159	—	20	...	20. 313	—	24, 25	...	18. 488
—	32	...	20. 210	—	20	...	20. 404	—	24, 25	...	20. 305
2.	1	...	19. 112	—	20-22	...	7. 205	—	25	...	22. 54
—	2-6	...	2. 77	—	22	...	16. 162	—	25	...	3. 388
—	4	...	6. 198	—	24	...	21. 346	—	25	...	12. 353
—	4	...	8. 212	—	29	...	13. 138	—	25	...	16. 334
—	4	...	15. 443	—	29	...	14. 352	—	25	...	19. 18
—	4	...	16. 432	3.	2	...	8. 105	—	25	...	19. 180
—	4	...	17. 229	—	2	...	14. 180	—	25	...	22. 56
—	4	...	20. 386	—	4	...	19. 287	—	25	...	22. 109
—	4, 5	...	17. 207	—	5, 6	...	16. 17	—	25, 26	...	2. 259
—	5	...	7. 354	—	5, 6	...	13. 260	—	25, 26	...	12. 342
—	6, 7	...	13. 74	—	5, 6	...	19. 133	—	25, 26	...	15. 432
—	5-15	...	10. 38	—	8	...	5. 148	4.	2	...	4. 244
—	6-8	...	2. 360	—	8	...	17. 214	—	3	...	20. 44
—	7	...	14. 166	—	13	...	21. 77	—	3	...	21. 39
—	7	...	15. 80	—	18	...	20. 8	—	4	...	15. 8
—	7	...	15. 402	—	19	...	13. 263	—	6, 7	...	12. 350
—	7	...	16. 340	—	19	...	15. 442	—	8	...	18. 208
—	7	...	18. 320	—	19	...	16. 440	—	11	...	14. 480
—	7	...	20. 152	—	19	...	17. 174	—	11	...	15. 480
—	8	...	19. 145	—	19	...	19. 35	—	11	...	15. 493
—	8	...	20. 220	—	19-22	...	12. 350	—	11	...	19. 89
—	9	...	13. 277	—	19, 23	...	20. 354	—	13	...	17. 167
—	9	...	18. 165	—	20	...	11. 396	—	15, 16	...	2. 353
—	9, 10	...	13. 84	—	20	...	17. 447	—	16	...	2. 260
—	9-11	...	18. 409	—	20	...	20. 42	—	16	...	13. 481
—	10	...	20. 25	—	20	...	20. 177	—	16	...	14. 103
—	12	...	12. 30	—	20	...	21. 37	—	16	...	16. 43
—	12	...	20. 246	—	21	...	12. 136	—	16	...	16. 53
—	13	...	13. 308	—	21, 22	...	13. 309	—	18	...	13. 361
—	13	...	21. 36	—	21, 22	...	20. 42	—	18-20	...	15. 11
—	14	...	12. 56	—	21-23	...	15. 58	—	18	...	17. 171
—	14	...	13. 233	—	22	...	14. 218	—	18-21	...	17. 179
—	14	...	16. 458	—	22	...	16. 67	—	19	...	14. 375
—	14, 15	...	8. 459	—	22	...	20. 33	—	21	...	12. 477
—	14, 15	...	12. 126	—	23	...	3. 298	—	21	...	13. 329
—	14, 15	...	17. 234	—	23	...	18. 5	—	21	...	13. 434
—	14, 15	...	19. 71	—	23	...	20. 45	—	21	...	14. 370
—	14, 15	...	19. 311	—	23	...	21. 14	—	21	...	17. 88
—	15	...	12. 364	—	24	...	13. 76	—	21	...	20. 169
—	15	...	15. 266	—	24	...	13. 259	—	23	...	18. 445

Romans.			Romans.			Romans.		
chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page
4.	23, 24	... 12. 412	5.	6	... 19. 162	5.	16	... 5. 64
—	23, 24	... 20. 233	—	6-8	... 19. 85	—	16	... 5. 76
—	25	... 1. 499	—	7	... 15. 404	—	17	... 21. 51
—	25	... 10. 223	—	7	... 18. 98	—	18	... 12. 360
—	25	... 11. 167	—	7	... 19. 258	—	18	... 13. 265
—	25	... 19. 35	—	7, 8	... 2. 343	—	18	... 13. 308
—	25	... 19. 82	—	7, 8	... 19. 186	—	18	... 15. 57
5.	1	... 3. 279	—	8	... 3. 147	—	18	... 21. 38
—	1	... 13. 147	—	8	... 12. 118	—	18, 19	... 13. 311
—	1	... 13. 257	—	8	... 12. 343	—	18, 19	... 20. 44
—	1	... 15. 105	—	8	... 12. 383	—	19	... 13. 307
—	1	... 15. 363	—	8	... 13. 142	—	19	... 19. 180
—	1	... 15. 399	—	8	... 15. 446	—	19	... 21. 10
—	1	... 16. 314	—	8	... 17. 335	—	19	... 21. 34
—	1	... 18. 107	—	8	... 17. 366	—	19	... 21. 39
—	1	... 19. 265	—	8	... 17. 471	—	20	... 16. 45
—	1	... 20. 367	—	8	... 18. 19	—	21	... 13. 480
—	1	... 22. 109	—	8	... 18. 136	—	25	... 13. 266
—	1, 2	... 9. 23	—	8	... 19. 84	6.	1	... 5. 145
—	1, 2	... 21. 4	—	8	... 19. 471	—	1	... 7. 16
—	1, 2	... 21. 188	—	8	... 20. 347	—	1	... 13. 195
—	1-3	... 16. 354	—	9	... 12. 28	—	1, 2	... 15. 162
—	1-5	... 15. 62	—	9	... 13. 147	—	2	... 12. 33
—	2	... 12. 199	—	9	... 13. 308	—	2	... 13. 194
—	2	... 16. 177	—	9	... 15. 65	—	2	... 16. 101
—	2	... 19. 67	—	9, 10	... 19. 255	—	3-5	... 13. 194
—	2	... 20. 333	—	10	... 3. 494	—	3-5	... 21. 316
—	2	... 20. 472	—	10	... 12. 211	—	4, 5	... 20. 52
—	2, 3	... 15. 52	—	10	... 13. 344	—	4, 5	... 20. 56
—	2, 3	... 20. 101	—	10	... 15. 433	—	5	... 13. 207
—	3	... 8. 413	—	10	... 16. 493	—	6	... 13. 190
—	3	... 16. 316	—	10, 11	... 13. 258	—	6	... 13. 193
—	3-5	... 12. 396	—	11	... 12. 7	—	6	... 15. 432
—	3-5	... 14. 12	—	11	... 13. 154	—	6	... 16. 256
—	3-5	... 15. 114	—	11	... 15. 163	—	6	... 16. 384
—	3-5	... 18. 52	—	11	... 17. 177	—	6	... 21. 6
—	3-5	... 20. 77	—	11	... 17. 471	—	8	... 12. 83
—	4	... 19. 142	—	11	... 18. 187	—	9	... 13. 204
—	4, 5	... 20. 54	—	11	... 20. 34	—	10	... 13. 206
—	5	... 2. 39	—	11	... 21. 229	—	11	... 12. 32
—	5	... 11. 137	—	12	... 6. 157	—	11	... 12. 172
—	5	... 12. 68	—	12	... 11. 239	—	11	... 21. 285
—	5	... 12. 210	—	12	... 12. 14	—	11, 12	... 21. 372
—	5	... 14. 20	—	12	... 19. 328	—	12	... 2. 285
—	5	... 17. 381	—	12	... 20. 46	—	12	... 12. 16
—	5	... 18. 441	—	12	... 21. 114	—	12	... 12. 80
—	5	... 19. 84	—	14	... 1. 261	—	12	... 21. 56
—	5	... 20. 70	—	14	... 13. 180	—	12	... 21. 370
—	5	... 21. 227	—	14	... 20. 510	—	12	... 22. 7
—	5	... 21. 294	—	14	... 21. 248	—	13	... 12. 27
—	6	... 8. 442	—	14	... 13. 193	—	13	... 12. 90
—	6	... 16. 76	—	15-17	... 22. 57	—	13	... 13. 127

Romans.				Romans.				Romans.			
chap.	ver.	vol.	page	chap.	ver.	vol.	page	chap.	ver.	vol.	page
6.	13	...	13. 194	7.	4	...	2. 51	7.	24	...	21. 58
—	13	...	13. 299	—	4	...	11. 421	—	24	...	21. 63
—	13	...	15. 12	—	4	...	13. 211	—	24, 25	...	14. 116
—	13	...	16. 487	—	4	...	13. 302	—	24, 25	...	15. 72
—	13	...	17. 442	—	4	...	15. 41	—	24, 25	...	16. 103
—	13	...	18. 27	—	4	...	17. 428	8.	1	...	5. 385
—	13	...	19. 370	—	5	...	11. 396	—	1	...	11. 241
—	13	...	19. 489	—	8	...	4. 99	—	1	...	13. 78
—	13	...	21. 83	—	9	...	4. 104	—	1	...	13. 315
—	13	...	21. 320	—	9	...	12. 67	—	1	...	16. 218
—	14	...	12. 105	—	9	...	13. 490	—	1	...	20. 167
—	14	...	13. 194	—	9	...	14. 120	—	1	...	21. 190
—	14	...	16. 443	—	9	...	15. 260	—	2	...	2. 287
—	14	...	21. 64	—	9	...	16. 336	—	2	...	4. 163
—	14	...	21. 189	—	9	...	17. 231	—	2	...	6. 325
—	15	...	16. 70	—	9	...	20. 8	—	2	...	12. 176
—	16	...	11. 413	—	12	...	2. 6	—	3	...	12. 339
—	16	...	18. 114	—	12	...	4. 219	—	3	...	13. 185
—	16	...	20. 252	—	12	...	6. 39	—	3	...	16. 440
—	16	...	21. 358	—	12	...	7. 477	—	3	...	17. 73
—	16	...	21. 368	—	12, 16	...	7. 214	—	3	...	17. 411
—	17	...	6. 66	—	13	...	17. 276	—	3	...	19. 328
—	17	...	15. 168	—	13	...	20. 371	—	3	...	21. 471
—	17	...	16. 257	—	14	...	20. 11	—	5	...	6. 480
—	17	...	19. 255	—	15-17	...	21. 68	—	5	...	7. 111
—	17	...	19. 411	—	18	...	1. 139	—	5	...	12. 100
—	18	...	12. 173	—	18	...	13. 247	—	5	...	15. 366
—	19	...	7. 39	—	18	...	15. 242	—	5	...	17. 65
—	19	...	12. 55	—	18	...	15. 264	—	5	...	18. 468
—	19	...	13. 121	—	18	...	15. 413	—	5	...	20. 134
—	19	...	15. 34	—	18	...	16. 425	—	5	...	20. 137
—	19	...	16. 285	—	18	...	20. 89	—	5	...	22. 79
—	19, 20	...	13. 191	—	21	...	14. 60	—	5, 7	...	4. 307
—	20	...	16. 46	—	23	...	2. 462	—	5-7	...	15. 116
—	20	...	21. 367	—	23	...	9. 305	—	6	...	13. 119
—	21	...	7. 346	—	23	...	11. 267	—	7	...	1. 123
—	21	...	11. 270	—	23	...	12. 63	—	7	...	11. 238
—	21	...	11. 315	—	23	...	21. 35	—	7	...	12. 46
—	21	...	13. 82	—	23	...	21. 374	—	7	...	13. 242
—	21	...	15. 372	—	23, 24	...	2. 66	—	7	...	13. 470
—	21	...	17. 305	—	23, 24	...	16. 259	—	7	...	15. 217
—	21	...	18. 340	—	24	...	7. 66	—	7	...	15. 306
—	21	...	20. 5	—	24	...	12. 66	—	7	...	17. 65
—	21	...	21. 245	—	24	...	12. 70	—	7	...	19. 231
—	21, 22	...	8. 394	—	24	...	12. 75	—	7	...	19. 333
—	21-23	...	18. 465	—	24	...	12. 189	—	8	...	13. 264
—	22	...	12. 55	—	24	...	13. 172	—	8	...	14. 49
—	23	...	2. 360	—	24	...	14. 264	—	8	...	14. 90
—	23	...	10. 133	—	24	...	14. 452	—	8	...	19. 292
—	23	...	13. 79	—	24	...	18. 8	—	9	...	12. 127
—	23	...	20. 346	—	24	...	20. 193	—	9	...	19. 217
—	23	...	20. 386	—	24	...	20. 497	—	9	...	19. 335

Romans.			Romans.			Romans.		
chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page
8.	9	... 20. 160	8.	18	... 14. 311	8.	28	... 5. 481
—	9	... 22. 103	—	18	... 15. 63	—	28	... 9. 438
—	10	... 19. 67	—	18	... 15. 77	—	28	... 13. 421
—	11	... 13. 204	—	18	... 17. 5	—	28	... 15. 128
—	11	... 15. 86	—	18	... 19. 128	—	28	... 15. 398
—	11	... 20. 172	—	18	... 20. 17	—	28	... 16. 270
—	11	... 20. 175	—	18	... 20. 25	—	28	... 16. 327
—	12	... 1. 216	—	18	... 20. 71	—	28	... 17. 346
—	12	... 15. 205	—	18	... 20. 153	—	28	... 18. 60
—	12	... 15. 270	—	18	... 20. 299	—	28	... 19. 163
—	12	... 18. 24	—	18	... 20. 372	—	28	... 20. 22
—	12	... 18. 113	—	18	... 22. 20	—	28	... 20. 353
—	13	... 11. 273	—	19	... 5. 351	—	28-30	... 15. 130
—	13	... 12. 24	—	19	... 16. 176	—	29	... 1. 431
—	13	... 13. 86	—	19	... 16. 211	—	29	... 16. 488
—	13	... 13. 348	—	19	... 19. 490	—	29	... 17. 415
—	13	... 13. 356	—	19	... 20. 452	—	29	... 19. 175
—	13	... 13. 368	—	20	... 5. 221	—	29	... 20. 61
—	13	... 13. 458	—	21	... 20. 478	—	30	... 13. 331
—	13	... 14. 194	—	22	... 9. 17	—	30	... 13. 489
—	13	... 16. 98	—	23	... 9. 286	—	30	... 15. 83
—	13	... 19. 219	—	23	... 11. 61	—	30	... 20. 353
—	13	... 19. 396	—	23	... 12. 25	—	31	... 17. 130
—	13	... 20. 67	—	23	... 12. 99	—	31	... 18. 176
—	13	... 20. 127	—	23	... 12. 478	—	32	... 1. 158
—	13	... 21. 184	—	23	... 12. 484	—	32	... 2. 345
—	14	... 12. 242	—	23	... 13. 8	—	32	... 13. 261
—	14	... 21. 298	—	23	... 13. 338	—	32	... 15. 100
—	15	... 12. 234	—	23	... 14. 15	—	32	... 15. 362
—	15	... 15. 486	—	23	... 14. 337	—	32	... 16. 116
—	15	... 16. 441	—	23	... 15. 84	—	32	... 19. 161
—	15	... 21. 85	—	23	... 16. 176	—	32	... 19. 182
—	15, 16	... 21. 233	—	23	... 19. 75	—	32	... 20. 355
—	15, 26	... 21. 155	—	23	... 19. 132	—	33	... 14. 9
—	16	... 12. 6	—	23	... 20. 166	—	33	... 15. 106
—	16	... 13. 109	—	24	... 13. 6	—	33	... 17. 433
—	16	... 13. 478	—	24	... 13. 12	—	33	... 20. 148
—	16	... 19. 8	—	24	... 13. 362	—	33, 34	... 3. 320
—	16	... 21. 81	—	24	... 16. 186	—	33, 34	... 15. 449
—	17	... 4. 195	—	24	... 17. 181	—	33, 34	... 17. 253
—	17	... 12. 120	—	24, 25	... 17. 120	—	33, 34	... 22. 61
—	17	... 12. 125	—	26	... 5. 339	—	34	... 12. 226
—	17	... 12. 211	—	26	... 10. 353	—	34	... 22. 76
—	17	... 14. 220	—	26	... 12. 13	—	35	... 7. 158
—	17	... 14. 319	—	26	... 15. 228	—	35	... 21. 27
—	17	... 15. 479	—	26	... 18. 70	—	35-39	... 18. 305
—	17	... 19. 214	—	26	... 18. 72	—	37	... 13. 146
—	17	... 20. 38	—	26, 27	... 14. 152	—	37, 38	... 12. 109
—	17	... 20. 60	—	26, 27	... 18. 461	—	37-39	... 15. 111
—	17	... 20. 213	—	27	... 5. 336	—	38	... 18. 186
—	18	... 13. 335	—	27	... 12. 236	—	38, 39	... 11. 83
—	18	... 13. 460	—	27	... 18. 69	—	38, 39	... 12. 395

Romans.				Romans.				Romans.			
chap.	ver.	vol.	page	chap.	ver.	vol.	page	chap.	ver.	vol.	page
8.	38, 39	...	20. 229	10.	9, 10	...	18. 16	12.	2	...	6. 140
—	39	...	20. 78	—	10	...	18. 249	—	2	...	11. 174
9.	1	...	12. 365	—	13	...	1. 16	—	2	...	14. 259
—	1, 3	...	21. 121	—	14	...	15. 150	—	2	...	15. 247
—	1-3	...	12. 1	—	14	...	16. 155	—	2	...	17. 426
—	1-3	...	19. 189	—	14, 15	...	13. 286	—	2	...	19. 172
—	3	...	1. 73	—	14, 15	...	17. 126	—	2	...	19. 291
—	3	...	13. 137	—	16	...	19. 463	—	3	...	17. 278
—	3	...	13. 152	11.	5, 6	...	16. 39	—	3	...	21. 414
—	3	...	17. 60	—	6	...	13. 477	—	3	...	21. 428
—	3	...	19. 231	—	6	...	13. 492	—	5	...	15. 292
—	5	...	1. 479	—	6	...	15. 210	—	5	...	16. 150
—	7	...	21. 466	—	8	...	19. 332	—	8	...	5. 196
—	10	...	15. 37	—	14	...	14. 407	—	9	...	9. 184
—	11	...	5. 128	—	16	...	12. 186	—	9	...	16. 148
—	11	...	12. 316	—	16	...	15. 466	—	9	...	19. 286
—	16	...	14. 97	—	22	...	19. 242	—	10	...	19. 431
—	16	...	19. 223	—	23	...	17. 80	—	10	...	21. 118
—	16	...	19. 407	—	24	...	14. 87	—	11	...	9. 86
—	18	...	20. 285	—	24	...	15. 467	—	11	...	9. 355
—	20	...	5. 195	—	26	...	21. 7	—	11	...	13. 174
—	20	...	8. 157	—	28	...	15. 468	—	11	...	15. 311
—	20	...	15. 222	—	29	...	5. 46	—	11	...	16. 279
—	20	...	15. 254	—	32	...	7. 143	—	12	...	17. 162
—	22	...	5. 131	—	35	...	7. 186	—	13	...	21. 148
—	22	...	5. 225	—	35	...	16. 42	—	15	...	17. 103
—	22	...	8. 298	—	35	...	20. 348	—	15	...	21. 89
—	22	...	13. 85	—	35	...	21. 71	—	17	...	5. 97
—	22	...	18. 234	—	36	...	1. 72	—	17	...	15. 364
—	22	...	21. 467	—	36	...	9. 425	—	17	...	16. 151
—	22, 23	...	10. 87	—	36	...	13. 126	13.	4	...	5. 120
—	23	...	12. 437	—	36	...	13. 404	—	4	...	14. 425
—	23	...	20. 149	—	36	...	17. 386	—	5	...	19. 327
—	30-32	...	18. 238	—	36	...	20. 181	—	7	...	13. 220
10.	3	...	10. 62	—	36	...	20. 289	—	7	...	16. 143
—	3	...	13. 478	12.	1	...	2. 224	—	7, 8	...	19. 268
—	3	...	13. 490	—	1	...	13. 43	—	7, 8	...	21. 92
—	3	...	15. 207	—	1	...	13. 127	—	8	...	16. 143
—	3	...	15. 318	—	1	...	13. 150	—	8	...	18. 98
—	3	...	16. 299	—	1	...	13. 214	—	8	...	21. 143
—	3	...	16. 451	—	1	...	13. 274	—	11	...	9. 356
—	3	...	18. 10	—	1	...	13. 293	—	11	...	16. 101
—	3	...	20. 42	—	1	...	15. 142	—	12	...	3. 15
—	4	...	13. 313	—	1	...	15. 246	—	12	...	12. 461
—	5-9	...	18. 236	—	1	...	15. 436	—	12	...	16. 127
—	8	...	6. 64	—	1	...	16. 70	—	12	...	17. 247
—	8, 9	...	15. 491	—	1	...	16. 248	—	12	...	19. 259
—	9, 10	...	1. 318	—	1	...	18. 82	—	12, 13	...	19. 255
—	9	...	20. 315	—	1	...	19. 189	—	14	...	12. 24
—	9, 10	...	15. 168	—	1	...	20. 185	—	14	...	12. 60
—	9, 10	...	16. 16	—	1	...	22. 23	—	14	...	16. 100
—	9, 10	...	17. 113	—	1, 2	...	7. 219	—	14	...	16. 104

Romans.				Romans.				I Corinthians.			
chap.	ver.	vol.	page	chap.	ver.	vol.	page	chap.	ver.	vol.	page
13.	14	...	16. 486	15.	4	...	3. 158	I.	28	...	13. 287
—	14	...	17. 269	—	4	...	19. 12	—	28	...	17. 84
—	14	...	19. 57	—	6	...	19. 102	—	30	...	12. 61
—	14	...	20. 168	—	8	...	17. 160	—	30	...	13. 310
—	14	...	21. 104	—	13	...	12. 10	—	30	...	14. 11
14.	1	...	14. 326	—	13	...	16. 314	—	30	...	15. 496
—	4	...	4. 272	—	13	...	18. 372	—	30	...	17. 417
—	4	...	12. 32	—	13	...	18. 463	—	30	...	18. 167
—	4	...	17. 81	—	13	...	19. 396	—	30	...	19. 225
—	6	...	13. 123	—	13	...	19. 410	—	30	...	20. 18
—	6	...	15. 190	—	13	...	20. 80	—	30	...	20. 38
—	7	...	7. 10	—	14	...	19. 116	—	30	...	21. 25
—	7	...	12. 119	—	14	...	19. 257	—	30	...	22. 40
—	7	...	15. 188	—	22	...	14. 247	—	31	...	16. 42
—	7, 8	...	10. 182	—	26, 27	...	13. 23	2.	1	...	21. 76
—	7, 8	...	13. 121	—	30	...	12. 256	—	2	...	20. 23
—	7, 8	...	20. 272	16.	4.	...	21. 141	—	3	...	4. 435
—	7-9	...	13. 44	—	17	...	2. 88	—	3-5	...	10. 440
—	7-9	...	14. 246	—	17	...	20. 110	—	4, 5	...	8. 340
—	7-9	...	18. 273	—	18	...	15. 280	—	4, 5	...	15. 29
—	7-9	...	20. 180	—	18	...	20. 130	—	6	...	5. 427
—	8	...	13. 135	—	18	...	20. 132	—	9	...	2. 197
—	8	...	13. 199	—	20	...	1. 226	—	9	...	12. 278
—	8	...	16. 163	—	20	...	11. 281	—	9	...	16. 297
—	9	...	17. 448	—	20	...	12. 402	—	9	...	18. 137
—	9	...	18. 251	—	20	...	15. 108	—	9	...	18. 143
—	9	...	19. 213	—	20	...	21. 56	—	9, 11	...	4. 22
—	9	...	19. 458	20.	7	...	15. 470	—	11	...	12. 125
—	9	...	20. 28					—	11	...	14. 63
—	9	...	20. 47					—	11	...	21. 161
—	9	...	20. 496					—	11, 12	...	13. 104
—	10	...	5. 102					—	11, 12	...	17. 118
—	10, 11	...	13. 45					—	12	...	12. 41
—	12	...	13. 65					—	12	...	12. 202
—	12	...	20. 45					—	12	...	12. 416
—	17	...	7. 99					—	12	...	12. 493
—	17	...	12. 9					—	12	...	15. 493
—	17	...	17. 175					—	12	...	18. 23
—	17	...	17. 412					—	12	...	18. 151
—	17, 18	...	2. 8					—	12	...	18. 404
—	17, 18	...	18. 101					—	12	...	21. 69
—	17, 18	...	19. 289					—	12, 14	...	2. 115
—	17, 18	...	21. 205					—	12, 14	...	12. 77
—	18	...	18. 122					—	13	...	15. 54
—	18	...	21. 486					—	13	...	19. 388
—	22, 23	...	17. 438					—	14	...	3. 212
—	22, 23	...	21. 170					—	14	...	6. 168
15.	2	...	13. 43	—	26	...	15. 28	—	14	...	8. 279
—	2	...	15. 205	—	26	...	16. 414	—	14	...	11. 125
—	3	...	13. 212	—	26	...	20. 298	—	14	...	11. 216
—	3	...	15. 294	—	27, 28	...	18. 14	—	14	...	11. 462
—	3	...	20. 121	—	27-29	...	3. 243	—	14	...	12. 51

1 Corinthians.			1 Corinthians.			1 Corinthians.		
chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page
2.	14	... 13. 356	4.	4	... 16. 456	6.	11	... 18. 438
—	14	... 14. 436	—	4	... 21. 166	—	11	... 19. 217
—	14	... 15. 167	—	4	... 21. 170	—	11	... 20. 272
—	14	... 15. 223	—	4, 5	... 13. 50	—	11	... 20. 388
—	14	... 15. 392	—	5	... 13. 61	—	11	... 21. 157
—	14	... 17. 486	—	5	... 13. 65	—	11	... 21. 288
—	14	... 20. 86	—	5	... 13. 492	—	12	... 2. 464
—	14	... 20. 274	—	5	... 19. 147	—	12	... 12. 27
—	14	... 20. 453	—	7	... 7. 329	—	12	... 16. 93
—	14	... 21. 264	—	7	... 8. 11	—	12	... 16. 112
—	14	... 21. 308	—	7	... 12. 299	—	12	... 16. 121
—	14	... 22. 97	—	7	... 15. 232	—	12	... 19. 190
3.	3	... 5. 25	—	7	... 15. 264	—	13	... 2. 308
—	5	... 15. 173	—	7	... 15. 409	—	13	... 12. 89
—	8	... 9. 459	—	7	... 16. 427	—	13	... 12. 168
—	8	... 12. 480	—	7	... 19. 427	—	15	... 2. 225
—	10	... 13. 282	—	7	... 21. 413	—	15	... 12. 36
—	10	... 14. 181	—	8	... 13. 482	—	15	... 20. 175
—	13	... 5. 285	—	9	... 20. 61	—	15	... 21. 29
—	13	... 5. 394	—	11	... 18. 172	—	15-17	... 13. 215
—	13	... 10. 37	—	13	... 12. 390	—	16	... 12. 19
—	14	... 14. 158	—	15	... 18. 158	—	16	... 19. 470
—	15	... 2. 87	—	20	... 20. 55	—	17	... 11. 144
—	16	... 21. 228	—	20	... 20. 292	—	18	... 19. 197
—	18	... 15. 217	—	20	... 22. 111	—	19	... 5. 223
—	18	... 15. 277	5.	1	... 19. 192	—	19	... 11. 486
—	18	... 18. 111	—	2	... 5. 330	—	19	... 12. 24
—	18	... 18. 408	—	5	... 15. 245	—	19	... 13. 135
—	21	... 7. 75	—	7, 8	... 15. 74	—	19	... 15. 53
—	21	... 14. 219	—	7, 8	... 16. 15	—	19, 20	... 3. 141
—	21-23	... 12. 260	—	7, 8	... 18. 484	—	19, 20	... 13. 126
—	21-23	... 15. 362	—	9, 10	... 14. 248	—	19, 20	... 13. 214
—	22	... 2. 445	—	10	... 10. 381	—	19, 20	... 15. 144
—	22	... 9. 60	—	11, 12	... 21. 91	—	19, 20	... 19. 191
—	22	... 12. 451	6.	2	... 14. 441	—	19, 20	... 20. 272
—	22, 23	... 10. 264	—	2	... 20. 464	—	19, 20	... 21. 486
—	22, 23	... 12. 175	—	2, 3	... 20. 265	—	20	... 1. 129
—	22, 23	... 12. 415	—	7	... 1. 190	—	20	... 6. 28
—	22, 23	... 18. 133	—	9	... 19. 220	—	20	... 13. 215
—	22, 23	... 20. 38	—	9	... 20. 314	—	20	... 14. 403
—	23	... 15. 97	—	9	... 21. 30	—	20	... 15. 86
4.	1	... 13. 291	—	9	... 21. 32	—	20	... 18. 140
—	1	... 19. 429	—	9, 10	... 12. 207	7.	4	... 8. 277
—	2	... 12. 481	—	9, 10	... 19. 215	—	5	... 11. 455
—	2	... 13. 103	—	9, 10	... 21. 342	—	5	... 16. 100
—	3	... 13. 39	—	10	... 15. 25	—	12	... 17. 281
—	3	... 16. 118	—	11	... 5. 27	—	14	... 14. 406
—	3, 4	... 6. 210	—	11	... 11. 159	—	14	... 18. 88
—	3-5	... 6. 416	—	11	... 12. 77	—	19	... 13. 227
—	4	... 13. 109	—	11	... 13. 232	—	19	... 20. 6
—	4	... 15. 209	—	11	... 15. 456	—	20	... 14. 240
—	4	... 15. 265	—	11	... 18. 167	—	21, 22	... 12. 175

I Corinthians.			I Corinthians.			I Corinthians.		
chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page
7.	22	... 19. 430	10.	9	... 1. 297	11.	14	... 16. 137
—	29	... 5. 146	—	10	... 17. 260	—	15	... 14. 478
—	29	... 19. 359	—	11	... 5. 383	—	17-20	... 15. 337
—	29, 30	... 19. 141	—	11	... 14. 204	—	18	... 22. 88
—	29, 30	... 20. 144	—	11	... 15. 155	—	19	... 6. 317
—	29-31	... 17. 77	—	11	... 17. 454	—	19, 22	... 4. 181
—	29-31	... 19. 372	—	11, 12	... 15. 373	—	23	... 15. 331
—	29-31	... 22. 80	—	12	... 5. 45	—	23	... 15. 350
—	30	... 10. 358	—	12	... 6. 323	—	23	... 17. 289
—	30	... 21. 444	—	12	... 19. 351	—	24	... 13. 485
—	30-31	... 14. 334	—	12	... 22. 105	—	24, 29	... 15. 431
—	31	... 6. 179	—	13	... 6. 275	—	25	... 15. 353
—	31	... 15. 418	—	13	... 12. 144	—	25	... 15. 356
—	31	... 16. 133	—	13	... 12. 229	—	26	... 11. 166
—	32, 33	... 17. 54	—	13	... 12. 382	—	26	... 12. 215
—	34	... 19. 439	—	13	... 12. 408	—	26	... 15. 496
—	39	... 2. 104	—	13	... 14. 239	—	26	... 20. 236
—	39	... 17. 469	—	13	... 17. 163	—	27, 30	... 15. 341
8.	1	... 9. 247	—	13	... 18. 55	—	28	... 14. 483
—	1	... 19. 249	—	13	... 18. 60	—	28	... 15. 462
—	2	... 3. 180	—	13	... 20. 116	—	28	... 20. 91
—	2	... 15. 221	—	13	... 21. 449	—	28	... 21. 81
—	2	... 20. 22	—	13	... 22. 25	—	29	... 15. 336
—	2	... 22. 105	—	13, 14	... 18. 25	—	29	... 21. 191
—	2, 3	... 19. 248	—	14	... 15. 194	—	29	... 22. 121
—	5	... 4. 124	—	16	... 11. 165	—	30	... 15. 324
—	5, 6	... 16. 234	—	16	... 14. 482	—	30	... 22. 67
—	6	... 11. 63	—	16	... 15. 431	—	31	... 14. 193
—	6	... 18. 259	—	16	... 15. 495	—	31	... 21. 15
—	13	... 16. 121	—	16	... 22. 110	—	32	... 12. 67
9.	10	... 12. 207	—	17	... 15. 497	—	32	... 14. 189
—	16, 17	... 19. 230	—	21	... 15. 428	—	32	... 15. 255
—	19	... 19. 434	—	21	... 21. 60	—	32	... 18. 60
—	24	... 12. 48	—	24	... 15. 290	12.	3	... 12. 235
—	24	... 19. 223	—	24	... 16. 150	—	8	... 14. 400
—	24	... 20. 108	—	24	... 18. 310	—	8, 9	... 16. 375
—	26	... 5. 52	—	27	... 10. 5	—	8-10	... 9. 432
—	26	... 2. 324	—	31	... 5. 141	—	11	... 16. 377
—	26	... 13. 353	—	31	... 13. 456	—	12	... 1. 454
—	26	... 16. 175	—	31	... 14. 244	—	12	... 12. 380
—	26	... 16. 186	—	31	... 15. 51	—	12	... 20. 61
—	26, 27	... 12. 490	—	31	... 16. 87	—	12	... 21. 25
—	26, 27	... 21. 66	—	31	... 16. 134	—	13	... 12. 5
—	27	... 2. 416	—	31	... 16. 162	—	13	... 13. 236
—	27	... 11. 277	—	31	... 17. 308	—	13	... 15. 484
—	27	... 12. 398	—	31	... 18. 101	—	13	... 19. 159
—	27	... 14. 177	—	31-33	... 2. 97	—	13	... 21. 27
—	27	... 16. 75	—	32	... 19. 355	—	21	... 7. 326
10.	2	... 15. 5	—	33	... 19. 445	—	25	... 11. 35
—	2, 5	... 21. 316	11.	1	... 20. 114	—	25-27	... 7. 282
—	4, 5	... 15. 18	—	3	... 19. 466	—	26	... 17. 103
—	8	... 18. 44	—	10	... 16. 138	—	31	... 5. 50

I Corinthians.			I Corinthians.			I Corinthians.		
chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page
13.	1	... 13. 449	15.	10	... 22. 44	15.	58	... 15. 78
—	1, 2	... 9. 233	—	19	... 2. 363	—	58	... 15. 143
—	1, 2	... 12. 3	—	19	... 9. 361	—	58	... 16. 203
—	1-3	... 8. 484	—	19	... 12. 152	—	58	... 17. 72
—	1-3	... 18. 142	—	19	... 18. 132	—	58	... 20. 101
—	1-3	... 20. 319	—	19	... 18. 290	—	58	... 20. 152
—	1-3	... 21. 95	—	19	... 20. 210	—	58	... 20. 309
—	1-3	... 21. 140	—	20	... 2. 445	—	58	... 22. 12
—	3	... 4. 81	—	20	... 19. 81	16.	13	... 17. 256
—	3	... 16. 385	—	20	... 19. 82	—	13	... 18. 24
—	3	... 16. 485	—	21	... 22. 128	—	22	... 10. 89
—	3	... 21. 117	—	22	... 3. 329	—	22	... 13. 178
—	4	... 2. 281	—	24	... 10. 207	—	22	... 20. 239
—	5	... 4. 273	—	24	... 16. 230	—	23	... 19. 158
—	5	... 19. 119	—	24, 25	... 12. 297			
—	6	... 19. 207	—	24-28	... 5. 216			
—	6	... 21. 101	—	24-28	... 16. 225	1.	2	... 13. 107
—	6, 7	... 4. 73	—	27	... 18. 14	—	3	... 9. 160
—	7	... 4. 315	—	28	... 15. 132	—	3	... 14. 156
—	11	... 14. 428	—	28	... 16. 196	—	4	... 3. 167
—	12	... 12. 175	—	29	... 20. 174	—	4	... 7. 287
—	12	... 13. 409	—	32	... 5. 146	—	4	... 18. 389
—	12	... 18. 209	—	32, 33	... 19. 74	—	4	... 20. 57
—	12	... 20. 65	—	33	... 19. 193	—	5	... 12. 142
—	12	... 20. 193	—	33	... 21. 33	—	5	... 15. 130
—	12	... 20. 462	—	40-44	... 2. 465	—	5	... 18. 55
—	13	... 12. 200	—	41	... 13. 416	—	5	... 18. 178
—	13	... 14. 102	—	42	... 20. 171	—	5	... 20. 190
—	13	... 18. 138	—	42-44	... 20. 65	—	5	... 20. 201
—	13	... 21. 70	—	45	... 7. 178	—	7	... 12. 207
—	13	... 21. 221	—	49	... 11. 185	—	9	... 8. 117
14.	15	... 19. 409	—	49	... 19. 178	—	9	... 9. 98
—	16	... 19. 418	—	49	... 20. 463	—	9	... 17. 182
—	18	... 13. 414	—	50	... 12. 170	—	9	... 21. 459
—	20	... 20. 382	—	50	... 12. 469	—	9, 10	... 14. 376
—	22	... 14. 481	—	50	... 20. 168	—	9, 10	... 15. 14
—	24, 25	... 18. 170	—	51	... 10. 35	—	10	... 7. 53
—	25	... 14. 132	—	53	... 12. 468	—	10	... 12. 406
—	31	... 7. 307	—	55	... 13. 489	—	10	... 12. 416
—	33	... 13. 424	—	55-57	... 12. 26	—	10	... 15. 92
—	34	... 19. 438	—	55-57	... 19. 43	—	10	... 18. 66
—	35	... 19. 472	—	56	... 17. 316	—	11	... 17. 104
—	40	... 4. 385	—	56	... 19. 69	—	11	... 19. 422
—	40	... 15. 346	—	56	... 20. 197	—	12	... 13. 44
15.	3	... 22. 37	—	56, 57	... 12. 173	—	12	... 13. 102
—	8	... 7. 137	—	56, 57	... 12. 450	—	12	... 13. 278
—	9	... 19. 253	—	58	... 12. 17	—	12	... 13. 385
—	10	... 12. 12	—	58	... 12. 440	—	12	... 16. 352
—	10	... 12. 230	—	58	... 12. 475	—	12	... 18. 368
—	10	... 15. 225	—	58	... 12. 494	—	12	... 18. 413
—	10	... 16. 422	—	58	... 13. 90	—	12	... 18. 472
—	10	... 20. 140	—	58	... 13. 370	—	12	... 19. 276

2 Corinthians.				2 Corinthians.				2 Corinthians.			
chap.	ver.	vol.	page	chap.	ver.	vol.	page	chap.	ver.	vol.	page
1.	12	...	19. 292	3.	17, 18	...	20. 86	4.	6	...	17. 84
—	12	...	20. 77	—	18	...	1. 349	—	6	...	19. 337
—	12	...	20. 87	—	18	...	1. 429	—	6	...	19. 424
—	12	...	20. 140	—	18	...	10. 485	—	6	...	20. 95
—	12	...	21. 36	—	18	...	11. 108	—	6	...	20. 287
—	12	...	21. 156	—	18	...	13. 230	—	6	...	21. 302
—	12	...	21. 174	—	18	...	13. 235	—	6	...	22. 97
—	12	...	21. 384	—	18	...	15. 483	—	7	...	12. 140
—	13, 14	...	19. 214	—	18	...	18. 130	—	7	...	12. 393
—	17	...	13. 132	—	18	...	18. 325	—	7	...	14. 467
—	20	...	2. 143	—	18	...	19. 172	—	8	...	12. 140
—	20	...	6. 400	—	18	...	19. 406	—	8, 9	...	12. 394
—	20	...	12. 415	—	18	...	20. 24	—	13	...	12. 392
—	20	...	13. 124	—	18	...	20. 66	—	13	...	12. 412
—	20	...	13. 366	—	18	...	20. 193	—	13	...	15. 169
—	20	...	14. 302	—	18	...	20. 463	—	13	...	18. 255
—	20, 21	...	12. 494	—	18	...	20. 486	—	13	...	20. 328
—	21	...	22. 96	—	18	...	21. 11	—	13	...	22. 73
—	21, 22	...	22. 102	—	18	...	21. 294	—	13, 14	...	12. 17
—	22	...	12. 6	—	18	...	21. 303	—	13, 14	...	12. 443
—	22	...	12. 315	—	18	...	22. 77	—	16	...	6. 269
—	22	...	13. 359	4.	2	...	7. 466	—	16	...	12. 269
—	22	...	14. 167	—	2	...	10. 479	—	16	...	13. 19
—	22	...	15. 79	—	2	...	13. 107	—	16	...	13. 28
—	22	...	15. 84	—	2	...	17. 356	—	16	...	13. 335
—	22	...	17. 477	—	2	...	21. 256	—	16	...	15. 129
—	22	...	19. 144	—	2-4	...	9. 120	—	16	...	15. 132
—	22	...	19. 488	—	2-4	...	12. 435	—	16	...	15. 199
2.	4	...	19. 118	—	2-4	...	15. 383	—	16	...	16. 356
—	7	...	13. 456	—	3, 4	...	12. 219	—	16	...	17. 100
—	11	...	20. 90	—	3, 4	...	13. 372	—	16	...	17. 106
—	12	...	11. 488	—	3, 4	...	20. 58	—	16	...	18. 324
—	12	...	18. 112	—	4	...	1. 100	—	16	...	19. 68
—	14	...	13. 112	—	4	...	3. 423	—	16	...	20. 190
—	17	...	13. 291	—	4	...	10. 123	—	16	...	20. 412
3.	1, 2	...	4. 153	—	4	...	13. 347	—	16, 17	...	12. 231
—	1-3	...	13. 103	—	4	...	15. 83	—	16-18	...	13. 237
—	3	...	11. 410	—	4	...	16. 420	—	16, 18	...	13. 364
—	3	...	11. 487	—	4	...	17. 67	—	16-18	...	15. 76
—	3	...	13. 292	—	4	...	17. 141	—	16-18	...	18. 302
—	3	...	17. 212	—	4	...	18. 32	—	16-18	...	19. 400
—	3	...	19. 323	—	4	...	18. 424	—	17	...	6. 228
—	3	...	22. 97	—	4	...	19. 172	—	17	...	12. 143
—	3, 18	...	14. 210	—	4	...	19. 246	—	17	...	12. 201
—	5	...	13. 247	—	4	...	19. 397	—	17	...	12. 263
—	5	...	13. 472	—	4	...	20. 453	—	17	...	13. 85
—	6	...	16. 52	—	4	...	21. 330	—	17	...	13. 134
—	6	...	21. 297	—	4	...	21. 334	—	17	...	14. 159
—	8	...	11. 278	—	6	...	6. 342	—	17	...	15. 128
—	8	...	12. 304	—	6	...	8. 336	—	17	...	15. 143
—	8	...	22. 103	—	6	...	12. 118	—	17	...	16. 179
—	9	...	12. 104	—	6	...	13. 432	—	17	...	16. 289

2 Corinthians.			2 Corinthians.			2 Corinthians.		
chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page
4.	17	... 16. 357	5.	5	... 12. 124	5.	14, 15	... 20. 341
—	17	... 17. 121	—	5	... 16. 202	—	14, 15	... 21. 70
—	17	... 18. 458	—	5	... 18. 222	—	14, 15	... 21. 138
—	17	... 19. 128	—	5	... 20. 155	—	15	... 5. 12
—	17	... 19. 147	—	5	... 21. 19	—	15	... 18. 145
—	17	... 20. 71	—	6	... 14. 254	—	16	... 17. 176
—	17	... 20. 103	—	6, 8	... 18. 138	—	16, 17	... 20. 8
—	17	... 20. 153	—	7	... 12. 196	—	17	... 11. 173
—	17	... 20. 276	—	7	... 13. 355	—	17	... 19. 254
—	17	... 20. 371	—	7	... 14. 72	—	17	... 20. 6
—	17	... 22. 76	—	7	... 15. 76	—	17	... 20. 78
—	17, 18	... 18. 220	—	7	... 19. 100	—	17	... 20. 451
—	18	... 1. 311	—	8	... 12. 157	—	17	... 21. 24
—	18	... 10. 385	—	8	... 16. 183	—	17	... 21. 225
—	18	... 12. 154	—	8	... 19. 102	—	17	... 21. 304
—	18	... 13. 20	—	8	... 19. 229	—	17, 18	... 17. 380
—	18	... 13. 36	—	8	... 20. 152	—	18	... 2. 389
—	18	... 13. 460	—	9	... 7. 467	—	18	... 19. 406
—	18	... 14. 270	—	9	... 10. 265	—	18	... 21. 232
—	18	... 14. 295	—	9	... 15. 82	—	18-20	... 18. 4
—	18	... 14. 468	—	9	... 15. 406	—	19	... 2. 156
—	18	... 15. 134	—	9	... 17. 449	—	19	... 5. 68
—	18	... 17. 120	—	9	... 18. 416	—	19	... 13. 142
—	18	... 17. 143	—	9	... 19. 290	—	20	... 8. 374
—	18	... 18. 274	—	9	... 20. 77	—	20	... 10. 484
—	18	... 20. 99	—	9	... 20. 99	—	20	... 15. 59
—	18	... 20. 135	—	9	... 21. 42	—	21	... 3. 265
—	18	... 20. 295	—	9	... 21. 163	—	21	... 13. 181
—	18	... 21. 485	—	9	... 21. 204	—	21	... 13. 479
—	18	... 22. 80	—	9, 10	... 20. 25	—	21	... 13. 487
5.	1	... 12. 15	—	10	... 3. 11	—	21	... 15. 431
—	1	... 12. 195	—	10	... 14. 81	—	21	... 15. 495
—	1	... 12. 205	—	10	... 14. 187	—	21	... 16. 253
—	1	... 12. 221	—	10	... 20. 173	—	21	... 19. 181
—	1	... 14. 266	—	11	... 2. 365	—	21	... 21. 41
—	1	... 15. 80	—	11	... 13. 451	6.	1	... 16. 44
—	1	... 18. 183	—	11	... 13. 458	—	1	... 16. 167
—	1	... 19. 370	—	11	... 13. 459	—	1	... 19. 163
—	1	... 20. 22	—	11	... 19. 229	—	1	... 21. 328
—	1	... 20. 32	—	13	... 19. 207	—	1, 2	... 17. 208
—	1	... 20. 176	—	14	... 11. 250	—	2	... 16. 61
—	1	... 20. 230	—	14	... 15. 401	—	3	... 5. 404
—	1, 2	... 20. 178	—	14	... 17. 375	—	4-6	... 13. 100
—	1, 2	... 20. 191	—	14	... 20. 389	—	6	... 19. 409
—	2	... 12. 199	—	14, 15	... 12. 68	—	7	... 12. 61
—	2	... 19. 75	—	14, 15	... 13. 36	—	7	... 13. 333
—	2	... 20. 163	—	14, 15	... 13. 274	—	8	... 13. 207
—	3	... 9. 290	—	14, 15	... 15. 433	—	8	... 20. 456
—	3	... 16. 20	—	14, 15	... 16. 289	—	8-10	... 15. 132
—	3-5	... 15. 80	—	14, 15	... 17. 449	—	10	... 15. 55
—	5	... 12. 6	—	14, 15	... 19. 184	—	10	... 17. 93
—	5	... 12. 16	—	14, 15	... 19. 164	—	10	... 17. 393

2 Corinthians.			2 Corinthians.			2 Corinthians.		
chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page
6.	10	... 17. 472	9.	6	... 13. 80	13.	4	... 21. 81
—	10	... 18. 171	—	8	... 2. 406	—	5	... 4. 247
—	10	... 18. 449	—	8, 9	... 15. 90	—	5	... 11. 28
—	11	... 19. 159	—	13	... 19. 159	—	5	... 12. 321
—	11-13	... 12. 409	10.	4	... 11. 47	—	5	... 14. 8
—	11-13	... 13. 143	—	4	... 15. 20	—	5	... 14. 109
—	14	... 19. 310	—	4	... 18. 25	—	5	... 14. 483
—	15	... 15. 452	—	4	... 18. 29	—	5	... 16. 217
—	16	... 15. 491	—	4, 5	... 18. 18	—	5	... 20. 92
—	17	... 18. 38	—	5	... 1. 397	—	5	... 21. 164
—	18	... 1. 45	—	5	... 8. 329	—	5	... 21. 314
—	18	... 13. 43	—	5	... 14. 366	—	9	... 20. 75
—	18	... 18. 265	—	5	... 15. 156	—	14	... 19. 156
—	21	... 13. 305	—	5	... 15. 215	14.	7	... 13. 287
—	21	... 20. 18	—	5	... 17. 277	15.	29	... 10. 318
7.	1	... 4. 313	—	6	... 13. 348	—	32	... 1. 470
—	1	... 13. 7	11.	2	... 16. 237			
—	1	... 13. 471	—	2	... 19. 489			
—	1	... 15. 73	—	3	... 5. 123			
—	4	... 17. 5	—	10	... 15. 103			
—	10	... 11. 192	—	12	... 5. 401			
—	10	... 12. 88	—	13-15	... 13. 101			
—	10	... 17. 22	—	14	... 1. 236			
—	10	... 17. 482	—	24-28	... 4. 26			
—	10	... 21. 264	—	26	... 12. 375			
8.	3	... 19. 435	—	27	... 5. 275			
—	5	... 19. 459	12.	2	... 20. 190			
—	5	... 21. 215	—	2, 3	... 13. 28			
—	7	... 21. 152	—	7	... 16. 96			
—	8, 9	... 19. 263	—	7	... 17. 238			
—	9	... 3. 231	—	7	... 17. 297			
—	9	... 14. 439	—	7	... 17. 402			
—	9	... 15. 187	—	7-9	... 4. 451			
—	9	... 15. 291	—	8	... 17. 292			
—	9	... 16. 489	—	8, 9	... 6. 250			
—	9	... 17. 28	—	9	... 1. 205			
—	9	... 18. 128	—	9	... 11. 489			
—	9	... 18. 130	—	9	... 12. 250			
—	9	... 19. 158	—	9	... 12. 332			
—	9	... 20. 18	—	9	... 17. 401			
—	9	... 21. 141	—	9	... 18. 25			
—	9	... 21. 151	—	9	... 18. 58			
—	9	... 21. 216	—	9, 10	... 12. 225			
—	12	... 13. 470	—	10	... 14. 470			
—	12	... 18. 119	—	10	... 13. 470			
—	12	... 22. 88	—	10	... 15. 63			
—	21	... 13. 378	—	10	... 15. 252			
—	21	... 13. 385	—	10	... 17. 70			
9.	2	... 16. 279	—	14	... 18. 195			
—	2	... 20. 113	—	15	... 13. 143			
—	2	... 21. 106	—	20	... 2. 275			
—	2-4	... 22. 43	13.	4	... 17. 249			

Galatians.

1.	4	... 12. 393
—	4	... 15. 117
—	4	... 15. 120
—	4	... 16. 243
—	4	... 17. 143
—	4	... 19. 47
—	4	... 20. 128
—	8	... 3. 74
—	10	... 3. 234
—	10	... 12. 343
—	10	... 13. 43
—	10	... 14. 59
—	12-14	... 8. 467
—	15	... 12. 296
—	15, 16	... 14. 83
—	16	... 17. 209
2.	9	... 11. 421
—	11	... 5. 116
—	11	... 19. 113
—	11	... 19. 119
—	13	... 8. 313
—	13	... 19. 239
—	17	... 18. 356
—	17, 18	... 11. 159
—	17, 18	... 20. 388
—	18	... 8. 309
—	19	... 2. 51
—	19	... 4. 339
—	19	... 7. 278
—	29	... 13. 78
—	19	... 13. 199
—	19	... 13. 211
—	19	... 16. 87
—	19	... 18. 168

Galatians.				Galatians.				Galatians.			
chap.	ver.	vol.	page	chap.	ver.	vol.	page	chap.	ver.	vol.	page
2.	20	...	7. 433	3.	18	...	13. 492	5.	6	...	19. 270
—	20	...	11. 240	—	21, 22	...	21. 37	—	6	...	20. 76
—	20	...	12. 62	—	22	...	6. 326	—	7	...	13. 160
—	20	...	12. 151	—	23	...	13. 170	—	7	...	15. 307
—	20	...	12. 346	—	26	...	12. 123	—	9	...	14. 80
—	20	...	13. 20	—	27	...	20. 33	—	11	...	20. 123
—	20	...	13. 154	4.	1	...	3. 442	—	13	...	19. 433
—	20	...	13. 192	—	3	...	19. 495	—	14	...	15. 288
—	20	...	13. 200	—	4	...	17. 243	—	14	...	21. 84
—	20	...	13. 207	—	4, 5	...	1. 45	—	14	...	21. 94
—	20	...	13. 358	—	4, 5	...	10. 463	—	15	...	5. 399
—	20	...	13. 469	—	4, 5	...	12. 342	—	15	...	18. 41
—	20	...	13. 479	—	4, 5	...	19. 181	—	16	...	13. 375
—	20	...	14. 276	—	4, 5	...	20. 491	—	16	...	16. 101
—	20	...	15. 224	—	4-6	...	19. 8	—	16	...	20. 6
—	20	...	15. 407	—	5	...	21. 136	—	16	...	21. 325
—	20	...	16. 68	—	5	...	21. 156	—	16, 17	...	9. 341
—	20,	...	16. 246	—	6	...	12. 7	—	16, 17	...	21. 235
—	20	...	19. 450	—	6	...	12. 75	—	17	...	9. 303
—	20	...	20. 34	—	6	...	12. 98	—	17	...	12. 38
—	20	...	20. 53	—	6	...	12. 137	—	17	...	13. 105
—	20	...	20. 179	—	6	...	12. 234	—	17	...	13. 195
—	20	...	21. 26	—	6	...	12. 281	—	17	...	15. 73
—	21	...	20. 122	—	6	...	13. 303	—	17	...	15. 228
3.	1	...	13. 16	—	6	...	18. 268	—	17	...	15. 417
—	1	...	14. 478	—	6	...	20. 77	—	17	...	16. 97
—	1	...	15. 431	—	6	...	20. 433	—	17	...	16. 108
—	1	...	17. 289	—	6	...	21. 126	—	17	...	16. 259
—	2	...	7. 437	—	8	...	16. 280	—	17	...	17. 321
—	2	...	16. 57	—	16	...	21. 187	—	17	...	18. 110
—	2	...	22. 112	—	19	...	20. 397	—	17	...	19. 101
—	3	...	11. 179	—	27	...	5. 431	—	17	...	19. 399
—	3, 4	...	22. 46	—	29	...	2. 105	—	17	...	20. 288
—	4	...	16. 21	—	29	...	5. 269	—	17	...	21. 67
—	4	...	19. 155	—	29	...	14. 194	—	17	...	21. 382
—	4	...	20. 109	—	29	...	19. 354	—	17, 18	...	12. 104
—	10	...	6. 200	5.	1	...	6. 306	—	18	...	20. 29
—	10	...	16. 441	—	1	...	18. 36	—	19	...	11. 464
—	10	...	17. 73	—	1	...	20. 63	—	19	...	16. 92
—	10	...	18. 347	—	2	...	13. 492	—	19	...	16. 391
—	10	...	20. 46	—	2, 3	...	16. 443	—	19	...	21. 76
—	10	...	21. 357	—	5	...	12. 219	—	19, 20	...	12. 66
—	10, 12	...	16. 438	—	6	...	5. 344	—	19-21	...	21. 30
—	11	...	15. 56	—	6	...	13. 154	—	19-21	...	21. 346
—	13	...	13. 181	—	6	...	13. 227	—	20	...	5. 327
—	13	...	16. 201	—	6	...	13. 468	—	21	...	19. 219
—	13, 14	...	13. 310	—	6	...	14. 94	—	21	...	19. 397
—	13, 14	...	18. 128	—	6	...	14. 227	—	21	...	21. 131
—	13, 14	...	20. 59	—	6	...	16. 263	—	22	...	15. 227
—	13	...	21. 16	—	6	...	17. 108	—	22	...	18. 100
—	13, 14	...	22. 99	—	6	...	18. 143	—	22, 23	...	12. 101
—	18	...	9. 94	—	6	...	18. 407	—	24	...	2. 34

Galatians.				Galatians.				Ephesians.			
chap.	ver.	vol.	page	chap.	ver.	vol.	page	chap.	ver.	vol.	page
5.	24	...	11. 163	6.	15	...	13. 227	1.	10	...	20. 182
—	24	...	11. 272	—	15	...	13. 234	—	11	...	5. 369
—	24	...	12. 42	—	15	...	22. 90	—	11	...	12. 312
—	24	...	12. 68	—	16	...	12. 35	—	11, 12	...	21. 214
—	24	...	15. 13	—	16	...	12. 464	—	12	...	19. 365
—	24	...	16. 102	—	16	...	13. 80	—	12	...	20. 118
—	24	...	18. 313	—	16	...	18. 344	—	12	...	22. 43
—	24	...	19. 215	—	16	...	19. 295	—	13	...	2. 297
—	24	...	19. 252	—	16	...	19. 348	—	13	...	2. 364
—	25	...	12. 74	—	16	...	21. 78	—	13	...	12. 320
—	25	...	13. 235	—	16	...	21. 191	—	13	...	13. 478
—	25	...	21. 292					—	13	...	20. 49
—	25	...	21. 318					—	13	...	21. 42
—	26	...	15. 284					—	13, 14	...	19. 144
6.	1	...	1. 215	1.	2	...	16. 247	—	13, 14	...	20. 77
—	1	...	15. 263	—	3	...	3. 108	—	13, 14	...	21. 85
—	1	...	17. 399	—	3	...	8. 448	—	13, 14	...	21. 155
—	1	...	19. 269	—	3	...	13. 5	—	14	...	1. 473
—	1	...	19. 344	—	3	...	17. 100	—	14	...	12. 23
—	1	...	20. 395	—	3	...	17. 386	—	14	...	12. 175
—	3	...	16. 454	—	3	...	18. 334	—	14	...	14. 292
—	7	...	12. 246	—	3	...	19. 487	—	14	...	17. 216
—	7	...	16. 18	—	4	...	12. 296	—	14	...	20. 66
—	7	...	19. 220	—	4	...	12. 318	—	14	...	20. 160
—	8	...	11. 440	—	4, 5	...	12. 97	—	14	...	21. 26
—	8	...	12. 16	—	5	...	12. 123	—	15	...	12. 306
—	8	...	12. 22	—	6	...	12. 413	—	15	...	21. 87
—	8	...	12. 100	—	6	...	13. 258	—	17	...	18. 221
—	8	...	14. 188	—	6	...	14. 104	—	17	...	19. 246
—	8	...	17. 35	—	6	...	15. 147	—	17, 18	...	12. 100
—	8	...	20. 67	—	6	...	15. 281	—	17, 18	...	12. 192
—	8	...	21. 335	—	6	...	16. 45	—	17, 18	...	12. 242
—	9	...	12. 228	—	6	...	16. 47	—	17, 18	...	12. 444
—	9	...	17. 109	—	6	...	16. 88	—	17, 18	...	13. 372
—	10	...	15. 400	—	6	...	17. 76	—	17, 18	...	15. 224
—	10	...	16. 277	—	6	...	18. 76	—	17, 18	...	18. 151
—	10	...	19. 261	—	6	...	19. 162	—	17, 18	...	18. 374
—	10	...	19. 374	—	6	...	20. 32	—	17, 18	...	20. 9
—	10	...	21. 148	—	6	...	20. 347	—	17, 18	...	20. 85
—	10	...	21. 148	—	6, 12	...	12. 300	—	17, 18	...	20. 150
—	12	...	1. 211	—	7	...	12. 189	—	17, 18	...	21. 236
—	12	...	20. 123	—	7	...	12. 367	—	17, 18	...	21. 401
—	12	...	22. 91	—	7	...	13. 275	—	17, 18	...	22. 78
—	14	...	12. 195	—	7	...	15. 363	—	17, 18	...	22. 97
—	14	...	14. 318	—	7	...	15. 444	—	18	...	1. 140
—	14	...	14. 333	—	7	...	15. 448	—	18	...	12. 134
—	14	...	18. 482	—	7	...	20. 268	—	18	...	12. 207
—	14	...	19. 41	—	7	...	21. 136	—	18	...	15. 76
—	14	...	20. 51	—	9	...	12. 294	—	18, 19	...	12. 19
—	14	...	20. 129	—	10	...	1. 335	—	18	...	17. 79
—	14	...	20. 130	—	10	...	3. 328	—	19	...	17. 80
—	14	...	20. 140	—	10	...	10. 324	—	19	...	21. 162

Ephesians.				Ephesians.				Ephesians.			
chap.	ver.	vol.	page	chap.	ver.	vol.	page	chap.	ver.	vol.	page
1.	19, 20	...	11. 176	2.	10	...	6. 362	3.	18, 19	...	12. 347
—	19, 20	...	13. 205	—	10	...	8. 192	—	18, 19	...	17. 331
—	19, 20	...	20. 57	—	10	...	12. 479	—	19	...	2. 36
—	20, 21	...	12. 371	—	10	...	13. 128	—	20	...	1. 249
—	20, 21	...	22. 75	—	10	...	13. 235	—	20	...	4. 62
—	21	...	12. 136	—	10	...	13. 238	—	20	...	14. 374
—	21	...	12. 411	—	10	...	13. 396	—	20	...	15. 146
—	22	...	19. 452	—	10	...	14. 62	—	20	...	17. 88
—	22	...	20. 240	—	10	...	16. 280	—	20	...	21. 199
—	22, 23	...	19. 451	—	10	...	17. 64	—	21	...	18. 48
—	23	...	10. 320	—	10	...	19. 261	4.	1	...	12. 293
—	23	...	11. 30	—	10	...	20. 320	—	1	...	20. 96
2.	1	...	2. 390	—	13	...	22. 120	—	2	...	6. 301
—	1	...	15. 23	—	16	...	13. 255	—	3	...	2. 78
—	1	...	22. 17	—	18	...	12. 235	—	4-6	...	5. 94
—	1-3	...	17. 252	—	18	...	14. 161	—	6	...	19. 319
—	2	...	12. 20	—	18	...	15. 298	—	7	...	16. 376
—	2	...	13. 446	—	18	...	16. 360	—	7	...	19. 449
—	2	...	18. 169	—	19	...	20. 148	—	7	...	20. 323
—	2	...	19. 231	—	20	...	13. 282	—	8	...	3. 349
—	2	...	19. 238	—	20	...	17. 420	—	8	...	17. 244
—	2	...	19. 309	—	22	...	13. 425	—	8	...	18. 205
—	2	...	19. 402	—	23	...	11. 439	—	10	...	20. 158
—	2	...	20. 247	3.	2	...	13. 488	—	11	...	1. 459
—	2	...	21. 52	—	4-6	...	15. 477	—	11	...	10. 478
—	2	...	21. 55	—	7	...	13. 166	—	11	...	13. 282
—	2, 3	...	2. 103	—	8	...	20. 92	—	11	...	17. 355
—	2, 3	...	9. 302	—	10	...	5. 107	—	13	...	2. 63
—	2, 3	...	11. 452	—	10	...	7. 469	—	16	...	14. 399
—	2, 3	...	21. 282	—	10	...	14. 76	—	17, 18	...	13. 351
—	2, 3	...	21. 322	—	10	...	14. 131	—	18	...	2. 391
—	3	...	11. 109	—	10	...	15. 215	—	18	...	9. 105
—	3	...	16. 100	—	10	...	17. 334	—	18	...	13. 199
—	3	...	17. 73	—	10	...	17. 498	—	18	...	13. 235
—	4	...	16. 45	—	10	...	18. 207	—	18	...	17. 192
—	4, 5	...	3. 150	—	10	...	21. 32	—	18	...	19. 247
—	4, 5	...	11. 278	—	12	...	12. 174	—	18, 19	...	13. 200
—	4, 5	...	12. 405	—	12	...	12. 490	—	19	...	5. 271
—	5	...	16. 291	—	12	...	13. 438	—	19	...	19. 192
—	5	...	20. 60	—	12	...	13. 471	—	19	...	19. 210
—	6	...	13. 329	—	12	...	20. 185	—	19	...	21. 14
—	6	...	20. 149	—	12	...	21. 185	—	20, 21	...	7. 185
—	8	...	2. 153	—	15	...	7. 69	—	21, 22	...	21. 32
—	8	...	13. 244	—	15	...	19. 144	—	22	...	6. 277
—	8	...	14. 103	—	16	...	12. 76	—	22	...	19. 287
—	8	...	16. 40	—	16	...	17. 80	—	22	...	20. 14
—	8	...	16. 41	—	16	...	21. 302	—	22	...	21. 379
—	8	...	17. 136	—	17	...	14. 105	—	22, 23	...	15. 243
—	8	...	18. 161	—	17, 18	...	13. 148	—	22-24	...	2. 214
—	8	...	19. 158	—	17-19	...	19. 84	—	22, 24	...	11. 191
—	8	...	20. 345	—	18	...	19. 493	—	22-24	...	16. 71
—	8	...	20. 350	—	18, 19	...	12. 75	—	22, 24	...	20. 331

Ephesians.				Ephesians.				Ephesians.			
chap.	ver.	vol.	page	chap.	ver.	vol.	page	chap.	ver.	vol.	page
4.	22-24	...	21. 310	5.	9	...	18. 100	6.	10	...	16. 161
—	24	...	8. 284	—	9	...	19. 401	—	10	...	19. 428
—	24	...	12. 467	—	9	...	21. 235	—	10	...	20. 423
—	24	...	16. 150	—	11	...	8. 181	—	11	...	13. 375
—	24	...	17. 447	—	11	...	14. 40	—	11, 12	...	1. 219
—	24	...	19. 171	—	11	...	19. 115	—	12	...	1. 99
—	24	...	19. 270	—	11	...	19. 288	—	12	...	1. 234
—	24	...	21. 33	—	12	...	15. 376	—	12	...	3. 67
—	24	...	21. 380	—	14	...	10. 418	—	12	...	8. 167
—	24, 25	...	11. 407	—	14	...	19. 338	—	12	...	11. 289
—	24, 25	...	18. 97	—	15	...	8. 18	—	12	...	12. 394
—	26	...	4. 142	—	15	...	13. 119	—	12	...	13. 334
—	26	...	21. 269	—	16	...	5. 306	—	12	...	17. 76
—	27	...	1. 329	—	16	...	22. 4	—	12	...	17. 186
—	27	...	4. 365	—	17	...	15. 248	—	13	...	3. 125
—	27	...	17. 260	—	17	...	17. 439	—	14	...	18. 97
—	28	...	14. 234	—	18, 19	...	7. 73	—	15	...	9. 215
—	28	...	14. 258	—	19	...	16. 161	—	15	...	17. 123
—	28	...	15. 270	—	20	...	19. 200	—	15	...	20. 73
—	28	...	16. 145	—	21	...	2. 373	—	16	...	15. 104
—	28	...	18. 195	—	25, 26	...	18. 128	—	16	...	17. 457
—	28	...	20. 145	—	25, 26	...	19. 42	—	17	...	17. 132
—	29	...	2. 228	—	25-27	...	13. 185	—	18	...	1. 220
—	29	...	9. 257	—	25-27	...	15. 67	—	18	...	16. 160
—	29	...	18. 98	—	25-27	...	19. 195	—	18	...	17. 495
—	29	...	19. 193	—	25-27	...	20. 482	—	20	...	4. 427
—	30	...	16. 269	—	26	...	13. 147	—	20	...	13. 290
—	30	...	17. 237	—	26	...	15. 71	—	24	...	12. 284
—	30	...	19. 344	—	26	...	15. 74				
—	30	...	20. 54	—	26	...	16. 262				
—	31	...	4. 304	—	26	...	19. 88				
—	31	...	9. 256	—	26	...	20. 305				
—	32	...	15. 448	—	26	...	22. 50				
—	32	...	19. 20	—	27	...	2. 462				
—	32	...	19. 169	—	27	...	5. 364				
—	32	...	21. 93	—	27	...	10. 296				
5.	2	...	5. 95	—	27	...	11. 204				
—	2	...	8. 110	—	27	...	20. 193				
—	2	...	15. 289	—	29	...	12. 37				
—	2	...	18. 79	—	29	...	15. 259				
—	2	...	20. 128	—	33	...	19. 438				
—	2	...	21. 139	6.	...	...	16. 87				
—	2, 25	...	19. 83	—	3	...	7. 182				
—	4	...	4. 294	—	4	...	18. 91				
—	4	...	9. 258	—	4	...	19. 384				
—	4	...	18. 457	—	4	...	21. 287				
—	4	...	19. 118	—	5	...	19. 437				
—	5	...	12. 169	—	5-6	...	9. 242				
—	5	...	21. 343	—	8	...	14. 164				
—	8	...	8. 294	—	8	...	15. 401				
—	8	...	13. 347	—	8	...	16. 374				
—	8	...	18. 57	—	10	...	14. 372				

Philippians.

1.	6	...	10. 305
—	6	...	11. 209
—	6	...	12. 402
—	6	...	12. 485
—	6	...	12. 488
—	6	...	17. 105
—	6	...	20. 286
—	7	...	17. 95
—	9	...	13. 350
—	9	...	17. 109
—	9	...	20. 25
—	9	...	20. 53
—	9	...	20. 407
—	9	...	22. 98
—	9, 10	...	7. 208
—	10	...	19. 289
—	10, 11	...	21. 386
—	11	...	13. 129
—	11	...	19. 274
—	11	...	20. 28
—	11	...	20. 115
—	11	...	20. 346

Philippians.				Philippians.				Philippians.			
chap.	ver.	vol.	page	chap.	ver.	vol.	page	chap.	ver.	vol.	page
I.	15	...	13. 37	2.	9, 10	...	14. 152	3.	7-9	...	14. 112
—	15	...	13. 447	—	9, 10	...	16. 402	—	7-10	...	12. 270
—	19	...	17. 101	—	10	...	5. 212	—	7-10	...	13. 157
—	19	...	19. 403	—	10	...	15. 108	—	7-21	...	20. 3
—	20	...	6. 161	—	10	...	18. 105	—	8	...	11. 148
—	20	...	12. 208	—	10	...	19. 460	—	8	...	14. 463
—	20	...	13. 39	—	10	...	20. 29	—	8	...	15. 39
—	20	...	18. 131	—	10	...	22. 76	—	8	...	15. 208
—	20, 21	...	20. 20	—	11	...	19. 214	—	8	...	15. 362
—	21	...	12. 392	—	12	...	8. 193	—	8	...	18. 83
—	21	...	15. 282	—	12	...	16. 340	—	8	...	19. 250
—	21	...	20. 38	—	12	...	18. 412	—	8	...	20. 139
—	21, 24	...	10. 391	—	12	...	20. 101	—	8, 9	...	12. 18
—	23	...	2. 446	—	12	...	20. 135	—	8, 9	...	17. 115
—	23	...	9. 295	—	12	...	21. 77	—	8, 9	...	20. 405
—	23	...	11. 94	—	12, 13	...	13. 248	—	8-10	...	20. 104
—	23	...	12. 195	—	12, 13	...	18. 187	—	9	...	13. 478
—	23	...	12. 456	—	13	...	1. 230	—	9	...	14. 217
—	23	...	13. 29	—	13	...	2. 390	—	9	...	15. 106
—	23	...	15. 195	—	13	...	2. 404	—	9	...	15. 206
—	23	...	16. 328	—	13	...	13. 245	—	9	...	18. 217
—	23	...	18. 138	—	13	...	15. 253	—	9	...	18. 258
—	23	...	20. 184	—	13	...	17. 80	—	9	...	21. 158
—	23	...	20. 191	—	13	...	17. 373	—	10	...	12. 303
—	23	...	20. 230	—	15	...	16. 144	—	10	...	13. 208
—	23	...	22. 79	—	17	...	5. 97	—	10	...	13. 230
—	23, 24	...	13. 359	—	15	...	19. 170	—	10	...	15. 209
—	24	...	12. 458	—	15	...	19. 321	—	10	...	17. 7
—	27	...	8. 469	—	15, 16	...	6. 312	—	10	...	20. 407
—	27	...	16. 16	—	15, 16	...	19. 308	—	10, 11	...	11. 182
—	28	...	19. 140	—	15, 16	...	20. 112	—	11	...	1. 148
—	29	...	20. 51	—	16	...	13. 235	—	11	...	20. 152
—	29	...	20. 199	—	17	...	21. 140	—	12	...	12. 293
—	29	...	20. 346	—	19	...	17. 313	—	12	...	13. 171
—	29	...	18. 250	—	21	...	13. 213	—	12	...	13. 483
2.	1, 2	...	2. 73	—	21	...	14. 410	—	12	...	19. 494
—	3	...	15. 230	—	21	...	15. 259	—	12	...	20. 33
—	4	...	21. 90	—	21	...	15. 285	—	13	...	13. 21
—	5	...	12. 304	—	21	...	16. 370	—	13	...	15. 377
—	5	...	17. 52	—	21	...	19. 185	—	13, 14	...	16. 178
—	6	...	1. 446	3.	1	...	10. 403	—	13, 14	...	19. 75
—	6	...	3. 443	—	1	...	17. 470	—	14	...	5. 89
—	6-8	...	13. 136	—	3	...	12. 103	—	14	...	13. 357
—	7	...	10. 190	—	3	...	17. 475	—	14	...	13. 460
—	7	...	15. 432	—	4-6	...	9. 89	—	14	...	14. 167
—	7	...	20. 18	—	7	...	5. 35	—	14	...	17. 71
—	7-11	...	20. 47	—	7	...	20. 109	—	14	...	19. 179
—	8	...	17. 215	—	7, 8	...	14. 113	—	14	...	22. 47
—	8	...	17. 244	—	7, 8	...	21. 10	—	15	...	14. 80
—	8-11	...	13. 311	—	7-9	...	13. 152	—	15	...	19. 351
—	9, 10	...	1. 434	—	7-9	...	13. 164	—	15, 16	...	10. 327
—	9, 10	...	3. 379	—	7-9	...	13. 490	—	15, 16	...	6. 301

Colossians.				Colossians.				1 Thessalonians.			
chap.	ver.	vol.	page	chap.	ver.	vol.	page	chap.	ver.	vol.	page
1.	24	...	20. 200	3.	3	...	11. 490	1.	3	...	12. 199
—	27	...	11. 28	—	3	...	12. 151	—	3	...	13. 145
—	27	...	13. 236	—	3	...	13. 355	—	3	...	20. 76
—	27	...	17. 138	—	3	...	14. 255	—	3	...	20. 164
—	28	...	20. 358	—	3	...	16. 227	—	3	...	21. 70
—	28, 29	...	13. 98	—	3-5	...	13. 192	—	4, 5	...	18. 355
—	29	...	20. 314	—	4	...	22. 14	—	4-7	...	20. 57
2.	2	...	18. 456	—	5	...	6. 277	—	5	...	19. 251
—	3	...	19. 449	—	5	...	15. 181	—	5	...	20. 53
—	5	...	18. 213	—	5	...	15. 235	—	5, 6	...	13. 349
—	6	...	12. 12	—	5	...	16. 122	—	5, 6	...	16. 33
—	6	...	15. 227	—	5	...	16. 134	—	5, 6	...	22. 103
—	6	...	18. 106	—	5	...	17. 40	—	5-7	...	15. 393
—	6	...	21. 224	—	5	...	20. 417	—	9	...	5. 19
—	9	...	3. 444	—	7	...	17. 18	—	9	...	7. 439
—	9	...	22. 57	—	8	...	12. 59	—	9	...	20. 5
—	10	...	13. 487	—	9	...	19. 284	—	10	...	2. 255
—	11	...	11. 230	—	9	...	21. 74	—	10	...	17. 259
—	11	...	16. 74	—	9, 10	...	11. 191	—	10	...	20. 29
—	11, 12	...	5. 465	—	10	...	10. 142	—	10	...	20. 162
—	11, 12	...	21. 284	—	10	...	20. 24	—	12	...	20. 301
—	12	...	3. 354	—	10	...	21. 309	—	13	...	20. 263
—	12	...	8. 462	—	11	...	16. 66	2.	5	...	16. 113
—	12	...	11. 171	—	12	...	12. 460	—	11	...	17. 37
—	14	...	1. 174	—	13	...	2. 375	—	11, 12	...	4. 198
—	14	...	13. 480	—	14	...	1. 344	—	12	...	14. 68
—	14, 15	...	1. 423	—	14	...	2. 301	—	12	...	14. 338
—	15	...	17. 248	—	14	...	19. 185	—	12	...	17. 67
—	15	...	20. 427	—	14	...	21. 120	—	12	...	18. 293
—	19	...	13. 425	—	16	...	7. 210	—	12	...	20. 84
—	19	...	15. 223	—	16	...	16. 157	—	12	...	20. 94
—	21, 22	...	3. 311	—	16	...	17. 111	—	12	...	20. 149
—	23	...	6. 11	—	16	...	19. 118	—	13	...	7. 217
3.	1	...	6. 177	—	16	...	19. 409	—	13	...	7. 435
—	1	...	12. 195	—	17	...	17. 430	—	13	...	12. 319
—	1	...	12. 214	—	17	...	18. 270	—	13	...	13. 291
—	1	...	12. 222	—	18	...	19. 438	—	13	...	15. 140
—	1	...	13. 4	—	18	...	19. 442	—	13	...	15. 169
—	1	...	20. 124	—	19	...	19. 474	—	13	...	20. 9
—	1	...	20. 156	—	22	...	21. 184	—	13	...	20. 280
—	1, 2	...	12. 138	—	23	...	21. 184	—	13	...	22. 103
—	1, 2	...	16. 187	—	23	...	13. 456	—	14, 15	...	22. 114
—	1, 2	...	18. 114	—	24	...	16. 179	—	15	...	15. 353
—	1, 2	...	19. 148	4.	1	...	18. 97	—	16	...	16. 62
—	1, 2	...	20. 97	—	2	...	17. 106	—	19	...	5. 365
—	1, 2	...	20. 99	—	3	...	8. 310	—	19	...	19. 489
—	1-3	...	20. 87	—	5	...	14. 212	—	19	...	20. 195
—	1, 5	...	20. 164	—	5	...	18. 123	—	20	...	20. 199
—	2	...	13. 141	—	5	...	19. 360	3.	3	...	3. 170
—	2	...	20. 151	—	12	...	15. 240	—	19, 20	...	13. 50
—	2, 3	...	12. 459	—	12	...	15. 246	4.	1	...	14. 48
—	3	...	11. 87	—	12	...	19. 462	—	1	...	14. 70

1 Thessalonians.			1 Thessalonians.			2 Thessalonians.		
chap. ver.	vol.	page	chap. ver.	vol.	page	chap. ver.	vol.	page
4. 1	...	19. 348	5. 23, 24	...	13. 195	2. 10-12	...	20. 250
— 3	...	14. 71	— 23, 24	...	14. 291	— 13	...	12. 10
— 3, 4	...	19. 197	— 23, 24	...	15. 71	— 13	...	12. 316
— 4	...	5. 223	— 97	...	13. 97	— 13, 14	...	5. 18
— 4, 5	...	8. 363	6. 10	...	13. 206	— 13, 14	...	12. 313
— 6, 7	...	19. 210				— 13, 14	...	12. 442
— 7	...	13. 167				— 13, 14	...	19. 157
— 9	...	21. 88				— 13, 14	...	20. 363
— 11, 12	...	18. 358	2 Thessalonians.			— 14	...	5. 31
— 13	...	2. 433	1. 6, 7	...	8. 441	— 14	...	12. 292
— 14	...	1. 472	— 6, 7	...	13. 73	— 14	...	19. 334
— 14	...	3. 352	— 6, 7	...	21. 111	— 14	...	20. 96
— 14	...	19. 113	— 6-8	...	4. 420	— 14	...	20. 293
— 16	...	16. 218	— 7, 8	...	11. 44	— 14	...	21. 233
— 17	...	12. 460	— 8	...	16. 20	— 14	...	12. 485
— 17	...	13. 85	— 8	...	16. 79	— 16	...	16. 173
— 17	...	14. 39	— 8	...	17. 136	— 16	...	12. 405
— 17	...	16. 222	— 8	...	19. 231	— 16, 17	...	16. 314
— 17	...	19. 265	— 9	...	10. 24	— 16, 17	...	20. 83
— 17	...	22. 125	— 9	...	12. 45	3. 6, 7	...	16. 149
— 18	...	14. 47	— 10	...	4. 184	— 8	...	19. 186
— 18	...	19. 138	— 10	...	5. 215	— 13	...	5. 395
5. 3	...	4. 438	— 10	...	12. 155	— 16	...	14. 151
— 3	...	20. 255	— 10	...	14. 43			
— 5, 6	...	19. 331	— 10	...	16. 199			
— 5-8	...	19. 256	— 10	...	19. 490			
— 7	...	20. 118	— 10	...	13. 248	1 Timothy.		
— 8	...	18. 453	— 11	...	14. 305	1. 1	...	17. 122
— 8	...	18. 453	— 11	...	15. 225	— 4, 5	...	15. 87
— 8, 9	...	12. 366	— 11	...	15. 229	— 5	...	5. 29
— 9	...	5. 129	— 11	...	15. 229	— 5	...	15. 164
— 9, 10	...	12. 136	— 11	...	21. 76	— 5	...	17. 420
— 9, 10	...	16. 361	— 11, 12	...	12. 151	— 5	...	17. 420
— 9, 10	...	19. 86	— 11, 12	...	12. 151	— 5	...	18. 144
— 9, 10	...	20. 128	— 11, 12	...	12. 394	— 7	...	17. 422
— 10	...	21. 137	— 11, 12	...	15. 39	— 7	...	19. 205
— 17	...	2. 28	— 11, 12	...	16. 392	— 11	...	5. 110
— 17	...	15. 305	— 11, 12	...	17. 427	— 13	...	14. 228
— 17	...	16. 160	— 11, 12	...	18. 257	— 13	...	17. 108
— 17, 18	...	9. 196	— 11, 12	...	19. 404	— 13	...	21. 401
— 18	...	17. 99	— 11, 12	...	20. 57	— 13	...	16. 145
— 18	...	18. 27	— 11, 12	...	20. 185	— 13, 16	...	15. 70
— 18	...	19. 425	— 11, 12	...	21. 36	— 15	...	7. 267
— 19	...	7. 430	— 11, 12	...	21. 160	— 15	...	13. 188
— 20	...	7. 430	2. 2	...	5. 117	— 15	...	13. 349
— 21	...	9. 265	— 3	...	15. 22	— 15	...	14. 107
— 21	...	19. 272	— 4	...	15. 319	— 15	...	14. 485
— 22	...	11. 294	— 5	...	15. 219	— 15	...	15. 192
— 22	...	16. 136	— 8	...	15. 27	— 15	...	15. 196
— 22	...	19. 312	— 8	...	18. 38	— 15	...	15. 386
— 23	...	12. 8	— 10	...	6. 105	— 15	...	15. 397
— 23	...	21. 231	— 10	...	15. 159	— 15	...	15. 407
			— 10	...	16. 85	— 15	...	16. 310
			— 10	...	22. 98	— 15	...	17. 164
			— 10, 11	...	17. 235	— 15	...	18. 4
			— 10, 11	...	20. 120			

1 Timothy.			1 Timothy.			1 Timothy.		
chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page
1.	15	... 18. 244	4.	8	... 2. 32	6.	17	... 16. 475
—	15	... 20. 16	—	8	... 7. 59	—	17	... 16. 480
—	15	... 20. 32	—	8	... 12. 197	—	17	... 17. 25
—	15	... 21. 3	—	8	... 12. 340	—	17	... 17. 32
—	16	... 12. 203	—	8	... 14. 297	—	17	... 17. 45
—	17	... 14. 147	—	8	... 15. 421	—	17	... 17. 47
2.	1, 2	... 17. 492	—	8	... 16. 163	—	17	... 17. 53
—	1, 2	... 21. 111	—	8	... 20. 38	—	17	... 21. 412
—	2	... 16. 152	—	10	... 12. 195	—	18	... 17. 55
—	4	... 6. 291	—	10	... 12. 488	—	18, 19	... 12. 437
—	4	... 18. 211	—	10	... 14. 472	—	18, 19	... 17. 36
—	4	... 18. 227	—	10	... 18. 115	—	19	... 13. 7
—	5	... 12. 368	—	10	... 19. 452	—	19	... 14. 44
—	5	... 18. 260	—	10	... 22. 31	—	19	... 20. 106
—	6	... 2. 272	—	16	... 16. 63	—	20	... 13. 345
—	6	... 16. 254	—	17, 18	... 14. 337			
—	8	... 17. 187	5.	1	... 19. 116			
—	8	... 19. 196	—	6	... 19. 368	2 Timothy.		
—	9	... 16. 134	—	8	... 19. 111	1.	6	... 2. 240
—	9	... 16. 138	—	8	... 21. 152	—	6	... 15. 430
—	12	... 19. 440	—	13	... 19. 374	—	6	... 21. 66
—	14	... 19. 443	—	14	... 18. 123	—	7	... 11. 405
—	15	... 14. 277	—	14	... 18. 123	—	7	... 18. 144
3.	3	... 16. 132	—	17	... 16. 143	—	7	... 19. 159
—	6	... 16. 132	—	21	... 19. 352	—	7	... 19. 258
—	6	... 13. 447	—	22	... 19. 239	—	7	... 19. 399
—	6	... 15. 261	6.	3	... 16. 89	—	7	... 21. 233
—	6	... 20. 89	—	7	... 13. 469	—	7	... 22. 101
—	7	... 6. 413	—	7	... 16. 109	—	7, 8	... 12. 109
—	9	... 15. 173	—	7	... 16. 109	—	9	... 11. 80
—	9	... 20. 480	—	7	... 16. 476	—	9	... 11. 80
—	16	... 3. 357	—	7	... 18. 275	—	9	... 16. 39
—	16	... 3. 357	—	8	... 16. 135	—	9	... 20. 96
—	16	... 6. 261	—	8	... 17. 34	—	9	... 20. 293
—	16	... 10. 273	—	8	... 21. 432	—	9	... 20. 297
—	16	... 15. 166	—	9	... 16. 114	—	9	... 20. 345
—	16	... 15. 435	—	9	... 17. 27	—	10	... 7. 398
—	16	... 16. 50	—	9	... 17. 75	—	10	... 7. 468
—	16	... 16. 296	—	9	... 18. 189	—	10	... 15. 79
—	16	... 17. 331	—	9	... 20. 133	—	10	... 16. 53
—	16	... 19. 183	—	9	... 21. 47	—	12	... 2. 351
—	16	... 20. 313	—	9, 10	... 19. 272	—	12	... 8. 169
4.	2	... 17. 425	—	9, 10	... 20. 142	—	12	... 12. 402
—	3	... 15. 96	—	10	... 17. 19	—	12	... 12. 412
—	3, 4	... 12. 174	—	10	... 21. 397	—	12	... 12. 418
—	3-5	... 2. 164	—	11	... 16. 152	—	12	... 13. 343
—	3-5	... 19. 421	—	11, 12	... 8. 311	—	12	... 14. 300
—	4	... 11. 359	—	12	... 12. 217	—	12	... 15. 165
—	4, 5	... 16. 133	—	12	... 15. 106	—	12	... 16. 358
—	5	... 1. 153	—	12-19	... 13. 327	—	12	... 17. 81
—	5	... 18. 150	—	14	... 13. 49	—	12	... 17. 126
—	7	... 16. 90	—	16	... 19. 92	—	12	... 17. 185
—	7	... 16. 152	—	16	... 19. 63	—	12	... 20. 26
—	7	... 16. 158	—	17	... 14. 319	—	12	... 21. 162

2 Timothy.				2 Timothy.				Titus.			
chap.	ver.	vol.	page	chap.	ver.	vol.	page	chap.	ver.	vol.	page
1.	12	...	22. 24	3.	12	...	12. 89	1.	16	...	15. 388
2.	1	...	15. 230	—	12	...	17. 7	—	16	...	15. 492
—	2	...	5. 491	—	12	...	18. 120	—	16	...	16. 17
—	2	...	18. 35	—	12	...	19. 126	2.	2	...	12. 279
—	2	...	20. 282	—	12	...	20. 200	—	2	...	20. 412
—	5	...	12. 131	—	13	...	15. 308	—	3	...	17. 66
—	5	...	12. 331	—	15	...	14. 392	—	5	...	19. 446
—	5	...	12. 479	—	15	...	19. 381	—	8	...	11. 53
—	5	...	20. 108	—	15	...	19. 401	—	8	...	20. 506
—	10	...	18. 330	—	16, 17	...	7. 211	—	9, 10	...	10. 268
—	12	...	19. 90	—	16, 17	...	17. 354	—	10	...	5. 435
—	12	...	19. 95	4.	2	...	19. 112	—	10	...	9. 332
—	12	...	20. 60	—	3	...	6. 190	—	10	...	14. 214
—	18	...	21. 176	—	3	...	15. 268	—	10	...	14. 444
—	19	...	9. 115	—	6-8	...	22. 9	—	10	...	16. 37
—	19	...	10. 256	—	7, 8	...	13. 133	—	10	...	16. 276
—	19	...	10. 316	—	7, 8	...	14. 291	—	11	...	12. 63
—	19	...	19. 224	—	7, 8	...	20. 75	—	11	...	16. 38
—	21	...	2. 392	—	8	...	5. 353	—	11	...	19. 40
—	21	...	5. 26	—	8	...	8. 441	—	11, 12	...	5. 314
—	21	...	13. 238	—	8	...	11. 117	—	11, 12	...	13. 144
—	21	...	15. 461	—	8	...	12. 195	—	11, 12	...	13. 274
—	21	...	17. 445	—	8	...	12. 205	—	11, 12	...	13. 473
—	21	...	19. 197	—	8	...	14. 320	—	11, 12	...	15. 143
—	21	...	21. 303	—	8	...	15. 109	—	11, 12	...	15. 447
—	22	...	21. 46	—	8	...	20. 73	—	11, 12	...	17. 428
—	24-25	...	18. 307	—	8	...	20. 335	—	11, 12	...	18. 100
—	25	...	13. 293	—	8	...	21. 189	—	11, 12	...	19. 355
—	25	...	16. 405	—	10	...	7. 268	—	11, 12	...	21. 67
—	25	...	18. 7	—	10	...	9. 213	—	11-13	...	3. 6
—	26	...	16. 252	—	10	...	12. 221	—	12	...	4. 307
3.	1	...	5. 270	—	10	...	16. 95	—	12	...	8. 90
—	1, 2	...	14. 140	—	16	...	14. 207	—	12	...	13. 212
—	2	...	15. 263	—	16, 17	...	12. 324	—	12	...	15. 116
—	2, 3	...	19. 425	—	17, 18	...	8. 172	—	12	...	15. 201
—	3	...	16. 298	—	17, 18	...	12. 406	—	12	...	16. 78
—	3	...	21. 126	—	18	...	14. 168	—	12	...	16. 90
—	3, 4	...	7. 340	—	18	...	20. 107	—	12	...	16. 452
—	3, 4	...	13. 156					—	12	...	18. 365
—	3, 4	...	15. 272					—	12	...	19. 150
—	3, 4	...	16. 125					—	12	...	19. 235
—	4	...	17. 75					—	12	...	19. 465
—	4	...	19. 216					—	12	...	20. 251
—	4	...	20. 7					—	12, 13	...	12. 203
—	5	...	3. 360					—	12, 13	...	20. 164
—	5	...	5. 426					—	12, 13	...	21. 454
—	5	...	13. 202					—	13	...	9. 219
—	5	...	16. 77					—	13	...	12. 187
—	5	...	16. 86					—	13	...	16. 341
—	5	...	20. 55					—	13	...	16. 401
—	5	...	20. 165					—	13	...	20. 150
—	12	...	10. 365					—	13	...	22. 79

Titus.

Titus.				Titus.				Hebrews.			
chap.	ver.	vol.	page	chap.	ver.	vol.	page	chap.	ver.	vol.	page
2.	13, 14	...	19. 143	3.	7	...	12. 175	2.	3, 4	...	15. 391
—	14	...	2. 400	—	7	...	14. 221	—	3, 4	...	18. 423
—	14	...	7. 442	—	7	...	21. 38	—	3, 4	...	22. 96
—	14	...	8. 393	—	8	...	16. 278	—	6-8	...	18. 13
—	14	...	13. 147	—	12	...	14. 234	—	7	...	18. 126
—	14	...	13. 185	—	15	...	11. 177	—	8	...	5. 211
—	14	...	19. 481					—	9, 10	...	18. 15
—	14	...	21. 136					—	10	...	12. 132
3.	2, 3	...	13. 293					—	10	...	20. 23
—	3	...	2. 195					—	10	...	20. 271
—	3	...	11. 194					—	11	...	10. 116
—	3	...	11. 354					—	11	...	11. 36
—	3	...	13. 239					—	11	...	18. 430
—	3	...	16. 130					—	11	...	19. 486
—	3	...	16. 252					—	11, 14	...	10. 466
—	3	...	19. 56					—	12	...	10. 72
—	3	...	19. 231					—	13	...	10. 138
—	3	...	19. 237					—	13	...	16. 197
—	3	...	21. 103					—	14	...	2. 448
—	3	...	21. 264					—	14	...	12. 25
—	4	...	16. 267					—	14	...	19. 45
—	4	...	16. 463					—	14	...	21. 54
—	4	...	17. 77					—	14, 15	...	2. 296
—	4	...	19. 262					—	14, 15	...	12. 173
—	4, 5	...	21. 312					—	14, 15	...	12. 357
—	5	...	12. 20					—	14, 15	...	17. 247
—	5	...	12. 481					—	14, 16	...	18. 20
—	5	...	14. 295					—	14, 18	...	15. 107
—	5	...	15. 456					—	15	...	3. 468
—	5	...	16. 262					—	15	...	14. 199
—	5	...	18. 439					—	16	...	17. 333
—	5	...	19. 195					—	17	...	13. 254
—	5	...	20. 162					—	17	...	18. 434
—	5	...	20. 484					—	17	...	19. 94
—	5	...	22. 97					—	17	...	21. 22
—	5, 6	...	12. 124					—	17, 18	...	17. 244
—	5, 6	...	13. 236					—	17, 18	...	17. 397
—	5, 6	...	16. 282					—	18	...	12. 381
—	5, 6	...	18. 133					3.	1	...	10. 163
—	5, 6	...	18. 331					—	1	...	10. 467
—	5, 6	...	18. 491					—	1	...	12. 319
—	5, 6	...	19. 402					—	1	...	20. 307
—	5, 6	...	19. 496					—	3-5	...	1. 464
—	5, 6	...	20. 37					—	6	...	12. 430
—	5, 6	...	20. 59					—	6	...	12. 448
—	5, 6	...	20. 491					—	6	...	12. 489
—	5, 6	...	21. 18					—	6	...	13. 486
—	5-7	...	12. 5					—	6	...	15. 81
—	5-7	...	12. 354					—	6	...	17. 16
—	5-7	...	19. 477					—	6	...	20. 315
—	5-7	...	21. 4					—	6, 14	...	15. 308
—	7	...	12. 133					—	6, 14	...	20. 79

Hebrews.			Hebrews.			Hebrews.		
chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page
3.	7	... 16. 337	4.	16	... 6. 244	6.	11	... 19. 154
—	7	... 19. 225	—	16	... 9. 95	—	11	... 20. 79
—	7	... 19. 362	—	16	... 11. 280	—	11	... 21. 164
—	7, 8	... 17. 364	—	16	... 15. 55	—	11	... 22. 8
—	12	.. 5. 178	—	16	... 16. 51	—	12	... 12. 194
—	12	... 12. 231	—	16	... 22. 29	—	12	... 12. 218
—	12	... 15. 172	5.	2, 3	... 12. 225	—	12	... 12. 479
—	12	... 15. 306	—	4	... 12. 292	—	12	... 14. 69
—	12	... 19. 352	—	4, 5	... 10. 467	—	12	... 14. 296
—	13	... 15. 293	—	5	... 10. 168	—	12	... 17. 134
—	13	... 17. 206	—	7	... 15. 148	—	12	... 17. 424
—	13	... 17. 219	—	7	... 16. 244	—	12	... 19. 151
—	13	... 19. 122	—	8	... 2. 372	—	12	... 20. 116
—	13	... 19. 368	—	8	... 20. 308	—	12	... 20. 278
—	14	... 13. 324	—	8, 9	... 18. 108	—	16	... 16. 303
—	14	... 13. 473	—	8, 9	... 18. 131	—	17	... 9. 118
—	14	... 13. 484	—	8, 9	... 19. 462	—	17, 18	... 3. 153
—	14	... 19. 154	—	8, 9	... 20. 252	—	17, 18	... 12. 355
—	14	... 20. 36	—	9	... 18. 332	—	17, 18	... 15. 430
—	15	... 16. 169	—	9	... 19. 93	—	18	... 7. 29
—	20	... 13. 254	—	9	... 19. 216	—	18	... 8. 142
4.	1	... 12. 445	—	9	... 20. 29	—	18	... 14. 115
—	1	... 14. 196	—	12, 13	... 19. 387	—	18	... 14. 485
—	1	... 20. 81	—	14	... 13. 123	—	18	... 16. 442
—	1	... 20. 224	—	14	... 17. 286	—	18	... 17. 186
—	1	... 22. 47	—	14	... 19. 295	—	18	... 19. 283
—	2	... 6. 401	6.	1	... 11. 208	—	19	... 9. 222
—	2	... 15. 339	—	1, 2	... 8. 349	—	19	... 19. 143
—	6	... 18. 64	—	2	... 3. 10	—	19	... 20. 473
—	9	... 19. 99	—	3, 4	... 18. 364	7.	2	... 14. 222
—	12	... 3. 207	—	4	... 8. 51	—	2, 3	... 1. 479
—	12	... 3. 423	—	4, 5	... 5. 38	—	9	... 3. 297
—	12	... 15. 220	—	4, 5	... 12. 493	—	20, 21	... 16. 302
—	12	... 15. 347	—	4, 5	... 21. 162	—	22	... 2. 443
—	12	... 18. 361	—	4-6	... 6. 316	—	22	... 3. 386
—	12	... 19. 53	—	4, 9	... 9. 324	—	22	... 13. 180
—	12	... 21. 166	—	5	... 13. 491	—	22	... 13. 193
—	12, 13	... 9. 178	—	5, 6	... 6. 94	—	22	... 16. 53
—	12, 13	... 21. 238	—	5, 9	... 5. 179	—	22	... 20. 34
—	12, 13	... 21. 300	—	5, 9	... 9. 431	—	24, 25	... 2. 298
—	13	... 16. 18	—	6	... 13. 225	—	25	... 1. 173
—	13.	... 21. 177	—	6	... 21. 242	—	25	... 19. 163
—	13	... 21. 183	—	9	... 4. 156	—	25	... 19. 455
—	14	... 21. 11	—	10	... 13. 145	—	26	... 11. 7
—	14-16	... 12. 373	—	10	... 13. 468	—	26	... 15. 453
—	14-16	... 17. 117	—	10	... 17. 282	—	26	... 19. 36
—	15	... 10. 287	—	10, 11	... 17. 110	—	26	... 20. 481
—	15	... 10. 466	—	10, 11	... 20. 83	—	26, 27	... 18. 479
—	15	... 16. 244	—	10-12	... 20. 34	8.	1, 2	... 12. 330
—	15	... 17. 459	—	11	... 12. 208	—	1, 2	... 16. 230
—	15	... 18. 117	—	11	... 12. 448	—	2	... 19. 424
—	15, 16	... 21. 188	—	11	... 12. 494	—	2	... 22. 116

Hebrews.				Hebrews.				Hebrews.			
chap.	ver.	vol.	page	chap.	ver.	vol.	page	chap.	ver.	vol.	page
8.	4	...	10. 274	9.	24	...	20. 158	10.	22	...	22. 110
—	6	...	15. 482	—	26, 28	...	19. 37	—	23	...	17. 187
—	10	...	11. 321	—	27	...	12. 13	—	23, 25	...	2. 107
—	10	...	13. 346	—	27	...	14. 36	—	24	...	10. 330
—	10	...	15. 69	—	28	...	10. 15	—	24	...	21. 100
—	10	...	18. 75	—	28	...	11. 222	—	24	...	22. 48
—	10	...	19. 212	—	28	...	16. 208	—	26	...	21. 401
—	10, 11	...	13. 283	—	28	...	16. 216	—	28, 29	...	19. 82
—	10-12	...	12. 315	—	28	...	16. 227	—	28, 29	...	21. 403
—	10-12	...	13. 274	—	28	...	20. 162	—	29	...	13. 61
9.	4	...	12. 71	10.	5, 6	...	19. 467	—	29	...	20. 238
—	8	...	19. 96	—	5-7	...	22. 38	—	29	...	21. 271
—	9	...	6. 298	—	5, 10	...	19. 180	—	29	...	21. 393
—	12	...	10. 304	—	6	...	11. 427	—	29	...	22. 121
—	12	...	20. 102	—	7	...	12. 309	—	30	...	20. 85
—	12	...	20. 158	—	7	...	13. 469	—	31	...	7. 397
—	12	...	22. 115	—	7	...	19. 160	—	31	...	11. 416
—	13, 14	...	18. 82	—	8	...	9. 335	—	31	...	13. 93
—	13, 14	...	22. 57	—	9, 10	...	15. 314	—	31	...	17. 326
—	13, 14	...	22. 108	—	10	...	11. 8	—	31	...	19. 228
—	14	...	4. 237	—	10	...	13. 183	—	31	...	21. 16
—	14	...	13. 264	—	10	...	17. 83	—	31	...	21. 166
—	14	...	14. 143	—	10	...	20. 158	—	31	...	21. 166
—	14	...	16. 235	—	12, 13	...	22. 73	—	32	...	10. 337
—	14	...	17. 337	—	12, 13	...	5. 47	—	32	...	14. 422
—	14	...	18. 79	—	14	...	10. 172	—	32	...	15. 12
—	14	...	18. 168	—	14	...	11. 14	—	32	...	20. 69
—	14	...	18. 272	—	14	...	12. 355	—	32	...	20. 419
—	14	...	18. 485	—	14	...	12. 367	—	33	...	21. 90
—	14	...	19. 89	—	14	...	17. 374	—	34	...	12. 141
—	14	...	21. 8	—	14	...	19. 36	—	34	...	12. 272
—	14	...	21. 174	—	14	...	19. 187	—	34	...	12. 395
—	14	...	21. 189	—	14	...	21. 5	—	34	...	12. 450
—	14	...	22. 110	—	14	...	22. 39	—	34	...	14. 307
—	14, 22	...	4. 312	—	14	...	22. 39	—	34	...	15. 239
—	15	...	11. 217	—	19	...	1. 63	—	34	...	15. 276
—	15	...	12. 134	—	19	...	6. 181	—	34	...	17. 483
—	15	...	12. 136	—	19	...	19. 95	—	34	...	17. 483
—	15	...	14. 41	—	19	...	22. 120	—	34	...	18. 280
—	15	...	17. 379	—	19, 20	...	3. 452	—	34	...	18. 373
—	15	...	19. 456	—	20	...	12. 329	—	34	...	20. 103
—	15	...	21. 137	—	20	...	12. 329	—	36	...	2. 248
—	16	...	22. 37	—	21, 22	...	14. 28	—	36	...	2. 248
—	18, 19	...	16. 187	—	22	...	9. 347	—	36	...	12. 222
—	22	...	13. 275	—	22	...	13. 294	—	36	...	12. 222
—	22	...	19. 181	—	22	...	14. 484	—	36	...	13. 336
—	22	...	22. 54	—	22	...	15. 65	—	36	...	15. 81
—	22	...	22. 106	—	22	...	15. 454	—	36	...	16. 173
—	24	...	6. 396	—	22	...	16. 29	—	36	...	20. 214
—	24	...	12. 330	—	22	...	18. 417	—	38	...	20. 214
—	24	...	18. 160	—	22	...	19. 89	—	38	...	14. 335
—	24	...	19. 25	—	22	...	19. 96	—	38	...	15. 50
				—	22	...	21. 188	—	39	...	12. 144
				—	22	...	21. 265	—	39	...	12. 144
				—	22	...		—	39	...	13. 6
				—	22	...		—	39	...	14. 471
				—	22	...		—	39	...	15. 16
				—	22	...		—	39	...	15. 16

Hebrews.				Hebrews.				Hebrews.			
chap.	ver.	vol.	page	chap.	ver.	vol.	page	chap.	ver.	vol.	page
10.	39	...	17. 122	11.	7	...	21. 79	11.	28, 29	...	15. 405
—	39	...	19. 64	—	7, 8	...	2. 147	—	31	...	4. 265
—	39	...	19. 78	—	9	...	6. 174	—	33	...	15. 51
—	39	...	20. 101	—	9	...	13. 3	—	35	...	12. 194
11.	1	...	3. 425	—	9	...	15. 472	—	35	...	12. 441
—	1	...	12. 145	—	10	...	12. 429	—	35	...	13. 340
—	1	...	13. 12	—	11	...	17. 129	—	35	...	20. 68
—	1	...	13. 323	—	12	...	14. 409	—	37	...	12. 326
—	1	...	14. 45	—	12	...	20. 391	—	37	...	12. 384
—	1	...	14. 252	—	13	...	12. 446	—	38	...	10. 375
—	1	...	15. 52	—	13	...	13. 340	—	38	...	16. 267
—	1	...	15. 170	—	13	...	13. 352	12.	1	...	3. 306
—	1	...	17. 118	—	13	...	13. 374	—	1	...	15. 116
—	1	...	17. 181	—	13	...	15. 58	—	1	...	15. 434
—	1	...	18. 276	—	13	...	18. 277	—	1	...	20. 111
—	1, 7	...	20. 122	—	13	...	20. 150	—	1	...	20. 127
—	2	...	17. 241	—	13	...	22. 77	—	1, 2	...	20. 87
—	3	...	8. 336	—	13-15	...	17. 170	—	1, 2	...	20. 129
—	3	...	9. 325	—	13, 26	...	15. 77	—	1-3	...	12. 386
—	3	...	17. 111	—	16	...	2. 469	—	2	...	5. 352
—	4	...	19. 24	—	16	...	7. 109	—	2	...	12. 188
—	5	...	16. 167	—	16	...	12. 142	—	2	...	12. 224
—	6	...	1. 388	—	16	...	13. 4	—	2	...	12. 303
—	6	...	7. 194	—	16	...	14. 215	—	2	...	12. 382
—	6	...	11. 480	—	16	...	13. 175	—	2	...	16. 181
—	6	...	12. 247	—	17	...	15. 140	—	2	...	19. 42
—	6	...	13. 150	—	17	...	22. 83	—	2	...	19. 45
—	6	...	13. 264	—	17	...	22. 85	—	2	...	21. 199
—	6	...	15. 75	—	19	...	13. 342	—	3	...	8. 281
—	6	...	15. 137	—	19	...	17. 188	—	3	...	12. 227
—	6	...	15. 146	—	24	...	9. 17	—	3	...	15. 120
—	6	...	15. 150	—	24, 25	...	16. 271	—	3	...	15. 122
—	6	...	15. 172	—	24, 25	...	20. 15	—	3	...	15. 311
—	6	...	16. 183	—	24-26	...	17. 124	—	4	...	13. 32
—	6	...	17. 64	—	25	...	15. 197	—	4	...	15. 119
—	6	...	19. 136	—	25	...	16. 123	—	5	...	2. 430
—	6	...	19. 177	—	25	...	18. 146	—	5	...	3. 171
—	6	...	20. 508	—	26	...	10. 345	—	5	...	5. 321
—	6	...	21. 206	—	26	...	13. 336	—	5	...	9. 19
—	7	...	2. 107	—	26	...	15. 275	—	5	...	12. 119
—	7	...	8. 19	—	26	...	17. 172	—	5	...	12. 227
—	7	...	12. 484	—	26	...	18. 153	—	5	...	15. 82
—	7	...	14. 227	—	26	...	18. 385	—	5	...	15. 123
—	7	...	16. 32	—	26	...	19. 131	—	5	...	16. 88
—	7	...	17. 123	—	26	...	19. 450	—	5	...	16. 346
—	7	...	18. 218	—	26	...	22. 71	—	5	...	19. 15
—	7	...	18. 291	—	26, 28	...	13. 183	—	5	...	20. 425
—	7	...	19. 78	—	27	...	13. 356	—	5	...	20. 428
—	7	...	19. 306	—	27	...	14. 365	—	5-8	...	19. 9
—	7	...	19. 321	—	27	...	15. 140	—	5-10	...	20. 445
—	7	...	20. 150	—	27	...	17. 121	—	6	...	16. 255
—	7	...	20. 265	—	28	...	22. 107	—	6-10	...	3. 144

James.			James.			James.		
chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page
1.	14	... 15. 241	2.	13	... 14. 150	4.	5, 6	... 22. 45
—	14	... 16. 106	—	13	... 17. 242	—	6	... 17. 107
—	14	... 16. 121	—	14	... 13. 377	—	7	... 11. 260
—	14	... 17. 484	—	14	... 19. 464	—	7	... 15. 105
—	14	... 18. 375	—	14	... 20. 283	—	7	... 21. 172
—	14	... 19. 49	—	14	... 20. 317	—	8	... 11. 214
—	14	... 20. 509	—	14	... 21. 278	—	11	... 6. 212
—	14	... 21. 377	—	19	... 5. 207	—	11	... 17. 321
—	14	... 21. 389	—	19	... 10. 155	—	12	... 1. 132
—	14, 15	... 11. 293	—	19	... 14. 133	—	13	... 16. 82
—	15	... 16. 97	—	19	... 17. 113	—	13-15	... 14. 242
—	15	... 20. 495	—	19	... 20. 35	—	14	... 13. 203
—	17	... 9. 25	—	20	... 15. 40	—	14	... 14. 66
—	17	... 9. 33	—	21	... 14. 355	—	17	... 11. 47
—	17	... 16. 424	—	21, 25	... 15. 36	—	17	... 15. 204
—	17	... 17. 102	—	22	... 13. 377	—	17	... 16. 393
—	17	... 19. 424	—	23	... 14. 216	—	17	... 17. 439
—	18	... 12. 113	—	23	... 16. 333	—	17	... 19. 28
—	18	... 12. 334	—	24	... 13. 76	—	17	... 19. 211
—	18	... 13. 235	—	24	... 14. 5	—	17	... 19. 318
—	18	... 16. 266	3.	1	... 15. 263	5.	2, 3	... 12. 183
—	19	... 16. 418	—	2	... 19. 203	—	3	... 12. 165
—	20	... 3. 366	—	7	... 19. 52	—	3	... 13. 69
—	20	... 19. 122	—	7	... 19. 71	—	3, 4	... 13. 428
—	21	... 7. 341	—	9	... 17. 387	—	4	... 12. 182
—	21	... 13. 448	—	9	... 19. 203	—	4	... 16. 144
—	21	... 16. 72	—	15	... 12. 50	—	5	... 13. 86
—	21	... 17. 322	—	15	... 20. 10	—	5	... 17. 12
—	21	... 20. 304	—	15	... 20. 133	—	7	... 2. 248
—	21	... 20. 477	—	16, 17	... 9. 441	—	10	... 14. 31
—	22-24	... 12. 322	—	17	... 5. 438	—	11	... 1. 326
—	23	... 6. 85	—	17	... 7. 183	—	11	... 4. 268
—	23	... 12. 61	—	17	... 9. 248	—	11	... 6. 20
—	23	... 21. 331	—	17	... 17. 153	—	11	... 7. 97
—	23, 24	... 6. 141	—	17	... 18. 38	—	13	... 8. 99
—	23, 24	... 15. 327	—	17	... 19. 249	—	13	... 12. 225
—	25	... 17. 280	4.	1	... 13. 222	—	13	... 17. 494
—	25	... 18. 428	—	1, 5	... 14. 243	—	13	... 19. 201
—	26	... 18. 390	—	2	... 17. 330	—	13	... 19. 390
—	26	... 19. 204	—	3	... 12. 250	—	13	... 19. 413
—	27	... 14. 212	—	3	... 15. 149	—	16	... 15. 348
—	27	... 21. 151	—	3	... 20. 339	—	17	... 9. 39
—	27	... 22. 91	—	3	... 21. 197			
—	27	... 22. 91	—	3	... 21. 197			
2.	1	... 19. 431	—	4	... 11. 473			
—	3	... 13. 471	—	4	... 12. 273	1 Peter.		
—	5	... 17. 28	—	4	... 13. 297	1.	2	... 3. 106
—	5, 6	... 20. 125	—	4	... 13. 297	—	2	... 5. 39
—	6, 7	... 17. 25	—	4	... 20. 124	—	2	... 10. 256
—	8	... 15. 289	—	4	... 20. 139	—	2	... 12. 9
—	10	... 3. 419	—	4	... 21. 486	—	2	... 12. 302
—	10	... 8. 60	—	5	... 12. 62	—	2	... 15. 454
—	10	... 14. 23	—	5	... 21. 127	—	2	... 18. 288
—	10	... 14. 23	—	5, 6	... 17. 78	—	2	... 19. 157

1 Peter.			1 Peter.			1 Peter.		
chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page
1.	2-5	... 14. 95	1.	12	... 17. 332	1.	19	... 19. 33
—	3	... 3. 353	—	12	... 19. 491	—	21	... 11. 223
—	3	... 16. 174	—	12	... 20. 21	—	21	... 12. 211
—	3	... 17. 80	—	13	... 11. 213	—	21	... 12. 307
—	3	... 17. 102	—	13	... 13. 46	—	21	... 12. 369
—	3	... 17. 423	—	13	... 13. 74	—	21	... 19. 66
—	3	... 19. 142	—	13	... 18. 459	—	22	... 12. 61
—	3	... 20. 59	—	13	... 20. 85	—	22	... 16. 261
—	3	... 20. 471	—	13	... 20. 100	—	22	... 18. 399
—	3	... 21. 304	—	13	... 20. 239	—	22	... 19. 410
—	3, 4	... 12. 98	—	13	... 20. 268	—	22	... 20. 482
—	3, 4	... 15. 363	—	14	... 2. 289	—	22	... 21. 88
—	3, 4	... 16. 199	—	14	... 11. 277	—	22	... 21. 118
—	3, 4	... 19. 494	—	14	... 13. 239	—	22	... 21. 292
—	3, 13	... 14. 165	—	14	... 16. 397	—	23	... 2. 154
—	4	... 12. 135	—	14	... 19. 221	—	23	... 17. 131
—	4	... 15. 245	—	14	... 20. 429	—	23	... 21. 64
—	4, 5	... 12. 482	—	14, 15	... 15. 168	—	24	... 9. 28
—	4, 5	... 14. 341	—	15	... 8. 73	—	24	... 5. 50
—	5	... 2. 140	—	15	... 8. 384	—	24	... 10. 308
—	5	... 10. 312	—	15	... 15. 135	—	24	... 19. 146
—	5	... 12. 399	—	15	... 16. 131	—	24	... 21. 6
—	5	... 12. 415	—	15	... 17. 444	2.	1, 2	... 12. 65
—	6	... 7. 225	—	15	... 19. 323	—	2	... 6. 187
—	6	... 12. 377	—	15	... 20. 147	—	2	... 13. 201
—	6	... 17. 7	—	15	... 20. 444	—	2	... 18. 322
—	6	... 20. 103	—	15	... 20. 478	—	2	... 20. 381
—	6	... 21. 110	—	15, 16	... 21. 325	—	2	... 20. 429
—	7	... 12. 376	—	17	... 1. 48	—	2, 3	... 16. 328
—	7	... 14. 356	—	17	... 12. 234	—	2, 3	... 18. 148
—	7	... 17. 68	—	17	... 13. 89	—	3	... 8. 46
—	7	... 19. 139	—	17	... 13. 91	—	3	... 15. 365
—	7	... 19. 148	—	17	... 13. 227	—	3	... 16. 47
—	7	... 19. 152	—	17	... 15. 300	—	3	... 19. 466
—	7	... 20. 200	—	17	... 19. 240	—	3	... 20. 18
—	7	... 20. 276	—	17	... 20. 321	—	3	... 20. 428
—	7	... 21. 111	—	18	... 9. 270	—	3	... 22. 98
—	8	... 8. 270	—	18	... 12. 32	—	4	... 12. 69
—	8	... 10. 278	—	18	... 13. 60	—	4	... 14. 124
—	8	... 12. 117	—	18	... 13. 260	—	5	... 10. 247
—	8	... 13. 13	—	18	... 14. 68	—	5	... 15. 457
—	8	... 13. 326	—	18	... 15. 319	—	5	... 19. 91
—	8	... 13. 364	—	18	... 18. 22	—	5, 9	... 8. 107
—	8	... 17. 119	—	18	... 21. 239	—	7	... 13. 151
—	8	... 18. 335	—	18	... 21. 390	—	7	... 15. 367
—	8	... 19. 67	—	18, 19	... 11. 275	—	7, 8	... 19. 234
—	8	... 19. 410	—	18, 19	... 18. 225	—	7, 8	... 20. 244
—	9	... 15. 42	—	18, 19	... 19. 485	—	8	... 5. 129
—	9	... 15. 48	—	18, 19	... 20. 183	—	9	... 2. 214
—	9	... 20. 99	—	18, 19	... 21. 7	—	9	... 13. 161
—	11	... 14. 257	—	18, 19	... 21. 21	—	9	... 14. 22
—	12	... 3. 270	—	18, 19	... 21. 371	—	9	... 14. 213

1 Peter.			1 Peter.			1 Peter.		
chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page
2	9	... 15. 447	2	24	... 17. 411	4	1	... 3. 279
—	9	... 15. 498	—	24	... 21. 137	—	1	... 12. 79
—	9	... 16. 265	3	1	... 11. 51	—	1	... 13. 191
—	9	... 16. 266	—	1	... 19. 326	—	1	... 19. 218
—	9	... 16. 488	—	3, 4	... 20. 141	—	1	... 21. 12
—	9	... 19. 90	—	4	... 8. 316	—	1, 2	... 21. 325
—	9	... 19. 177	—	4	... 16. 136	—	2	... 11. 195
—	9	... 19. 200	—	4	... 17. 101	—	2	... 15. 244
—	9	... 19. 300	—	6	... 19. 439	—	2	... 19. 379
—	9	... 19. 324	—	7	... 1. 56	—	3	... 12. 48
—	9	... 20. 117	—	7	... 7. 205	—	3	... 13. 217
—	9	... 20. 269	—	7	... 14. 27	—	3	... 15. 493
—	9	... 20. 301	—	7	... 19. 442	—	3	... 16. 286
—	10	... 16. 265	—	9	... 10. 49	—	3	... 18. 474
—	11	... 4. 327	—	9	... 12. 291	—	3	... 19. 391
—	11	... 12. 27	—	9	... 19. 23	—	3, 4	... 19. 329
—	11	... 12. 91	—	12	... 13. 82	—	4	... 2. 85
—	11	... 13. 7	—	13	... 8. 5	—	4	... 8. 334
—	11	... 14. 254	—	13	... 12. 325	—	4	... 12. 152
—	11	... 15. 72	—	13	... 19. 278	—	4	... 12. 253
—	11	... 16. 92	—	13, 14	... 15. 244	—	4	... 13. 377
—	11	... 16. 96	—	15	... 6. 460	—	4	... 19. 126
—	11	... 16. 102	—	16	... 13. 108	—	4, 5	... 12. 153
—	11	... 20. 154	—	16	... 13. 384	—	4, 5	... 20. 453
—	11	... 21. 105	—	16	... 18. 122	—	4, 5	... 21. 104
—	12	... 13. 381	—	18	... 12. 198	—	6	... 13. 235
—	12	... 13. 387	—	18	... 13. 184	—	6	... 19. 405
—	12	... 14. 209	—	18	... 13. 243	—	7	... 5. 117
—	12	... 15. 24	—	18	... 16. 247	—	7	... 13. 33
—	12	... 18. 99	—	18	... 20. 309	—	7	... 17. 500
—	12	... 18. 121	—	18	... 21. 213	—	8	... 19. 474
—	12	... 19. 326	—	18	... 21. 321	—	8	... 21. 89
—	12	... 20. 115	—	18	... 21. 477	—	8	... 21. 122
—	13, 14	... 19. 430	—	19	... 13. 29	—	12	... 12. 90
—	14	... 11. 175	—	19, 20	... 19. 238	—	12	... 12. 386
—	15	... 13. 379	—	19, 20	... 20. 248	—	13	... 12. 131
—	15	... 14. 210	—	20	... 14. 190	—	13	... 12. 224
—	15	... 15. 247	—	20	... 19. 341	—	13	... 12. 318
—	17	... 16. 465	—	20	... 19. 453	—	13	... 20. 466
—	17	... 21. 125	—	20, 21	... 15. 5	—	13, 14	... 19. 132
—	21	... 18. 336	—	21	... 21. 190	—	13, 14	... 20. 211
—	21, 23	... 19. 16	—	21	... 1. 216	—	14	... 3. 168
—	23	... 16. 493	—	21	... 5. 313	—	14	... 12. 393
—	23	... 18. 478	—	21	... 5. 466	—	14	... 12. 409
—	23	... 19. 21	—	21	... 6. 72	—	14	... 14. 211
—	23	... 19. 34	—	21	... 8. 81	—	14	... 14. 471
—	24	... 3. 266	—	21	... 12. 33	—	14	... 19. 161
—	24	... 8. 27	—	21	... 14. 203	—	14	... 19. 323
—	24	... 9. 341	—	21	... 16. 102	—	14	... 20. 70
—	24	... 12. 80	—	21	... 17. 425	—	14	... 21. 291
—	24	... 13. 202	—	21	... 19. 480	—	14	... 21. 293
—	24	... 13. 313	—	21	... 21. 317	—	15	... 15. 119

1 Peter.			1 Peter.			2 Peter.		
chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page
4.	15	... 17. 10	5.	9	... 20. 113	1.	6	... 8. 6
—	15, 16	... 21. 112	—	10	... 3. 162	—	7	... 7. 178
—	17	... 19. 233	—	10	... 12. 142	—	7	... 10. 72
—	17	... 20. 208	—	10	... 12. 231	—	7	... 19. 110
—	18	... 5. 134	—	10	... 20. 97	—	8	... 18. 400
—	18	... 16. 76	—	10	... 20. 298	—	9	... 2. 394
—	18	... 17. 29				—	9	... 7. 465
—	18	... 17. 63				—	9	... 9. 418
—	19	... 1. 43				—	9	... 13. 244
—	19	... 7. 299	1.	1	... 13. 488	—	9	... 14. 16
—	19	... 8. 116	—	2	... 11. 138	—	9	... 14. 179
—	19	... 10. 215	—	2	... 12. 341	—	9	... 14. 298
—	19	... 15. 13	—	3	... 3. 113	—	9	... 14. 312
—	19	... 15. 26	—	3	... 5. 77	—	9	... 16. 262
—	19	... 16. 186	—	3	... 16. 163	—	9	... 17. 67
—	19	... 17. 83	—	3	... 17. 376	—	9	... 17. 170
5.	2	... 6. 384	—	3	... 18. 271	—	9	... 19. 248
—	2	... 17. 20	—	3	... 20. 287	—	9	... 19. 248
—	3	... 17. 20	—	3	... 21. 116	—	10	... 3. 111
—	3	... 20. 113	—	3	... 21. 116	—	10	... 3. 111
—	4	... 20. 108	—	4	... 1. 209	—	10	... 13. 370
—	4	... 20. 108	—	4	... 4. 85	—	10	... 15. 78
—	5	... 19. 432	—	4	... 4. 85	—	10	... 15. 462
—	6	... 8. 301	—	4	... 7. 111	—	10	... 15. 462
—	6	... 17. 89	—	4	... 10. 383	—	10	... 16. 281
—	7	... 1. 37	—	4	... 11. 487	—	10	... 20. 81
—	7	... 14. 369	—	4	... 12. 41	—	10	... 16. 333
—	7	... 15. 87	—	4	... 12. 414	—	10, 11	... 16. 185
—	7	... 15. 94	—	4	... 12. 481	—	11	... 19. 219
—	7	... 16. 140	—	4	... 12. 481	—	12	... 11. 122
—	7	... 20. 145	—	4	... 13. 247	—	12	... 19. 297
—	7	... 21. 462	—	4	... 14. 261	—	12	... 19. 297
—	7-9	... 15. 111	—	4	... 15. 70	—	13	... 19. 120
—	8	... 1. 208	—	4	... 15. 157	—	13, 14	... 12. 425
—	8	... 3. 173	—	4	... 16. 57	—	16	... 13. 348
—	8	... 15. 406	—	4	... 16. 57	—	16	... 13. 348
—	8	... 16. 287	—	4	... 16. 101	—	16	... 15. 382
—	8	... 17. 76	—	4	... 16. 106	—	18, 19	... 17. 357
—	8	... 17. 396	—	4	... 16. 106	—	19	... 3. 24
—	8	... 18. 17	—	4	... 17. 26	—	19	... 5. 109
—	8	... 18. 161	—	4	... 17. 75	—	19	... 6. 149
—	8	... 19. 341	—	4	... 17. 127	—	19	... 8. 78
—	8	... 19. 353	—	4	... 18. 433	—	19	... 9. 115
—	8	... 20. 131	—	4	... 19. 67	—	19	... 9. 115
—	8	... 21. 49	—	4	... 19. 72	—	19	... 13. 194
—	8, 9	... 12. 190	—	4	... 19. 72	—	19	... 13. 194
—	8, 9	... 12. 394	—	4	... 19. 173	—	19	... 13. 287
—	8, 9	... 12. 452	—	4	... 19. 173	—	19	... 13. 287
—	8, 9	... 21. 283	—	4	... 19. 251	—	19	... 14. 401
—	9	... 8. 37	—	4	... 19. 251	—	19	... 14. 401
—	9	... 10. 285	—	4	... 19. 251	—	19	... 15. 396
—	9	... 12. 181	—	4	... 19. 366	—	19	... 15. 396
—	9	... 17. 11	—	4	... 20. 86	—	19	... 17. 133
—	9	... 17. 405	—	4	... 20. 86	—	19	... 17. 133
			—	4	... 20. 155	—	19	... 19. 294
			—	4	... 20. 155	—	19	... 19. 294
			—	4	... 21. 63	—	21	... 8. 70
			—	4	... 21. 63	2.	1	... 8. 286
			—	4	... 21. 303	—	2	... 13. 370
			—	5	... 8. 349	—	3	... 13. 258
			—	5	... 22. 11	—	3	... 19. 332
			—	5, 6	... 4. 33	—	3	... 19. 332
			—	5, 6	... 16. 119	—	4	... 10. 29
			—	5-7	... 15. 49	—	4	... 18. 124
			—	5, 10, 16	... 15. 43	—	4	... 20. 402
			—	5, 10, 16	... 15. 43	—	4	... 20. 402

2 Peter.				2 Peter.				1 John.			
chap.	ver.	vol.	page	chap.	ver.	vol.	page	chap.	ver.	vol.	page
2	6	...	16. 89	3	4	...	20. 212	1	1-3	...	12. 219
—	8	...	8. 183	—	5	...	13. 432	—	2, 3	...	18. 394
—	8	...	8. 423	—	5	...	7. 477	—	3	...	9. 251
—	8	...	19. 124	—	5	...	19. 299	—	3	...	11. 390
—	9	...	15. 92	—	5	...	19. 386	—	3	...	13. 105
—	10	...	14. 186	—	6	...	14. 175	—	3	...	15. 23
—	13	...	7. 5	—	7	...	12. 155	—	3	...	17. 60
—	14	...	17. 66	—	9	...	16. 216	—	3	...	19. 68
—	14	...	17. 275	—	9	...	18. 226	—	3	...	19. 72
—	14	...	18. 201	—	10	...	5. 211	—	3	...	19. 130
—	14	...	19. 235	—	10	...	12. 159	—	3	...	21. 105
—	16	...	12. 179	—	10	...	12. 465	—	3, 4	...	20. 396
—	18	...	4. 88	—	10	...	20. 245	—	4	...	12. 436
—	18	...	19. 205	—	10-12	...	16. 226	—	4	...	17. 478
—	18	...	20. 421	—	11	...	5. 218	—	5	...	10. 293
—	19	...	4. 165	—	11	...	9. 371	—	5	...	13. 54
—	19	...	6. 479	—	11	...	12. 320	—	5	...	19. 206
—	19	...	6. 481	—	11	...	12. 462	—	5-7	...	11. 452
—	19	...	14. 174	—	11	...	14. 377	—	6, 7	...	13. 238
—	19	...	20. 184	—	11	...	16. 87	—	6, 7	...	21. 29
—	20	...	9. 32	—	11	...	16. 88	—	6-8	...	17. 417
—	20	...	9. 324	—	12	...	5. 347	—	7	...	15. 35
—	20	...	11. 197	—	12	...	13. 338	—	7	...	15. 73
—	20	...	17. 114	—	12	...	14. 299	—	7	...	18. 383
—	20	...	19. 154	—	12	...	16. 215	—	7	...	19. 87
—	20	...	19. 194	—	12	...	20. 164	—	7	...	20. 84
—	20	...	21. 404	—	13	...	12. 168	—	7	...	21. 5
—	20, 21	...	2. 136	—	14	...	9. 374	—	7	...	21. 26
—	20, 21	...	6. 137	—	14	...	12. 319	—	7	...	21. 222
—	20, 21	...	7. 133	—	14	...	12. 464	—	7	...	22. 50
—	20, 21	...	9. 490	—	14	...	13. 89	—	9	...	2. 183
—	20-22	...	12. 493	—	14	...	13. 341	—	9	...	4. 123
—	21	...	15. 313	—	14	...	19. 345	—	9	...	5. 151
—	21, 22	...	6. 317	—	14	...	20. 144	—	9	...	8. 377
—	21, 22	...	17. 235	—	14	...	20. 166	—	9	...	13. 70
—	24	...	12. 61	—	14	...	20. 474	—	9	...	12. 356
3.	1	...	5. 216	—	16	...	5. 284	—	9	...	17. 128
—	3	...	2. 112	—	16	...	8. 76	—	9	...	17. 336
—	3	...	12. 148	—	16, 17	...	3. 20	—	9	...	18. 167
—	3	...	13. 94	—	16	...	10. 436	—	9	...	18. 492
—	3	...	14. 139	—	17	...	3. 178	—	9	...	19. 88
—	3	...	15. 308	—	17	...	6. 295	—	9	...	20. 49
—	3	...	15. 391	—	17	...	7. 207	—	9	...	20. 397
—	3, 4	...	2. 247	—	17	...	19. 296	—	9	...	21. 9
—	3, 4	...	7. 39	—	17, 18	...	18. 318	—	9	...	21. 15
—	3, 4	...	13. 61	—	18	...	11. 135	—	9	...	21. 20
—	3, 4	...	20. 162	—	18	...	12. 64	—	9	...	22. 52
—	3-5	...	3. 6	—	18	...	18. 119	—	9	...	22. 111
—	4	...	7. 404					—	25	...	20. 102
—	4	...	13. 354					2.	1	...	10. 127
—	4	...	14. 141	1 John				—	1	...	11. 158
—	4	...	19. 141	1, 1	...	20. 399		—	1	...	13. 59
				—	1, 2	...	15. 392				

1 John				1 John.				1 John.			
chap.	ver.	vol.	page	chap.	ver.	vol.	page	chap.	ver.	vol.	page
2.	1	...	16. 331	2.	16	...	20. 133	3.	2, 3	...	20. 130
—	1	...	19. 25	—	16	...	21. 46	—	2, 3	...	20. 154
—	1	...	21. 50	—	17	...	16. 109	—	3	...	2. 57
—	1	...	21. 62	—	17	...	17. 121	—	3	...	5. 351
—	1	...	21. 360	—	17	...	19. 132	—	3	...	8. 480
—	1	...	22. 75	—	17	...	20. 138	—	3	...	10. 54
—	1, 2	...	11. 17	—	20	...	7. 209	—	3	...	11. 58
—	1, 2	...	12. 75	—	20	...	17. 416	—	3	...	12. 88
—	1, 2	...	15. 60	—	21	...	5. 173	—	3	...	16. 177
—	1, 2	...	15. 444	—	25	...	12. 198	—	3	...	19. 196
—	1, 2	...	21. 272	—	25	...	15. 79	—	3	...	20. 96
—	2	...	12. 367	—	25	...	17. 128	—	3	...	20. 273
—	3	...	12. 432	—	25	...	19. 131	—	3	...	21. 71
—	3, 4	...	6. 260	—	25	...	20. 270	—	4	...	21. 158
—	4	...	18. 134	—	25	...	22. 21	—	4	...	22. 52
—	4	...	20. 22	—	27	...	8. 39	—	5	...	17. 409
—	4	...	20. 250	—	27	...	9. 249	—	5	...	19. 484
—	5	...	2. 406	—	27	...	13. 199	—	5, 8	...	15. 460
—	5	...	13. 144	—	27, 28	...	5. 48	—	5, 8	...	21. 70
—	6	...	12. 304	—	27, 28	...	21. 22	—	6	...	20. 461
—	6	...	17. 53	—	28	...	10. 22	—	7	...	12. 462
—	6	...	18. 129	—	28	...	12. 464	—	8	...	5. 34
—	6	...	20. 56	—	28	...	12. 490	—	8	...	12. 79
—	6	...	21. 22	—	28	...	13. 63	—	8	...	13. 195
—	6	...	21. 28	—	28	...	13. 491	—	8	...	17. 255
—	7	...	20. 400	—	28	...	17. 369	—	8	...	18. 17
—	7	...	21. 87	—	28	...	20. 167	—	8	...	19. 259
—	7	...	21. 94	—	28	...	21. 185	—	8, 9	...	11. 275
—	10, 11	...	8. 66	—	29	...	20. 44	—	9	...	5. 50
—	11	...	21. 131	3.	1	...	20. 438	—	9	...	9. 340
—	13, 14	...	22. 105	—	1	...	11. 78	—	9	...	12. 64
—	14	...	8. 20	—	1	...	12. 98	—	9	...	12. 173
—	14	...	15. 117	—	1	...	12. 122	—	9	...	13. 233
—	14	...	18. 24	—	1	...	18. 77	—	9	...	19. 171
—	15	...	13. 173	—	1	...	19. 174	—	9	...	19. 308
—	15	...	13. 177	—	1, 2	...	12. 188	—	9, 10	...	6. 32
—	15	...	15. 112	—	1, 2	...	13. 147	—	10	...	14. 215
—	15	...	15. 311	—	1, 2	...	18. 137	—	10	...	18. 103
—	15	...	17. 19	—	1, 2	...	20. 433	—	10	...	19. 174
—	15	...	20. 139	—	1, 2	...	21. 107	—	10	...	19. 225
—	15	...	21. 321	—	2	...	2. 217	—	10	...	20. 452
—	15	...	21. 487	—	2	...	12. 86	—	14	...	12. 117
—	15, 16	...	18. 460	—	2	...	13. 365	—	14	...	15. 174
—	15, 16	...	20. 90	—	2	...	14. 41	—	16	...	3. 330
—	15-17	...	18. 132	—	2	...	14. 145	—	16	...	4. 209
—	16	...	4. 354	—	2	...	16. 198	—	16	...	13. 147
—	16	...	7. 225	—	2	...	19. 483	—	16	...	19. 179
—	16	...	12. 37	—	2	...	20. 65	—	16	...	19. 189
—	16	...	14. 460	—	2	...	20. 84	—	17	...	10. 66
—	16	...	15. 284	—	2	...	20. 193	—	17	...	12. 379
—	16	...	16. 93	—	2	...	22. 77	—	17	...	19. 365
—	16	...	17. 74	—	2, 3	...	15. 399	—	18	...	12. 128

1 John.			1 John.			1 John.		
chap.	ver.	page	chap.	ver.	page	chap.	ver.	page
3.	18	... 16. 71	4.	10	... 3. 375	5.	3	... 15. 310
—	18	... 19. 187	—	10	... 12. 278	—	3	... 16. 70
—	19	... 12. 465	—	10	... 13. 142	—	3	... 21. 28
—	19	... 12. 488	—	10	... 18. 80	—	3, 4	... 17. 41
—	19	... 14. 222	—	10	... 18. 136	—	3, 4	... 17. 71
—	19	... 17. 437	—	10	... 18. 329	—	3, 4	... 20. 127
—	19	... 20. 32	—	10	... 19. 482	—	3-5	... 15. 235
—	19	... 20. 80	—	10	... 21. 138	—	3-5	... 16. 475
—	20	... 1. 9	—	11	... 15. 433	—	3-10	... 20. 55
—	20	... 13. 278	—	11	... 21. 96	—	4	... 12. 417
—	20	... 15. 265	—	13	... 8. 196	—	4	... 12. 491
—	20	... 17. 315	—	13	... 12. 128	—	4	... 14. 473
—	20	... 19. 87	—	13	... 21. 27	—	4	... 15. 13
—	20	... 19. 299	—	14	... 6. 102	—	4	... 15. 112
—	20, 21	... 2. 179	—	16	... 13. 150	—	4	... 16. 98
—	20, 21	... 4. 156	—	17	... 4. 234	—	4	... 17. 222
—	20, 21	... 17. 433	—	17	... 12. 304	—	4	... 20. 16
—	20, 21	... 18. 69	—	17	... 20. 263	—	4, 5	... 12. 392
—	21	... 17. 503	—	17	... 20. 56	—	4, 5	... 12. 399
—	21	... 21. 352	—	17	... 21. 14	—	4, 5	... 17. 140
—	21, 22	... 11. 357	—	17, 18	... 12. 361	—	4, 5	... 18. 454
—	22	... 12. 255	—	18	... 5. 347	—	4, 5	... 19. 90
—	23	... 15. 139	—	18	... 13. 84	—	5	... 17. 148
—	23	... 19. 234	—	18	... 13. 154	—	5	... 21. 214
—	23	... 21. 132	—	18	... 14. 197	—	6	... 14. 180
—	24	... 12. 19	—	18	... 14. 201	—	6	... 19. 485
—	24	... 12. 113	—	18	... 15. 338	—	6	... 22. 39
—	28	... 15. 288	—	19	... 3. 147	—	7, 8	... 15. 384
4.	1	... 6. 293	—	19	... 5. 72	—	7, 8	... 15. 481
—	1	... 14. 332	—	19	... 12. 280	—	8	... 22. 109
—	2	... 17. 148	—	19	... 12. 380	—	10	... 4. 120
—	4	... 15. 115	—	19	... 13. 142	—	10	... 6. 18
—	4	... 18. 161	—	19	... 16. 154	—	10	... 7. 436
—	4	... 20. 289	—	19	... 17. 125	—	10	... 10. 447
—	4, 5	... 10. 284	—	19	... 19. 184	—	10	... 12. 493
—	5	... 18. 388	—	20	... 10. 75	—	10	... 15. 390
—	5	... 20. 132	—	20	... 15. 287	—	10	... 16. 305
—	7	... 13. 63	—	20	... 18. 135	—	10	... 20. 320
—	7	... 13. 244	—	20	... 21. 120	—	10	... 22. 111
—	7	... 21. 119	—	21	... 19. 271	—	12	... 13. 330
—	7, 8	... 21. 95	5.	1	... 2. 349	—	12	... 15. 49
—	7, 8	... 22. 101	—	1	... 21. 149	—	12	... 18. 435
—	8	... 9. 469	—	1	... 21. 299	—	12	... 21. 220
—	8	... 12. 110	—	1, 2	... 18. 135	—	13	... 11. 21
—	8	... 18. 31	—	2	... 21. 119	—	13	... 13. 371
—	8	... 19. 84	—	3	... 2. 135	—	13	... 13. 486
—	8	... 19. 171	—	3	... 9. 328	—	14	... 12. 348
—	8, 16	... 21. 84	—	3	... 12. 110	—	14	... 15. 148
—	9	... 2. 388	—	3	... 13. 144	—	14, 15	... 12. 255
—	9, 10	... 18. 19	—	3	... 13. 175	—	14, 15	... 18. 67
—	9, 10	... 19. 85	—	3	... 13. 468	—	14, 15	... 21. 195
—	9, 10	... 19. 479	—	3	... 15. 135	—	15	... 15. 148

1 John.			Jude.			Revelations.		
chap. v r.	vol.	page	chap. ver.	vol.	page	chap. ver.	vol.	page
5.	18	... 12. 64	—	20	... 12. 232	3.	5	... 12. 155
—	19	... 12. 434	—	20	... 13. 452	—	5	... 19. 147
—	19	... 21. 104	—	20	... 20. 433	—	5	... 19. 490
—	20	... 13. 245	—	21	... 12. 387	—	10	... 17. 18
—	20	... 13. 347	—	21	... 12. 448	—	10	... 22. 86
—	20	... 16. 236	—	21	... 13. 357	—	14	... 19. 81
—	20	... 19. 72	—	21	... 15. 409	—	16	... 16. 291
—	20	... 22. 7	—	21	... 18. 269	—	17, 18	... 15. 222
—	21	... 6. 303	—	21	... 20. 165	—	17, 18	... 15. 260
—	24	... 21. 132	—	21	... 20. 286	—	17, 18	... 16. 16
—	26	... 17. 307	—	21	... 20. 377	—	17, 18	... 20. 413
			—	24	... 14. 371	—	17, 18	... 21. 169
			—	24	... 17. 253	—	18	... 9. 391
			—	24	... 18. 319	—	18	... 20. 40
			—	24	... 20. 193	—	18	... 22. 103
						—	19	... 15. 125
						—	20	... 7. 150
						—	20	... 15. 428
						—	20	... 20. 97
						—	21	... 19. 147
						4.	8	... 13. 153
						—	10, 11	... 17. 102
						—	11	... 12. 310
						—	11	... 13. 151
						—	11	... 13. 406
						—	11	... 20. 294
						5.	8	... 10. 267
						—	9	... 17. 442
						—	9	... 19. 476
						—	11, 12	... 19. 104
						—	12	... 19. 458
						—	12	... 20. 27
						6.	2	... 17. 254
						—	9	... 14. 33
						—	9, 10	... 22. 114
						—	11	... 9. 447
						—	15-17	... 14. 176
						—	16	... 10. 24
						—	16	... 13. 23
						—	16	... 14. 198
						7.	9, 10	... 19. 492
						—	14	... 16. 22
						—	14, 15	... 19. 89
						—	14, 15	... 20. 40
						—	14, 15	... 20. 228
						—	14-16	... 19. 98
						—	15	... 20. 376
						—	17	... 20. 376
						8.	3	... 12. 373
						—	3	... 15. 142
						—	3	... 15. 436
						—	3	... 18. 263

Revelations.			Revelations.			Revelations.		
chap. ver.	vol.	page	chap. ver.	vol.	page	chap. ver.	vol.	page
8. 3	...	19. 26	14. 13	...	20. 192	20. 12	...	22. 77
— 3, 4	...	13. 471	15. 4	...	19. 83	— 13	...	2. 447
11. 8	...	5. 254	16. 5	...	20. 218	— 13	...	14. 38
— 10	...	14. 31	— 5, 6	...	20. 223	— 13	...	14. 419
12. 4	...	14. 421	— 9	...	15. 323	— 13	...	20. 173
— 9	...	17. 450	— 15	...	9. 367	21. 4	...	2. 464
— 10	...	17. 250	— 15	...	16. 22	— 4	...	12. 176
— 11	...	8. 492	17. 4	...	8. 308	— 4	...	16. 190
— 11	...	9. 141	— 5	...	3. 69	— 4	...	22. 127
— 11	...	10. 451	— 9	...	3. 49	— 7	...	12. 340
— 11	...	12. 395	— 12	...	3. 92	— 7	...	14. 347
— 11	...	14. 231	18. 4	...	3. 46	— 8	...	10. 99
— 11	...	15. 113	19. 7, 8	...	3. 396	— 8	...	14. 42
— 11	...	15. 271	— 8	...	16. 16	— 27	...	21. 472
— 11	...	17. 257	— 8	...	19. 480	22. 2	...	22. 17
— 11	...	17. 357	— 10	...	5. 437	— 4	...	20. 226
— 11	...	19. 184	20. 6, 14	...	11. 373	— 5	...	16. 198
— 12	...	3. 283	— 7	...	4. 227	— 11	...	17. 232
— 12	...	5. 201	— 10	...	17. 255	— 15	...	17. 160
— 12	...	13. 66	— 12	...	1. 170	— 15	...	19. 216
— 12	...	21. 58	— 12	...	2. 403	— 17	...	3. 8
— 13	...	3. 73	— 12	...	4. 221	— 17	...	5. 17
13. 7	...	8. 492	— 12	...	5. 295	— 17	...	12. 363
14. 13	...	8. 121	— 12	...	9. 450	— 17	...	16. 209
— 13	...	8. 322	— 12	...	12. 354	— 17	...	20. 166
— 13	...	14. 136	— 12	...	13. 364	— 18	...	4. 164
— 13	...	14. 288	— 12	...	16. 381	— 20	...	1. 110
— 13	...	17. 435	— 12	...	20. 45	— 20	...	2. 247
— 13	...	19. 370	— 12	...	21. 80	— 20	...	16. 208
— 13	...	20. 177	— 12	...	21. 153	— 20	...	20. 163

Psalms.			Psalms.			Canticles.		
chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page
119.	76	... 7. 300	119.	133	... 8. 381	1.	12	... 15. 427
—	77	... 7. 309	—	134	... 8. 398	2.	3	... 15. 358
—	78	... 7. 322	—	135	... 8. 408	Isaiah.		
—	78, 79	... 7. 331	—	136	... 8. 420	43.	2	... 15. 297
—	80	... 7. 339	—	137	... 8. 437	50.	10	... 18. 51
—	81	... 7. 349	—	138	... 8. 454	53	1	... 3. 191
—	82	... 7. 361	—	139	... 8. 465	—	2	... 3. 219
—	83	... 7. 372	—	140	... 8. 477	—	3	... 3. 247
—	85	... 7. 381	—	141	... 8. 489	—	4	... 3. 260
—	89	... 7. 391	—	142	... 9. 3	—	5	... 3. 272
—	90	... 7. 407	—	143	... 9. 14	—	6	... 3. 295
—	91	... 7. 413	—	144	... 9. 24	—	7	... 3. 335
—	92	... 7. 420	—	145	... 9. 36	—	8	... 3. 344
—	93	... 7. 428	—	146	... 9. 53	—	9	... 3. 362
—	94	... 7. 442	—	147	... 9. 66	—	10	... 3. 368
—	96	... 7. 451	—	148	... 9. 77	—	11	... 3. 400
—	97	... 7. 463	—	149	... 9. 83	—	12	... 3. 455
—	98	... 7. 482	—	150	... 9. 96	Amos.		
—	99	... 8. 9	—	151	... 9. 101	4.	12	... 16. 23
—	100	... 8. 14	—	152	... 9. 113	Micah.		
—	101	... 8. 25	—	153	... 9. 125	6.	5	... 18. 40
—	102	... 8. 36	—	154	... 9. 135	—	8	... 15. 394
—	103	... 8. 43	—	155	... 9. 145	7.	18	... 15. 438
—	104	... 8. 53	—	156	... 9. 158	Zechariah.		
—	105	... 8. 64	—	161	... 9. 166	14.	6, 7	... 15. 414
—	106	... 8. 80	—	162	... 9. 177	—	9	... 5. 381
—	107	... 8. 94	—	163	... 9. 180	—	20, 21	... 17. 441
—	108	... 8. 106	—	164	... 9. 189	Malachi.		
—	109	... 8. 114	—	165	... 9. 199	3.	7	... 15. 315
—	110	... 8. 127	—	166	... 9. 218	—	17	... 18. 337
—	111	... 8. 134	—	167	... 9. 227	Matthew.		
—	112	... 8. 148	—	168	... 9. 236	4.	1	... 1. 258
—	113	... 8. 155	—	171	... 9. 245	—	2-4	... 1. 267
—	114	... 8. 166	—	172	... 9. 254	—	5, 6	... 1. 276
—	115	... 8. 177	—	173	... 9. 263	—	7	... 1. 286
—	116	... 8. 188	—	174	... 9. 277	—	8, 9	... 1. 301
—	116-17	... 8. 198	—	175	... 9. 292	—	10	... 1. 313
—	118	... 8. 208	—	176	... 9. 299	—	11	... 1. 323
—	119	... 8. 220	127.	3	... 18. 85	6.	6-8	... 1. 4
—	120	... 8. 230	Proverbs.			—	9	... 1. 39
—	121	... 8. 238	3.	17	... 18. 367	—	10	... 1. 90
—	122	... 8. 248	—	18	... 22. 13	—	11	... 1. 149
—	123	... 8. 263	—	31, 32	... 18. 376	—	12	... 1. 167
—	124	... 8. 273	6.	6-8	... 22. 3	—	13	... 1. 199
—	125	... 8. 285	10.	20	... 18. 387	7.	12	... 2. 369
—	126	... 8. 296	14.	14	... 18. 464	8.	5-10	... 17. 146
—	127	... 8. 307	Ecclesiastes.					
—	128	... 8. 320	7.	29	... 19. 49			
—	129	... 8. 333	9.	11	... 2. 315			
—	130	... 8. 346	12.	7	... 19. 61			
—	131	... 8. 357						
—	132	... 8. 365						

2 Thessalonians.			Hebrews.			James.		
chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page	chap.	ver.	vol. page
2.	10	... 3. 75	11.	26	... 14. 459	2.	19	... 4. 239
—	11, 12	... 3. 85	—	28	... 14. 473	—	20	... 4. 242
—	12	... 3. 94	—	29	... 15. 3	—	21	... 4. 244
—	13	... 3. 102	—	30	... 15. 17	—	22	... 4. 253
—	14	... 3. 112	—	31	... 15. 30	—	23	... 4. 255
—	15	... 3. 122	12.	1	... 2. 411	—	24	... 4. 260
—	15	... 5. 487	—	24	... 22. 106	—	25	... 4. 265
—	16, 17	... 3. 135	13.	5	... 18. 443	—	26	... 4. 269
—	16	... 3. 146	—	20, 21	... 17. 373	3.	1	... 4. 270
—	17	... 3. 166				—	2	... 4. 274
3.	5	... 2. 235				—	3, 4	... 4. 282
						—	5	... 4. 283
						—	6	... 4. 285
						—	7, 8	... 4. 289
						—	9	... 4. 294
						—	10	... 4. 297
						—	11, 12	... 4. 298
						—	13	... 4. 299
						—	14	... 4. 301
						—	15	... 4. 305
						—	16	... 4. 309
						—	17	... 4. 310
						—	18	... 4. 321
						4.	1	... 4. 325
						—	2	... 4. 332
						—	3	... 4. 338
						—	4	... 4. 342
						—	5	... 4. 346
						—	6	... 4. 348
						—	7	... 4. 356
						—	8	... 4. 366
						—	9	... 4. 372
						—	10	... 4. 377
						—	11	... 4. 379
						—	12	... 4. 383
						—	13	... 4. 386
						—	14	... 4. 390
						—	15	... 4. 391
						—	16	... 4. 394
						5.	1	... 4. 398
						—	2, 3	... 4. 403
						—	4	... 4. 408
						—	5	... 4. 412
						—	6	... 4. 415
						—	7	... 4. 418
						—	8	... 4. 422
						—	9	... 4. 423
						—	10	... 4. 426
						—	11	... 4. 428
						—	12	... 4. 434
						—	13	... 4. 439
						—	14	... 4. 445



