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THE COMPLETE WORKS

OF

THOMAS MANTON, D.D.

VOLUME IV.

CONTAINING

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

JAMES.

LONDON:

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1871.

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A PRACTICAL COMMENTARY,

OR

AN EXPOSITION WITH NOTES

ON THE

EPISTLE OF JAMES.

VOL. IV.

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THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

To the Honourable Colonel Alexander Popham, a Member of Parliament.

SIR, Dedications, though often abused to a vain flattery, are of

ancient use, and may be of great profit. The custom is the less to be

disparaged, because we find it hallowed by the practice of one of the

penmen of the Holy Scriptures, St Luke, in his Gospel and the Acts,

Luke i. 3, Acts i. 3, both which he inscribeth to Theophilus, a person

not only eminent in religion, but dignified with birth and place; [1]

which hath been imitated by the holy men of God in all ages; their aim

in such inscriptions being, partly to signify their thankfulness for

favours received in this public and spiritual way of return; partly to

oblige persons eminent by the respects of the church, and by the honour

of their name, to commend their labours to public acceptance; partly by

an innocent guile to bring them under a greater obligation in the

profession and practice of the truths of religion. It is usual in

scripture to ascribe a testimony, producible at the day of judgment, to

the more notable circumstances and accidents of human life; as to the

rust of hoarded money, James v. 3; to the solemn publications of the

gospel, the dust of the apostles, feet, Matt. x. And so, I remember, in

the primitive times, when grown persons were baptized, they were wont

to leave a stole and white garment in the vestry of the church for a

testimony and witness. Wherefore, when one Elpidophorus had revolted

from the faith, the deacon of the church came and told him, `O

Elpidophorus, I will keep this stole as a monument against thee to all

eternity., And truly books, being public monuments, are much of this

nature, a testimony likely to be produced in the day of judgment, not

only against the author, but the persons to whom they are inscribed, in

case, on either side, there be any defection in judgment or manners

from the truths therein professed; for they being consigned to their

respect and patronage, they are drawn into a fellowship of the

obligation.

Sir there are many reasons why I should prefix your name to this work

,Besides the general relation you have to the place where, [2] by the

blessing of God, I have enjoyed a quiet and successful ministry and

service in the word for these seven years, I have good cause to

remember your frequent attendance upon these lectures and countenancing

of religion, whilst the Lord continued your abode amongst us; your

private respect to my person; your often repairing those breaches which

at any time were made in my estate by the hand of violence: for all

which, if the Lord would make me an instrument, by the present

exercises, of promoting your spiritual welfare, or warming your heart

into any raisedness of zeal and religious eminency, that by your

example others may be provoked to the emulation of the like virtue, I

shall have my aim and the fruit of my prayers. By this inscription the

book is become not only mine but yours; you own the truths to which I

have witnessed, and it will be sad for our account in the day of the

Lord, if, after such a solemn profession, you or I should be found in a

carnal and unregenerate condition.

Good sir, make it your work to honour him that hath advanced you. Those

differences of high and low, rich and poor, are only calculated for the

present world, and cannot outlive time. In the grave, at the day of

judgment, and in heaven, there are no such distinctions. The grave

taketh away all civil differences; skulls wear no wreaths and marks of

honour: Job iii. 19, ,The small and the great are there, and the

servant is free from his master.` So at the day of judgment: ,I saw the

dead, both great and small, stand before the Lord,` Rev. xx. 12. None

can be exempted from trial at Christ`s bar. When civil differences

vanish, moral take place. The distinction then is good and bad, not

great and small. Oh, sir, then you will see that there is no birth like

that to be born again of the Spirit, no tenure like an interest in the

covenant, no estate like the inheritance of the saints in light, no

magistracy like that whereby we sit at Christ`s right hand, judging

angels and men, 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3. How will the faces of great men gather

blackness, that now flourish in the pomp and splendour of an outward

estate, but then shall become the scorn of God, and saints, and angels!

And those holy ones of God shall come forth and say, ,Lo, this is the

man that made not God his strength, but trusted in the abundance of his

riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness!` Ps. lii. 7. Ah!

sir, wealth and power are of no use in that day, unless it be to

aggravate and increase judgment. Many that are now despicable, so

obscure that they are lost in the tale and count of the world, shall

then be taken into the arms of Christ; he will not be ashamed to

confess them man by man before his Father, Luke xii. 8--;Father, this

is one of mine. Oh! it is sweet to hear such an acknowledgment out of

Christ,s own mouth. So also in heaven there are none poor. All the

vessels of glory are filled up. If there be any difference in the

degree, the foundation of it is laid in grace, not greatness.

Sir, you will find in this epistle that men of your rank and quality

are liable to great corruptions; [3] they soon grow proud, sensual,

oppressive, worldly, stubborn against the word: ,I went to the great

men, but they had altogether broken the yoke,` Jer. v. 5. To a

spiritual eye, the condition is no way desirable but as it giveth

fairer advantages of public usefulness and a more diffusive charity.

Greatness hath nothing greater than a heart to be willing, and a power

to be able to do good. [4] Then it is a fair resemblance of that

perfection which is in God, who differeth from man in nothing so much

as the eternity of his being, the infiniteness of his power, and the

unweariedness of his love and goodness. [5] It is the fond ambition of

man to sever these things. We all affect to be great, but not good; and

would be as gods, not in holiness, but power. Nothing hath cost the

creature dearer since the creation. It turned angels into devils, and

Adam out of paradise. In these times we have seen strange changes. God

hath been contending with the oaks and cedars, Amos ii. 9, and staining

all worldly glory. Certainly there is no security in anything on this

side Christ; whatever storm cometh, you will find his bosom the surest

place of retreat. The Lord give you to lay up your soul there by the

sure reposal of a lively and active faith!

Sir, you will bear with my plainness and freedom with you; other

addresses would neither be comely in me, nor pleasing to you. Our work

is not to flatter greatness, but, in the scripture sense (not in the

humour of the age), to level mountains, Luke iii. 5. Now, sir, the God

and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ bless you with all spiritual

blessings in Christ; as also your pious consort, your hopeful buds,

with all the worthy relatives and branches of your family, that the

name of Popham may yield forth a sweet and fresh perfume in the

churches of Christ; which I desire to fix here, as the prayer of him

who is, sir, yours, in all Christian observance,

Tho. Manton.

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[1] So much I conceive is intimated in that form of address, kra'tiste

Theo'phile, a term which is wont to be given to persons of honour, as

Acts xxiv. 3, kra'tiste Phe'lix, and Acts xxvi. 25, kra'tiste Pheste,

in both places we render noble. And so by Justin Martyr to Diognetus,

to whom he giveth an account of the Christian religion, kra'tiste

Dio'gnete. (Just. Mart. Epist. ad Diog.)

[2] Stoke-Newington.

[3] See the notes on James i. 9, 11, and ii. 1-7, and v. 1-5.

[4] "Nihil habet fortuna magna majus quam ut possit, et natura bona

melius quam ut velit, benefacere quamplurimis."--Tullius, Orat. pro

Rege Deiotaro.

[5] "Tri'a e'stin en hois diaphe'ron e'stin o Theo's, aidi'oteti zo'es,

periousi'a duna'meos, kai` me` dialei'pein eupoiein tou`s

anthro'pous,"--Themistius.

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AN ADVERTISEMENT TO THE READER.

GOOD READER,--It is usual with those that publish books, to premise

somewhat by way of excuse and acknowledgment of the unworthiness of

what they publish; which, setting aside the modest sense that every man

should have of his own endeavours, seemeth not to be without crime; if

it be unworthy, the excuse will not make it better or more passable;

for this is to adventure upon a crime against conviction, and (if we

may allude to a matter so weighty) is somewhat like Pilate,s case, who

washed his hands, and yet condemned Christ. Usually such professions

are but counterfeit; and that praise which men seem to neglect, or beat

back at the first hop, they readily take at next rebound, which

certainly is a vain and wicked artifice in divine matters; for besides

the hypocrisy, there is a disparagement done to the precious truths

which they publish, whilst they would seem to weaken the esteem of

them, that they may the more plausibly promote their own honour: the

best that can be said is, that every man in public would appear in a

better dress than common infirmity will allow; and to this work we come

not out of choice, but constraint. For my own part (though I know

apologies of this nature are little credited), I can freely profess

that I had no itch to appear in public, as conceiving my gifts fitter

for private edification; and being humbled with the constant burthen of

four times a week preaching, what could I do? And if I had a mind to

divulge my labours, some will wonder that I made choice of this

subject, which was conceived in my very youth, and without the least

aim of any further publication than to the auditory that then attended

upon it. But it being an entire piece, and being persuaded by the

renewed importunity of many gracious ministers and Christians that it

might conduce somewhat to public benefit, I was willing to be deaf to

all considerations of my own credit and fame. Wherein is that to be

accounted of, so one poor soul receive comfort and profit? The Epistle

of Jude was with this licensed to the press. But being wearied with

this and the constant returns of my other employment, and hearing that

another learned brother [6] intendeth to publish his elaborate

meditations on that epistle I shall confine my thoughts to that privacy

to which I had intended these, had they not been thus publicly drawn

forth. The matter herein delivered, will, I conceive, be found holy and

useful. If any expression should be found that savoureth not of true

piety, or suiteth not with reverence to God, charity to men, or zeal of

good works, I do, from my soul, wish it expunged, and shall upon

conviction take the next occasion to retract it. I know some are

prejudiced against endeavours of this kind, as if nothing could be said

but what hath been said already. For my part, I pretend to nothing

novel, and though no other things can be said, yet they may be more

explained, and with more liveliness of phrase and expression, every

truth receiving some savour from the vessel through which it passeth;

and yet I may speak it without arrogance, some arguments thou wilt find

improved for thy further edification; and therefore I suppose (though

there be now some glut) this book may crowd forth in the throng of

comments. I confess I have made use of those that have formerly written

upon this epistle, and upon others, instigation, that the work might be

more complete, more than I at first intended; and yet (I hope) I cannot

be said to ,boast in another man,s line of things made ready to our

hand,` 2 Cor. x. 16. For thy direction in this work, I do entreat thee

to compare the notes with the exposition, especially if thou dost at

any time stick at the genuineness of any point. Well, then, so often

repeated, is the usual note of the use or practical inference. If the

style seem too curt and abrupt, know that I sometimes reserved myself

for a sudden inculcation and enlargement. For the great controversy of

justification, I have handled it as largely as the epistle would give

leave, and the state of the auditory would bear. Had I been aware of

some controversies grown since amongst us, I should have said more;

yet, take it altogether, enough is said as to my sense, and for

vindicating this epistle. If some passages be again repeated, which I

suppose will seldom fall out, impute it to the multitude of my

employment. I never saw the work altogether, and my thoughts being

scattered to so many subjects throughout the week, I could not always

so distinctly remember what I had written. In short, if thou receivest

any benefit, return me but the relief of thy prayers for an increase of

abilities, and a faithful use of them to the Lord,s glory, and I shall

be abundantly recompensed.

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[6] Mr Jenkins.

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PROLEGOMENA,

OR,

A PREFACE WHEREIN, BESIDES AN EXPLICATION OF THE TITLE,

SEVERAL NECESSARY PRELIMINARY QUESTIONS

ARE HANDLED AND DISCUSSED.

I INTEND, by the assistance of God,s Holy Spirit, in the weekly returns

of this lecture, to handle the Epistle of James. It is full of useful

and practical matter. I have the rather chosen this scripture that it

may be an allay to those comforts which, in another exercise, I have

endeavoured to draw out of the 53d of Isaiah. I would, at the same

time, carry on the doctrine both of faith and manners, and show you

your duties together with your encouragements, lest, with Ephraim, you

should only love to tread out the corn, and refuse to break the clods,

Hosea x. 11. We are all apt to divorce comfort from duty, and to

content ourselves with a `barren and unfruitful knowledge, of Jesus

Christ, 2 Peter i. 8; as if all that he required of the world were only

a few naked, cold, and inactive apprehensions of his merit, and all

things were so done for us, that nothing remained to be done by us.

This is the wretched conceit of many in the present age, and therefore,

either they abuse the sweetness of grace to looseness, or the power of

it to laziness. Christ,s merit and the Spirit,s efficacy are the

commonplaces from whence they draw all the defences and excuses of

their own wantonness and idleness. It is true God hath opened an

excellent treasure in the church to defray the debts of humble sinners,

and to bear the expenses of the saints to heaven; but there is nothing

allowed to wanton prodigals, who spend freely and sin lavishly upon the

mere account of the riches of grace; as in your charitable bequests,

when you leave moneys in the way of a stock, it is to encourage men in

an honest calling, not to feed riot and excess. Who ever left a sum for

drunkards, or a stock to be employed in dicing and gaming? Again, I

confess, whatever grace doth, it doth freely; we have ,grace for

grace,` [7] John i. 16; that is, grace for grace,s sake. But there is a

difference between merit and means; a schoolmaster may teach a child

gratis, freely, and yet he must take pains to get his learning. And

there is a difference between causality and order. Mercy is never

obtained but in the use of means; wisdom,s dole is dispensed at

wisdom,s gate, Prov. viii. 34. But the use of means doth not oblige God

to give mercy; there are conditions which only show the way of grace`s

working. Again, I grant that closing with Christ is an excellent duty,

and of the highest importance in religion. But in Christ there are no

dead and sapless branches; faith is not an idle grace; wherever it is,

it fructifieth in good works. To evince all this to you, I have chosen

to explain this epistle. The apostle wrote it upon the same reason, to

wit, to prevent or check their misprisions who cried up naked

apprehensions for faith, and a barren profession for true religion.

Such unrelenting lumps of sin and lust were there even in the primitive

times, gilded with the specious name of Christians.

The epistle in our translation beareth title thus, The Epistle General

of James; in the Greek, Iako'bou tou aposto'lou epistole`

katholike`--the Catholic, or General Epistle of James the Apostle; for

the clearing of which, before I enter upon the body of the epistle,

give me leave to premise these questions:--

1. Whether this epistle be of divine authority?

2. Concerning the subordinate author or instrument, James, what James

this was?

3. What was the time of writing it?

4. The persons to whom it was written.

5. What is the occasion, matter, and scope of it?

6. The reason of that term in the title, catholic or general.

I. Concerning the divine authority of this epistle, I desire to discuss

it with reverence and trembling. It is dangerous to loosen foundation

stones. I should wholly have omitted this part of my work, but that the

difference is so famous; and to conceal known adversaries is an

argument of fear and distrust. The Lord grant that the cure be not

turned into a snare, and that vain men may not unsettle themselves by

what is intended for an establishment! That which gave occasion to

doubt of this epistle was some passages in Jerome and Eusebius, in

which they seem, at least by reporting the sense of others, to infringe

the authority of it. I shall give you the passages, and then show you

what little reason there is why they should jostle James out of the

canon. The passage of Eusebius runneth thus:--Kai` ta kata` Iako'bon,

hou e pro'te ton epistolon ton onomazome'non katholikon einai le'getai,

iste'on os notheu'etai me`n; ou polloi goun ton pa'lai autes

emnemo'neusan, os oude` tes legome'nes Iouda, mi'as kai` autes ou'ses

ton legome'non katholikon; o'mos d' i'smen kai` tau'tas meta` ton

loi'pon en plei'stais ekklesi'ais, &c.; [8] that is, ,And these things

concerning James, whose epistle that is reported to be, which is the

first among the epistles called universal; [9] yet we are to understand

that the same is not void of suspicion, for many of the ancients make

no mention thereof, nor of Jude, being also one of the seven called

universal; yet notwithstanding we know them to be publicly read in most

churches:` so far Eusebius. The other passage of Jerome, [10] is

this:--Jacobus unam tantum scripsit epistolam, quae et ipsa ab alio

quodam sub ejus nomine edita esse asseritur, licet paullatim tempore

procedente obtinuerit auctoritatem; that is, ,James wrote but one

epistle, which is also said to be put forth by another in his name,

though by little and little in process of time it gained authority in

the church.` These are the clauses which first begat a doubt of this

epistle, but without reason--these two authors reporting the sense of

others rather than their own; and if any part of scripture should be

laid aside because some have questioned it, the devil would soon obtain

his purpose. One time or another the greatest part of it hath been

impeached by men of a wicked and unsober wit, who, when they could not

pervert the rule to gratify their purposes, reflected a scorn and

contempt upon it. Now it would exceedingly furnish the triumphs of hell

if we should think their private cavils to be warrant sufficient to

weaken our faith, and besides disadvantage the church by the loss of a

most considerable part of the canon; for the case doth not only concern

this epistle, but divers others, as the Second of Peter, the Second and

Third Epistles of John, the Book of the Revelation, the last chapter of

Mark, [11] some passages in the 22d of Luke, [12] the beginning of the

8th of John, [13] some passages in the 5th chapter of the First Epistle

of John. Where would profaneness stay? and, if this liberty should be

allowed, the flood of atheism stop its course? But, besides all this,

why should a few private testimonies prejudice the general consent of

the church, which hath transmitted this epistle to us, together with

other parts of the New Testament? For if we go to external testimony,

there is no reason but the greater number should carry it. It were easy

to instance in councils and fathers, who by an unanimous suffrage have

commended this epistle to the faith and reverence of the church. Those

canons which commonly go under the name of the apostles [14] (though I

build not much upon that testimony) decreed it to be received for

scripture; so the Council of Laodicea, can. 59; so of Milevis, cap. 7;

so the third Council of Carthage, cap. 47; of Orange, cap. 25;

Concilium Cabilonense, cap. 33; of Toledo, cap. 3. So for the consent

of the most ancient fathers, [15] by whom it is quoted as scripture, as

by Ignatius, Epist. ad Ephesios, &c. You may see Brochmand, in Prolog.

Epist. Jacob, and Iodocus Coccius, his `Thesaurus Theologicus,, tom.,

i., lib. 6, art. 23; read also Dr Rainold,s `De Libris Apocryphis,,

tom. i., praelect. 4, &c. Out of all which you may see what authority

it had among the ancients. Of late, I confess, it hath found harder

measure Cajetan and Erasmus show little respect to it; Luther plainly

rejecteth it; and for the incivility and rudeness of his expression in

calling it stramineam epistolam, as it cannot be denied, [16] so it is

not to be excused. Luther himself seemeth to retract it, speaking of it

elsewhere with more reverence: Epistolam hanc, quamvis rejectam a

veteribus, pro utili tamen et non contemnenda habeo, vel ob hanc causam

quod nihil plan� humanae doctrinae offerat, ut legem Dei fortiter

urgeat; verum ut meam de illa sententiam candide promam extra

praejudicium, existimo nullius esse apostoli (Luther Praef. Epist.

Jacob.); that is, `This epistle, though not owned by many of the

ancients, I judge to be full of profitable and precious matter, it

offering no doctrine of a human invention, strongly urging the law of

God; yet, in my opinion (which I would speak without prejudice), it

seemeth not to be written by any apostle;, which was the error and

failing of this holy and eminent servant of God; and therein he is

followed by others of his own profession, Osiander, Camerarius,

Bugenhag, &c., and Althamerus, whose blasphemies are recorded by

Grotius in his `Rivetian Apol. Discuss.,, p. 170, and by him unworthily

urged to reflect a scorn upon our churches. Concerning this Andreas

Althamerus, see learned Rivet,s reply, in his dia'lusis (Grot.

Discuss., p. 480). However, Luther is herein deserted by the modern

Lutherans, who allow this epistle in the canon, as is plain by the

writings of Hunnius, Montrer, Gerhard, Walther, &c. Brochmand, a

learned Lutheran, and Bishop of Zealand, in Denmark, hath written a

worthy comment upon this epistle, to whom (though I received him late,

and when the work was in a good progress) I have been beholden for some

help in this exposition, especially in the critical explication of some

Greek words, and most of the quotations out of the Socinian pamphlets,

and for whom I acknowledge myself indebted to the courtesy of that

learned and worthy gentleman, Colonel Edward Leigh, to whose

faithfulness and industry the church of God oweth so much.

The reasons which moved Luther to reject this epistle shall be answered

in their proper places. By his own testimony, cited before, it

containeth nothing repugnant to other scriptures, and it savoureth of

the genius of the gospel, as well as other writings of the apostles;

and though he seemeth to make little mention of Christ and the gospel,

yet, if you consider it more thoroughly, you will find many passages

looking that way. The Epistle of Paul to Philemon hath been hitherto

reputed canonical, yet it treateth not of the merits and death of

Christ. I confess the style which the apostle useth is more rousing,

much of the epistle concerning the carnal Hebrews, as well as those

that had taken upon themselves the profession of Christ; in short, it

hath a force upon the conscience, and is not only delivered by the

church, but sealed up to our use and comfort by the Holy Ghost, as

other scriptures are. It was written by an apostle, as other epistles

taken into the canon, as the inscription showeth, and there is no

reason why we should doubt of this title, more than of Paul,s name

before his epistles. It is true there were some spurious writings that

carried the names of the apostles, as the `Acts of Andrew,, the

`Liturgy of St James,, the `Canons of the Apostles,, `Luke,s History of

the Acts of Paul and Tecla,, `Mark,s Life of Barnabas,, the `Gospel of

Paul;, but all these, by the just hand of God, had some mark of infamy

impressed upon them, by the enforcement of matters false or ridiculous,

or contrary to the truth of doctrine or history. But this epistle hath

nothing contrary to the truth of religion, nor unbeseeming the gravity

of it, and the majesty of other scriptures; therefore, upon the whole,

we may pronounce that, it being represented to us with these

advantages, it hath a just title to our respect and belief, and should

be received in the church with the same esteem and reverence which we

bear to other scriptures.

II. Secondly, Concerning the subordinate author, James, there is some

controversy about stating the right person, who he was. In the general,

it is certain he was an apostle, no epistles but theirs being received

into the rule of faith; and it is no prejudice that he styleth himself

`the servant of the Lord,, for so doth Paul often, as we shall prove

anon in the explication of the first verse. But now, among the apostles

there were two called by the name of James--James the son of Zebedee,

and James the son of Alpheus. Many of the ancients indeed thought there

were three of this name--Jacobus major, or of Zebedee; Jacobus minor,

or of Alpheus; and James the brother of the Lord, called also

Chobliham, [17] or Oblias, or James the Just, whom they thought not to

be an apostle, but Bishop of Jerusalem. Jerome calleth him decimum

tertium apostolum, the thirteenth apostle (in Isai. lib. v. cap. 7).

Dorotheas maketh him one of the seventy, the first in his catalogue,

but without reason. For indeed there were but two Jameses, [18] this

latter James being the same with him of Alpheus; for plainly the

brother of the Lord is reckoned among the apostles, Gal. i. 19; and

called a pillar, Gal. ii. 9; and he is called the brother of the Lord,

because he was in that family to which Christ was numbered. Some

suppose his mother,s sister,s son, the son of Mary of Cleophas, who was

sister to the Virgin. Now, Cleophas and Alpheus is all one, as a

learned author supposeth, [19] though Junius contradicteth it (in

Epist. Judae, sub initio); and Rabanus saith, after the death of

Alpheus, she married Cleophas. But however it be, this James is the

same, which is enough for our purpose. Well, then, there being two, to

which of these is the epistle to be ascribed? The whole stream of

antiquity carrieth it for the brother of the Lord, who, as I said, is

the same with Jacobus minor, or the son of Alpheus; and with good

reason, the son of Zebedee being long before beheaded by Herod, from

the very beginning of the preaching of the gospel, Acts xii. 2. But

this epistle must needs be of a later date, as alluding to some

passages already written, and noting the degeneration of the church

which was not so very presently. There are some few indeed of another

judgment, as Flavius Dexter, Julius Toletanus, Didacus Dazor, and

others cited by Eusebius Neirembergius, [20] a Spanish Jesuit, who also

bringeth the authority of an ancient Gottish missal to this purpose,

together with reasons to prove this to be the first New Testament

scripture that was written, and all to devolve the honour of the

epistle upon the Spanish saint, Jacobus major; which yet is contrary to

the decree of the Trent Council, which ascribeth it to James the

brother of the Lord. Well, then, James the Less is the person whom we

have found to be the instrument which the Spirit of God made use of to

convey this treasure to the church. Much may be said of him, but I

shall contract all into a brief sum. He was by his private calling an

husbandman, [21] by public office in the church an apostle, and

especially called to the inspection of the church in and about

Jerusalem, either because of his eminency and near relation to Christ,

or for the great esteem he had gained among the Jews; and therefore,

when the other apostles were going to and fro disseminating the word of

life, James is often found at Jerusalem. (See Gal. i. 18, 19; Acts i.

14, 21; and xv. &c.) For his temper, he was of an exact strictness,

exceeding just; and therefore called Oblias, and James the Just; yea,

so just, that Josephus maketh the violence offered to him to be one of

the causes of the Jewish ruin. (Joseph. Antiq., lib. xx. cap. 16.) Of

so great temperance, that he drank neither wine nor strong drink, and

ate no flesh. So pious, that his knees were made like a camel,s hoof by

frequent prayer. His death happened six years before that of Peter,

thirty-eight years before that of John, in the sixty-third year of

Christ, if chronology be true. He died a martyr; they would have him

persuade the people to abandon the doctrine of Christ, which, when he

refused, and pressed the quite contrary, he was thrown down from a

pinnacle of the temple, and his brains dashed out with a fuller,s club,

and so gave up the ghost. See these things set forth at large by

Eusebius, lib. ii. cap. 23, et ibi citatos.

III. Thirdly, For the time when this epistle was written, it cannot be

exactly stated. It is placed first among the catholic epistles, either

as first written, or first received into the canon, though in the

ranking of it there be a variety. In the Greek Bibles it sustaineth the

same place which we assign to it. Some think the Epistle of Peter was

first written; but in so great an uncertainty who can determine

anything? Certain we are, that it was written after the heresies were

somewhat grown, and before Jerusalem drew to its end; for what St James

threateneth, St Paul taketh notice of as accomplished, 1 Thes. ii. 16.

Speaking of the people of the Jews, he saith, `Wrath is come upon them,

eis to` te'los, to the uttermost;, which is denounced in chap. v. of

our apostle. The critical reader, that would know more of the time and

order of this epistle, I refer to Eusebius Neirembergius, lib. xi. De

Origine Sacrae Scripturae, cap. 15.

IV. Fourthly, The persons to whom he wrote are specified in the first

verse `To the twelve tribes,, &c., which we shall explain anon; let it

suffice for the present, that he writeth chiefly to those among them

that were gained to the faith of Christ, though there be many passages

interspersed which do concern the unbelieving Jews. See chap. v. 1, and

the reasons there alleged in the exposition.

V. Fifthly, For the occasion, matter, and scope, you may take it thus:

Certainly one great occasion was that which Austin [22] taketh notice

of, to wit, the growth of that opinion in the apostles, days, that a

bare, naked faith was enough to salvation, though good works were

neglected. It is clear that some such thing was cried up by the school

of Simon. Now, Samaria being nigh to Jerusalem, our apostle, whose

inspection was mostly confined to those churches, might rather than

others take notice of it. But this concerneth but a part of the

epistle; the more general occasion was the great degeneration of faith

and manners, and the growth of libertine doctrines, as about God,s

being the author of sin, the sufficiency of empty faith, and naked

profession, &c. When the world was newly ploughed and sowed with the

gospel, these tares came up together with the good corn. As also to

comfort God,s children against the violence of the persecutions then

exercised upon them, and to awaken the men of his own nation out of

their stupid security, judgments being even at the door, and they

altogether senseless; therefore the whole epistle is fraught with

excellent instructions how to bear afflictions, to hear the word, to

mortify vile affections, to bridle the tongue, to conceive rightly of

the nature of God, to adorn our profession with a good conversation,

with meekness, and peace, and charity; finally, how to behave ourselves

in the time of approaching misery. All these, and many other doctrines,

are scattered throughout the epistle, so that you may see it is

exceeding useful for these times.

VI. Sixthly, Concerning the title catholic or general epistle, which is

the title given all the seven latter epistles; I answer, in some copies

it is kanonike`, canonical; but probably that is an error. Why then

catholic? Many reasons are given. OEcumenius, and out of him Beza,

thinketh it is because they were not inscribed to any particular nation

or city, as Paul,s are to Rome, Corinth, &c. But this holdeth not in

all, some of John,s being dedicated to private persons, to Gaius and

the Elect Lady; and then there must be more than seven, that to the

Hebrews being directed to the same persons to which Peter and James

wrote theirs. Some say, because they contain universal doctrine, or the

public treasure of the universal church; but that would seem to

derogate from the other epistles, and to prefer these before them.

Pareus thinketh they were merely called so by an inconsiderate custom;

but most probably the reason is to vindicate their authenticity, and to

distinguish them from the epistles of Barnabas, Ignatius, Clemens, and

Polycarp, which, though ancient, never made up any part of the rule of

faith, and so not derogate from the other epistles, [23] but to join

these to them. These things premised, I come, by God,s assistance, to

handle the epistle itself.

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[7] charin anti` cha'ritos, id est, non pro ullo merito, sed ex me a

bonitate, quod alibi distinctius enunciat apostolus, charismata kata

ten charin.--Rom. xii. 6 (Grot. in locum).

[8] Euseb., lib. ii. Hist. Eccles., c. 23.

[9] So Dr Hamner rendereth that clause, iste'on me`n os notheu'etai.

[10] Hieron. in Catal. Eccles. Script.

[11] See Hieron., Quest. 3, ad Hedibium et Euthymium.

[12] Sextus Senensis Bibl. sanct., lib. i. c. 23, 24.

[13] Hieron. adversus Pelag., lib. ii.

[14] See Caranza, his Summa Conciliorum, p .7.

[15] Eusebius himself differenceth it from those that are plainly

spurious--lib. iii. Eccles. Hist., c. 25.

[16] Doctor Whitaker denyeth it, as not finding it in his works; but it

is generally granted that this was Luther,s expression, it being found

in his German Bibles printed 1528. The words recorded by Brochman are

these:--Epistola Jacobi vere straminea epistola est, collata cum

Evangelio Johanniw et ejus Epistola prima, et cum Epistolis Paulinis,

imprimis quae ad Romanos, Galatas, Ephesios scriptae sunt; nec enim

genium indolemque habet evangelicam. So in his Comment, on Genesis, in

c. 22, he saith, Facessant de medio adversarii, cum suo Jacobo, quem

toties nobis objiciunt.

[17] Which is rendered by Clemens, perioke` tou la'ou en dikaiosu'ne by

Epiphanius,teichos tou la'ou.

[18] And no more are reckoned by Clemens and Eusebius, yea, by the

scripture, among the apostles. See Mat. x. 2, 3, and Mark iii. 17, 18.

[19] Herbert Thorndike, `Of the Primitive Government of the Church,,

pp. 11-13, who discusseth this matter at large, and with satisfaction.

[20] Eusebius Neirembergius de Origene Sacrae Scripturae, lib. xi. cap.

15-19.

[21] Clemens, lib. ii. Constit. Apostol., cap. 63.

[22] `Excitata fuit tempore apostolorum opinio, sufficere solam fidem

ad salutem obtinendam, si vel maxime bona opera negligerentur, contra

quam opinionem Apostolicae Epistolae Petri, Johannis, Jacobi, Judae,

maxime dirigunt intentionem, ut vehementer adstruant fidem sine

operibus nihil prodesse.,--Aug. Lib. de fide et Operibus.

[23] `Ecclesia vetus has epistolas canonicas et catholicas appellavit,

non ut aliis quidquam adimeret, sed ut has illis contra nonnullorum

sententias adjungeret.,--Junius in Judam, p. 10.

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AN EXPOSITION WITH NOTES

UPON THE

EPISTLE OF JAMES.

CHAPTER I.

James, a servant of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve

tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.--James I. 1.

JAMES, there were two of this name, the son of Zebedee, and the son of

Alpheus; the latter is the author of this epistle, as in the prefatory

discourse on the title more fully appeareth.

A servant of God.--The word doulos is sometimes put to imply an abject

and vile condition, as that of a slave or bondman; so the apostle Paul,

when he saith, Gal. iii. 28, `bond or free are all one in Christ,, for

bond he useth the word doulos; and this great apostle thinketh it an

honour to be doulos, the servant of God. The lowest ministry and office

about God is honourable.

But why not apostle? Grotius supposeth the reason to be because neither

James the son of Zebedee, nor James of Alpheus, was the author of this

epistle, but some third James; not an apostle, but president of the

presbytery at Jerusalem; but that we have disproved in the preface. I

answer, therefore: He mentioneth not his apostleship--1. Because there

was no need, he being eminent in the opinion and repute of the

churches; therefore Paul saith, he was accounted a pillar and main

column of the Christian faith, Gal. ii. 9. Paul, whose apostleship was

enviously questioned, avoucheth it often. 2. Paul himself doth not in

every epistle call himself an apostle. Some times his style is, `Paul,

a prisoner of Jesus Christ,, Philem. 1; sometimes, `Paul, a servant of

Christ,, Phil. i. 1; sometimes nothing but his name Paul is prefixed,

as in 1 Thes. i. 1, and 2 Thes. i. 1.

It followeth, and of the Lord Jesus Christ. Some take both these

clauses in a conjoined sense, as applied to the same person, and read

it thus: A servant of Jesus Christ who is God and Lord; as indeed this

was one of the places urged by the Greek fathers for the God head of

Christ against the Arians. But our reading, which disjoineth the

clauses, is to be preferred, as being least strained, and more suitable

to the apostolic inscriptions; neither is the dignity of Christ hereby

impaired, he being proposed as an object of equal honour with the

Father; and as the Father is Lord, as well as Jesus Christ, so Jesus

Christ is God as well as the Father. Well, then, James is not only

God,s servant by the right of creation and providence, but Christ,s

servant by the right of redemption; yea, especially deputed by Christ

as Lord, that is, as mediator and head of the church, to do him service

in the way of an apostle; and I suppose there is some special reason of

this disjunction, `a servant of God and of Christ,, to show his

countrymen that, in serving Christ, he served the God of his fathers,

as Paul pleaded, Acts xxvi. 6, 7, that, in standing for Christ, he did

but stand for `the hope of the promise made unto the fathers, unto

which promise the twelve tribes, serving God day and night, hope to

come.,

It followeth in the text, to the twelve tribes; that is, to the Jews

and people of Israel, chiefly those converted to the faith of Christ;

to these James writeth, as the `minister of the circumcision,, Gal. ii.

9. And he writeth not in Hebrew, their own tongue, but in Greek, as

being the language then most in use, as the apostle Paul writeth to the

Romans in the same tongue, and not in the Latin.

Which are scattered abroad; in the original, tais en te diaspora, to

those which are in or of the dispersion. But what scattering or

dispersion is here intended? I answer, (1.) Either that which was

occasioned by their ancient captivities, and the frequent changes of

nations, for so there were some Jews that still lived abroad, supposed

to be intended in that expression, John vii. 35, `Will he go to the

dispersed among the Gentiles?, Or (2.) More lately by the persecution

spoken of in the 8th of the Acts. Or (3.) By the hatred of Claudius,

who commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome, Acts xviii. 2. And it

is probable that the like was done in other great cities. The Jews, and

amongst them the Christians, being every where cast out, as John out of

Ephesus, and others out of Alexandria. Or (4.) Some voluntary

dispersion, the Hebrews living here and there among the Gentiles a

little before the declension and ruin of their state, some in Cilicia,

some in Pontus, &c. Thus the apostle Peter writeth, 1 Peter i. 1, `To

the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Cappadocia, Asia, and

Bithynia.,

Chairein, greeting.--An usual salutation, but not so frequent in

scripture. Cajetan thinketh it profane and paganish, and therefore

questioneth the epistle, but unworthily. We find the same salutation

sometimes used in holy writ, as to the Virgin Mary, Luke i. 28: chaire

(the same word that is used here), `Hail, thou that art highly

favoured., So Acts xv. 23: `The apostles, and elders, and brethren,

send (chairein) greeting to the brethren which are of the Gentiles.,

Usually it is `grace, mercy, and peace,, but sometimes `greeting.,

Observations out of this verse are these:--

Obs. 1. From that, James a servant of God, he was Christ,s near kinsman

according to the flesh, and, therefore, by a Hebraism called `The

brother of the Lord,, Gal. i. 19, not properly and strictly, as

Joseph,s son, which yet was the opinion of some of the ancients [24] by

a former marriage, but his cousin. Well, then, `James, the Lord,s

kinsman,, calleth himself `the Lord,s servant:, the note is, that

inward privileges are the best and most honourable, and spiritual kin

is to be preferred before carnal. Mary was happier, gestando Christum

corde quam utero--in having Christ in her heart rather than her womb;

and James in being Christ,s servant, than his brother. Hear Christ

himself speaking to this point, Mat. xii. 47-49: `When one told him,

Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without desiring to speak

with thee., Christ answered. `Who is my mother, and who are my

brethren? And he stretched forth his hand to his disciples, and said,

Behold my mother and my brethren; for whosoever shall do the will of my

Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, sister, and mother.,

The truest relation to Christ is founded in grace, and we are far

happier in receiving him by faith, than in touching him by blood; and

he that endeavours to do his will may be as sure of Christ,s love and

esteem, as if he were linked to him by the nearest outward relations.

Obs. 2. It is no dishonour to the highest to be Christ,s servant.

James, whom Paul calleth `a pillar,, calleth himself `a servant of

Christ;, and David, a king, saith, Ps. lxxxiv. 10, `I had rather be a

doorkeeper in the house of my God, than dwell in the tents of

wickedness., The office of the Nethinims, or doorkeepers in the temple,

was the lowest; and therefore, when the question was proposed what they

should do with the Levites that had warped from God to idols, God

saith, `They shall bear their iniquity;, that is, they shall be

degraded, and employed in the lowest offices and minis tries of the

temple, which was to be porters and doorkeepers (see Ezek. xliv.

10-13): yet saith David, `I had rather be a doorkeeper;, carnal honour

and greatness is nothing to this. Paul was `an Hebrew of the Hebrews,,

Phil. iii. 5; that is, of an ancient Hebrew race and extraction, there

being, to the memory of man, no proselyte in his family or among his

ancestors, which was accounted a very great honour by that nation; yet,

saith Paul, I count all sku'bala, dung and dog,s meat, in comparison of

an interest in Christ, Phil. iii. 8.

Obs. 3. The highest in repute and office in the church yet are still

but servants: `James, a servant;, 2 Cor. iv. 1, `Let a man account of

us as of ministers of Christ., The sin of Corinth was man-worship, in

giving an excess of honour and respect to those teachers whom they

admired, setting them up as heads of factions, and giving up their

faith to their dictates. The apostle seeketh to reclaim them from that

error, by showing that they are not masters, but ministers: give them

the honour of a minister and steward, but not that dependence which is

due to the master only. See 2 Cor. i. 24: `We have not dominion over

your faith, but are helpers of your joy., We are not to prescribe

articles of faith, but explain them. So the apostle Peter bids the

elders not to behave themselves as `lords over God,s heritage,, 1 Peter

v. 3; not to master it over their consciences. Our work is mere

service, and we can but persuade; Christ must impose upon the

conscience. It is Christ,s own advice to his disciples in Mat. xxiii.

10: `Be not ye called masters, for one is your master, even Christ.,

All the authority and success of our teaching is from our Lord. We can

prescribe nothing as necessary to be believed or done which is not

according to his will or word. In short, we come not in our own name,

and must not act with respect to our own ends; we are servants.

Obs. 4. A servant of God, and of Jesus Christ.--In all services we must

honour the Father, and the Son also: John v. 23, `God will have all to

honour the Son as they honour the Father;, that is, God will be

honoured and worshipped only in Christ: John xiv. 1, `Ye believe in

God, believe also in me., Believing is the highest worship and respect

of the creature; you must give it to the Son, to the second person as

mediator, as well as to the Father. Do Duties so as you may honour

Christ in them; and so--

First, Look for their acceptance in Christ. Oh! it would be sad if we

were only to look to God the Father in duties. Adam hid himself, and

durst not come into the presence of God, till the promise of Christ.

The hypocrites cried, Isa. xxxiii. 14, `Who shall dwell with consuming

fire?, Guilt can form no other thought of God by looking upon him out

of Christ; we can see nothing but majesty armed with wrath and power.

But now it is said, Eph. iii. 12, that `in Christ we have access with

boldness and confidence;, for in him those attributes, which are in

themselves terrible, become sweet and comfortable; as water, which is

salt in the ocean, being strained through the earth, becometh sweet in

the rivers; that in God which, out of Christ, striketh terror into the

soul, in Christ begets a confidence.

Secondly, Look for your assistance from him. You serve God in

Christ:--[1.] When you serve God through Christ: Phil. iv. 13, `I can

do all things, through Christ that strengtheneth me., When your own

hands are in God,s work, your eyes must be to Christ,s hands for

support in it: Ps. cxxiii. 2, `As the eyes of servants look to the

hands of their masters,, &c.; you must go about God,s work with his own

tools.

[2.] When ye have an eye to the concernments of Jesus Christ in all

your service of God, 2 Cor. v. 15. We must `live to him that died for

us;, not only to God in general, but to him, to God that died for us.

You must see how you advance his kingdom, propagate his truth, further

the glory of Christ as mediator.

[3.] When all is done for Christ,s sake. In Christ God hath a new claim

in you, and ye are bought with his blood, that ye may be his servants.

Under the law the great argument to obedience was God,s sovereignty:

Thus and thus ye shall do, `I am the Lord;, as in Lev. xix. 37, and

other places. Now the argument is gratitude, God,s love, God,s love in

Christ: `The love of Christ constraineth us,, 2 Cor. v. 14. The apostle

often persuades by that motive--Be God,s servants for Christ,s sake.

Obs. 5. To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad.--God looks

after his afflicted servants: he moveth James to write to the scattered

tribes: the care of heaven flourisheth towards you when you wither. A

man would have thought these had been driven away from God,s care, when

they had been driven away from the sanctuary. Ezek. xi. 16, `Thus saith

the Lord, though I have cast them far off among the heathen, and have

scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a little

sanctuary in the places where they come., Though they wanted the

temple, yet God would be a little sanctuary. He looks after them, to

watch their spirits, that he may apply seasonable comforts; and to

watch their adversaries, to prevent them with seasonable providences.

He looketh after them to watch the seasons of deliverance, `that he may

gather her that was driven out,, Micah iv. 6, and make up `his jewels,,

Mal. iii. 17, that seemed to be carelessly scattered and lost.

Obs. 6. God,s own people may be dispersed, and driven from their

countries and habitations. God hath his outcasts: he saith to Moab,

`Pity my outcasts,, Isa. xvi. 4. And the church complains, `Our in

heritance is turned to strangers,, Lam. v. 2. Christ himself had not

where to lay his head; and the apostle tells us of some `of whom the

world was not worthy,, that `they wandered in deserts, and mountains,

and woods, and caves,, Mark, they wandered in the woods (it is

Chrysostom,s note) alla` kai` ekei` o'ntes e'pheugon-- [25] the

retirement and privacy of the wilderness did not yield them a quiet and

safe abode. So in Acts viii. 4, we read of the primitive believers,

that `they were scattered abroad everywhere., Many of the children of

God in these times have been driven from their dwellings; but you see

we have no reason to think the case strange.

Obs. 7. To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad.--There was

something more in their scattering than ordinary: they were a people

whom God for a long time had kept together under the wings of

providence. That which is notable in their scattering is:--

1. The severity of God,s justice; the twelve tribes are scattered--his

own people. It is ill resting on any privileges, when God,s Israel may

be made strangers. Israel was all for liberty; therefore God saith, `I

will feed them as a lamb in a large place,, Hosea iv. 16. God would

give them liberty and room enough. As a lamb out of the fold goeth up

and down bleating in the forest or wilderness, without comfort and

companion, in the midst of wolves and the beasts of the desert liberty

enough, but danger enough!--so God would cast them out of the fold, and

they should live a Jew here and a Jew there, thinly scattered and

dispersed throughout the countries, among a people whose language they

understood not, and as a lamb in the midst of the beasts of prey. Oh!

consider the severity of God,s justice; certainly it is a great sin

that maketh a loving father cast a child out of doors. Sin is always

driving away and casting out; it drove the angels out of heaven, Adam

out of paradise, and Cain out of the church, Gen. iv. 12, 16, and the

children of God out of their dwellings: Jer. ix. 19, `Our dwellings

have cast us out., Your houses will be weary of you when you dishonour

God in them, and you will be driven from those comforts which you abuse

to excess; riot doth but make way for rapine. You shall see in the 6th

of Amos, when they were at ease in Sion, they would prostitute David,s

music to their sportiveness and common banquets: Amos vi. 5, `They

invent to themselves instruments of music like David., But for this God

threateneth to scatter them, and to remove them from their houses of

luxury and pleasure. And when they were driven to the land of a

stranger, they were served in their own kind; the Babylonians would

have temple-music: Ps. cxxxvii. 3, `Now let us have one of your Hebrew

songs:, nothing but a holy song would serve their profane sport. And so

in all such like cases, when we are weary of God in our houses and

families, our houses are weary of us. David,s house was out of order,

and then he was forced to fly from it, 2 Sam. xv. Oh! then, when you

walk in the midst of your comforts, your stately dwellings and houses

of pomp and pleasure, be not of Nebuchadnezzar,s spirit, when he walked

in the palace of Babylon, and said, Dan. iv. 30, `Is not this great

Babel, which I have built?,--pride grew upon him by the sight of his

comforts; not of the spirit of those Jews who, when they dwelt within

ceiled houses, cried, `The time to build the Lord,s house is not come,,

Hag. i. 1,2. They were well, and at ease, and therefore neglected

God;--but of David,s spirit, who, when he went into his stately palace,

serious thoughts and purposes of honouring God arose within his spirit:

2 Sam. vii. 2, `Shall I dwell in a house of cedar, and the ark of God

dwell within curtains?, Observe the different workings of their

spirits. Nebuchadnezzar, walking in his palace, groweth proud: `Is not

this great Babel, which I have built?, The Jews, in their ceiled

houses, grow careless: `The time to build the Lord,s house is not

come., David, in his curious house of cedar, groweth religious: What

have I done for the ark of God, who hath done so much for me? Well,

then, honour God in your houses, lest you become the burdens of them,

and they spue you out. The twelve tribes were scattered.

2. The infallibility of his truth; they were punished `as their

congregation had heard;, as the prophet speaketh, Hosea vii. 11, 12. In

judicial dispensations, it is good to observe not only God,s justice,

but God,s truth. No calamity befell Israel but what was in the letter

foretold in the books of Moses; a man might have written their history

out of the threatenings of the law. See Lev. xxvi. 33: `If ye walk

contrary unto me, I will scatter you among the heathens, and will draw

a sword after you., The like is threatened in Deut. xxviii. 64: `And

the Lord shall scatter you from one end of the earth unto another among

all the people., And you see how suitable the event was to the

prophecy; and therefore I conceive James useth this expression of `the

twelve tribes,, when that distinction was antiquated, and the tribes

much confounded, to show that they, who were once twelve flourishing

tribes, were now, by the accomplishment of that prophecy, sadly

scattered and mingled among the nations.

3. The tenderness of his love to the believers among them; he hath a

James for the Christians of the scattered tribes, In the severest ways

of his justice he doth not forget his own, and he hath special

consolations for them when they lie under the common judgment. When

other Jews were banished, John, amongst the rest, was banished out of

Ephesus into Patmos, a barren, miserable rock or island; but there he

had those high revelations, Rev. i. 9. Well, then, wherever you are,

you are near to God; he is a God at hand, and a God afar off:^ when you

lose your dwelling, you do not lose your interest in Christ; and you

are everywhere at home, but there where you are strangers to God.

Ver. 2. My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into divers

temptations.

My brethren.--A usual compellation in the scriptures, and very frequent

in this epistle, partly because of the manner of the Jews, who were

wont to call all of their nation brethren, and partly because of the

manner of the ancient Christians, [26] who in courtesy used to call the

men and women of their society and communion brothers and sisters;

partly out of apostolical kindness, and that the exhortation might be

seasoned with the more love and good-will.

Count it; that is, though sense will not find it so, yet in spiritual

judgment you must so esteem it.

All joy; that is, matter of chief joy. Pasan, all is thus used in the

writings of the apostles, as in 1 Tim. i. 15, pases apodoches axios,

`worthy of all acceptation,, that is, of chief acceptation.

When ye fall, hotan peripesete.--The word signifies such troubles as

come upon us unawares, as sudden things do most discompose the mind.

But however, says the apostle, `when ye fall,, and are suddenly

circumvented, yet you must look upon it as a trial and matter of great

joy; for though it seemeth a chance to us, yet it falleth under the

ordination of God.

Divers.--The Jewish nation was infamous, and generally hated,

especially the Christian Jews, who, besides the scorn of the heathen,

were exercised with sundry injuries, rapines, and spoils from their own

brethren, and people of their own nation, as appeareth by the Epistle

of Peter, who wrote to the same persons that our apostle doth; and also

speaketh of `divers or manifold temptations,, 1 Peter i. 6. And again

by the Epistle to the Hebrews, written also to these dispersed tribes:

see Heb. x. 34, `Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods,, that is,

by the fury of the multitude and base people, against whom the

Christians could have no right.

Temptations.--So he calleth afflictions, which to believers are of that

use and habitude.

The observations are:--

Obs. 1. My brethren.--Christians are linked to one another in the bond

of brotherhood. It was an ancient use, as I showed before, for

Christians of the same communion to call one another brothers and

sisters, which gave occasion of scorn to the heathen then. Quod fratres

nos vocamus, infamant, saith Tertullian; and it is still made matter of

reproach: what scoff more usual than that of holy brethren? If we will

not keep up the title, yet the affection which becomes the relation

should not cease. The term hinteth duty to all sorts of Christians;

meekness to those that excel in gifts or office, that they may be not

stately and disdainful to the meanest in the body of Christ--it is

Christ,s own argument, `Ye are brethren,, Mat. xxiii. 8: and it also

suggesteth love, and mutual amity. Who should love more than those that

are united in the same head and hope? Eodem sanguine Christi glutinati,

as Augustine said of himself and his friend Alipius; that is, cemented

with the same blood of Christ. We are all travelling homeward, and

expect to meet in the same heaven: it would be sad that brethren should

`fall out by the way,, Gen. xlv. 24. It was once said, Aspice, ut se

mutuo diligunt Christiani!--See how the Christians love one another!

(Tertul. in Apol. cap. 39.) But alas! now we may say, See how they hate

one another!

Obs. 2. From that count it, miseries are sweet or bitter according as

we will reckon of them. Seneca said, Levis est dolor si nihil opinio

adjecerit--our grief lieth in our own opinion and apprehension of

miseries. Spiritual things are worthy in themselves, other things

depend upon our opinion and valuation of them. Well, then, it standeth

us much upon to make a right judgment; therein lieth our misery or

comfort; things are according as you will count them. That your

judgments may be rectified in point of afflictions, take these rules.

1. Do not judge by sense: Heb. xii. 11, `No affliction for the present

seemeth joyous, but grievous,, &c. Theophylact observeth, [27] that in

this passage two words are emphatical, pros to paron and dokei, for the

present and seemeth; for the present noteth the feeling and experience

of sense, and seemeth the apprehension and dictate of it: sense can

feel no joy in it, and sense will suggest nothing but bitterness and

sorrow; but we are not to go by that count and reckoning. A Christian

liveth above the world, because he doth not judge according to the

world. Paul,s scorn of all sublunary accidents arose from his spiritual

judgment concerning them: Rom. viii. 18, `I reckon that the sufferings

of this present world are not worthy to be compared with the joys that

shall be revealed in us., Sense, that is altogether for present things,

would judge quite otherwise; but saith the apostle, `I reckon,, i.e.,

reason by another manner of rule and account: so Heb. xi. 26, it is

said, that `Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ better than the

treasures of Egypt:, his choice, you see, was founded in his judgment

and esteem.

2. Judge by a supernatural light. Christ,s eye-salve must clear your

sight, or else you cannot make a right judgment: there is no proper and

fit apprehension of things till you get within the veil, and see by the

light of a sanctuary lamp: 1 Cor. ii. 11, `The things of God knoweth no

man, but by the Spirit of God., He had said before, ver. 9, `Eye hath

not seen, ear hath not heard,, &c.; i.e., natural senses do not

perceive the worth and price of spiritual privileges; for I suppose the

apostle speaketh not there of the incapacity of our understandings to

conceive of heavenly joys, but of the unsuitableness of spiritual

objects to carnal senses. A man that hath no other light but reason and

nature, cannot judge of those things; God,s riddles are only open to

those that plough with God,s heifer: and it is by God,s Spirit that we

come to discern and esteem the things that are of God; which is the

main drift of the apostle in that chapter. So David, Ps. xxxvi. 9, `In

thy light we shall see light;, that is, by his Spirit we come to

discern the brightness of glory or grace, and the nothingness of the

world.

3. Judge by supernatural grounds. Many times common grounds may help us

to discern the lightness of our grief, yea, carnal grounds; your

counting must be an holy counting. Those in the prophet said, `The

bricks are fallen, but we will build with hewn stones,, Isa. ix. 10. It

is a misery, but we know how to remedy it; so many despise their

troubles: we can repair and make up this loss again, or know how to

deal well enough with this misery. All this is not `a right judgment,,

but `vain thoughts;, so the prophet calleth their carnal debates and

reasonings: Jer. iv. 14, `How long shall vain thoughts lodge within

thee?, that is, carnal shifts and contrivances, by which they despised

the judgment, rather than improved it. True judging and counting always

followeth some spiritual discourse and reasoning, and is the result of

some principle of faith or patience; as thus, it is a misery, but God

will turn it to our good. God,s corrections are sharp, but we have

strong corruptions to be mortified; we are called to great trials, but

we may reckon upon great hopes, &c.

Obs. 3. From that all joy; afflictions to God,s people do not only

minister occasion of patience, but great joy. The world hath no reason

to think religion a black and gloomy way: as the apostle saith, `The

weakness of Christ is stronger than the strength of men,, 1 Cor. i. 25;

so grace,s worst is better than the world,s best; `all joy,, when in

divers trials! A Christian is a bird that can sing in winter as well as

in spring; he can live in the fire like Moses,s bush; burn, and not be

consumed; nay, leap in the fire. The counsel of the text is not a

paradox, fitted only for notion and discourse, or some strain and reach

of fancy; but an observation, built upon a common and known experience:

this is the fashion and manner of believers, to rejoice in their

trials. Thus Heb. x. 34, `Ye took the spoiling of your goods joy

fully;, in the midst of rifling and plundering, and the incivilities of

rude and violent men, they were joyful and cheerful. The apostle goeth

one step higher: 2 Cor. vii. 4, `I am exceeding joyful in all our

tribulation,, Mark that huperperisseuomai te chara, I superabound or

overflow in joy. Certainly a dejected spirit liveth much beneath the

height of Christian privileges and principles. Paul in his worst estate

felt an exuberancy of joy: `I am exceeding joyful;, nay, you shall see

in another place he went higher yet: Rom. v. 3, `We glory in

tribulations,, kauchometha; it noteth the highest joy--joy with a

boasting and exultation; such a ravishment as cannot be compressed.

Certainly a Christian is the world,s wonder, and there is nothing in

their lives but what men will count strange; their whole course is a

riddle, which the multitude understandeth not, 2 Cor. vi. 10: `As

sorrowful, yet always rejoicing;, it is Paul,s riddle, and may be every

Christian,s motto and symbol.

Object. 1. But you will say, Doth not the scripture allow us a sense of

our condition? How can we rejoice in that which is evil? Christ,s soul

was `heavy unto death.,

Solut. I answer--1. Not barely in the evil of them; that is so far from

being a fruit of grace, that it is against nature: there is a natural

abhorrency of that which is painful, as we see in Christ himself: John

xii. 27, `My soul is troubled; what shall I say? Father, save me from

this hour,, &c. As a private person, Christ would manifest the same

affections that are in us, though as mediator, he freely chose death

and sufferings; the mere evil is grievous. Besides, in the sufferings

of Christ there was a concurrence of our guilt taken into his own

person and of God,s wrath; and it is a known rule, Coelestis ira quos

premit miseros facit, humana nullos. No adversary but God can make us

miserable; and it is his wrath that putteth a vinegar and gall into our

sufferings, not man,s.

2. Their joy is from the happy effects, or consequents, or comforts,

occasioned by their sufferings. I will name some.

[1.] The honour done to us; that we are singled out to bear witness to

the truths of Christ: `To you it is given to suffer,, Phil. i. 29. It

is a gift and an act of free-grace: to be called to such special

service is an act of God,s special favour, and so far from being a

matter of discouragement, that it is a ground of thanksgiving: 1 Peter

iv. 16, `If any man surfer as a Christian, let him glorify God in this

behalf:, not accuse God by murmuring thoughts, but glorify him. This

consideration had an influence upon the primitive saints and martyrs.

It is said, Acts v. 41, that `they went away rejoicing that they were

counted worthy to suffer for Christ: `in the original, hoti

katexiothesan atimasthenai, that they were honoured to be dishonoured

for Christ. It is a great dignity and honour put upon us to be drawn

out before angels and men as champions for God and his truth; and this

will warrant our joy. So Christ himself: Mat. v. 12, `When men say all

manner of evil against you falsely, and for my name,s sake, rejoice and

be exceeding glad,, Luke hath it, `Rejoice, and leap for joy,, Luke vi.

23; which noteth such exsiliency of affection as is stirred up by some

sudden and great comfort.

[2.] The benefit the church receiveth. Resolute defences gain upon the

world. The church is like an oak, which liveth by its own wounds, and

the more limbs are cut off, the more new sprouts. [28] Tertullian

saith, The heathen,s cruelty was the great bait and motive by which men

were drawn into the Christian religion; [29] and Austin [30] reckoneth

up all the methods of destruction by which the heathen sought to

suppress the growth of Christianity, but still it grew the more; they

were bound, butchered, racked, stoned, burned, but still they were

multiplied. The church was at first founded in blood, and it thriveth

best when it is moistened with blood; founded in the blood of Christ,

and moistened or watered, as it were, with the blood of the martyrs.

Well, then, they may rejoice in this, that religion is more propagated,

and that their own death and sufferings do any way contribute to the

life and nourishing of the church.

[3.] Their own private and particular comforts. God hath consolations

proper for martyrs, and his children under trials. [31] Let me name a

few. Sometimes it is a greater presence of the word: 1 Thes. i. 6, `Ye

received the word with much affliction, and joy in the Holy Ghost.,

Great affliction! but the gospel will counterpoise all. Usually it is a

clear evidence and sight of their gracious estate. The sun shineth many

times when it raineth; and they have sweet glimpses of God,s favour

when their outward condition is most gloomy and sad: `When men revile

you, and persecute you, rejoice, for yours is the kingdom of heaven,,

Mat. v. 10. God cleareth up their right and interest--yours. So also

distinct hopes and thoughts of glory. Martyrs, in the act of suffering

and troubles, have not only a sight of their interest, but a sight of

the glory of their interest. There are some thoughts stirred up in them

which come near to an ecstasy, a happy pre-union of their souls and

their blessedness, and such a fore-enjoyment of heaven as giveth them a

kind of dedolency in the midst of their trials and sufferings. Their

minds are so wholly swallowed up with the things that are not seen,

that they have little thought or sense of the things that are seen; as

the apostle seemeth to intimate, 2 Cor. iv. 18. Again, they rejoice

because of their speedy and swifter passage into glory. The enemies do

them a courtesy to rid them out of a troublesome world. This made the

ancient Christians to rejoice more when they were condemned than

absolved; [32] to kiss the stake, and thank the executioner, because of

their earnest desires to be with Christ. So Justin Martyr (Apol. 1,

adversus Gentes), Gratias agimus quod a molestis dominis liberemur--we

thank you for delivering us from hard taskmasters, that we may more

sweetly enjoy the bosom of Jesus Christ.

Object. 2. But some will say, My sufferings are not akin to martyrdom;

they come not from the hand of men, but providence, and are for my own

sins, not for Christ.

Solut. I answer--It is true there is a difference between afflictions

from the hand of God, and persecutions from the violence of men. God,s

hand is just, and guilt will make the soul less cheerful; but remember

the apostle,s word is divers trials; and sickness, death of friends,

and such things as come from an immediate providence, are but trials to

the children of God. In these afflictions there is required not only

mourning and humbling, but a holy courage and confidence: Job v. 22,

`At destruction and famine shalt thou laugh., There is a holy greatness

of mind, and a joy that becometh the saddest providences. Faith should

be above all that befalleth us; it is its proper work to make a

believer triumph over every temporary accident. In ordinary crosses

there are many reasons of laughing and joy; as the fellow-feeling of

Christ; if you do not suffer for Christ, Christ suffereth in you, and

with you. He is afflicted and touched with a sense of your afflictions.

It is an error in believers to think that Christ is altogether

unconcerned in their sorrows, unless they be endured for his name,s

sake, and that the comforts of the gospel are only applicable to

martyrdom. Again, another ground of joy in ordinary crosses is, because

in them we may have much experience of grace, of the love of God, and

our own sincerity and patience; and that is ground of rejoicing: Rom.

v. 3, `We rejoice in tribulation, knowing that tribulation worketh

patience, and patience experience., The rule holdeth good in all kinds

of tribulations or sufferings; they occasion sweet discoveries of God,

and so are matter of joy. See also 2 Cor. xii. 9, 10, `I glory in

infirmities,, and `take pleasure in infirmities, that the power of

Christ may rest upon me., They are happy occasions to discover more of

God to us, to give us a greater sense and feeling of the power of

grace; and so we may take pleasure m them. Lastly, all evils are alike

to faith; and it would as much misbecome a Christian hope to be

dejected with losses, as with violence or persecution. You should walk

so that the world may know you can live above every condition, and that

all evils are much beneath your hopes. Well, then, from all that hath

been said we see that we should with the same cheerfulness suffer the

will of Christ as we should suffer for the name of Christ.

Obs. 4. From that, when ye fall, observe that evils are the better

borne when they are undeserved and involuntary; that is, when we fall

into them, rather than draw them upon ourselves. It was Tertullian,s

error to say that afflictions were to be sought and desired. The

creature never knoweth when it is well; sometimes we question God,s

love, because we have no afflictions, and anon, because we have no

thing but afflictions. In all these things we must refer ourselves to

God,s pleasure, not desire troubles, but bear them when he layeth them

on us. Christ hath taught us to pray, `Lead us not into temptation;, it

is but a fond presumption to cast ourselves upon it. Philastrius

speaketh of some that would compel men to kill them out of an

affectation of martyrdom; and so doth Theodoret. [33] This was a mad

ambition, not a true zeal; and no less fond are they that seek out

crosses and troubles in the world, rather than wait for them, or by

their own violences and miscarriages draw just hatred upon themselves.

Peter,s rule is: `Let none of you suffer as an evil-doer,, 1 Peter iv.

15. We lose the comfort of our sufferings when there is guilt in them.

Obs. 5. From that divers, God hath several ways wherewith to exercise

his people. Divers miseries come one in the neck of another, as the

lunatic in the gospel `fell sometimes in the water, sometimes in the

fire;, so God changeth the dispensation, sometimes in this trouble,

sometimes in that. Paul gives a catalogue of his dangers and

sufferings: 2 Cor. xi. 24-28, `In perils of waters, in perils of

robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in

perils in the wilderness, in perils in the city, in perils in the sea,

in perils among false brethren., Crosses seldom come single. When God

beginneth once to try, he useth divers ways of trial; and indeed there

is great reason. Divers diseases must have divers remedies. Pride,

envy, coveteousness, worldliness, wantonness, ambition, are not all

cured by the same physic. Such an affliction pricks the bladder of

pride, another checks our desires, that are apt to run out in the way

of the world, &c. Do not murmur, then, if miseries come upon you, like

waves, in a continual succession. Job,s messengers came thick and close

one after another, to tell of oxen, and house, and camels, and sons,

and daughters, and all destroyed, Job i.; messenger upon messenger, and

still with a sadder story. We have `divers lusts,, Titus iii. 3, and,

therefore, have need of `divers trials., In the 6th of the Revelations

one horse cometh after another--the white, the pale, the black, the

red. When the sluice is once opened, several judgments succeed in

order. In the 4th of Amos, the prophet speaks of blasting, and mildew,

and cleanness of teeth, pestilence, and war; all these judgments one

after another. So Christ threatens Jerusalem with `wars and rumours of

wars;, and addeth: `There shall be famine, and pestilences, and

earthquakes in divers places,, Mat. xxiv. 7. Oh! then, `Stand in awe,

and sin not,, Ps. iv. When the first brunt is over, you cannot say,

`the bitterness of death is past;, other judgments will have their

course and turn. And learn, too, from hence, that God hath several

methods of trial--confiscation, banishment, poverty, infamy, reproach;

some trials search us more than others. We must leave it to his wisdom

to make choice. Will-suffering is as bad as will-worship.

Obs. 6. From that word temptations, observe, that the afflictions of

God,s people are but trials. He calleth them not afflictions or

persecutions, but `temptations,, from the end for which God sendeth

them. The same word is elsewhere used: 2 Peter ii. 9, `God knoweth how

to deliver the godly out of temptation., Now affliction is called

temptation, not in the vulgar sense, as temptation is put for an

occasion or inducement to sin, but in its proper and native

signification, as it is taken for trial and experience; and so we have

it positively asserted that this is the end of God: Deut. viii. 16, `He

fed thee with manna in the wilderness, to humble thee and prove thee,

and do thee good at the latter end., The afflictions of the saints are

not judgments, but corrections or trials--God,s discipline to mortify

sin, or his means to discover grace; to prove our faith, love,

patience, sincerity, constancy, &c. Well, then, behave thyself as one

under trial. Let nothing be discovered in thee but what is good and

gracious. Men will do their best at their trial; oh! watch over

yourselves with the more care that no impatience, vanity, murmuring, or

worldliness of spirit may appear in you.

Ver. 3. Knowing this, that the trial of your faith worketh patience.

Here is the first argument to press them to joy in afflictions, taken

partly from the nature, partly from the effect of them. The nature of

them--they are a `trial of faith;, the effect or fruit of them--they

beget or `work patience., Let us a little examine the words.

Knowing.--It either implieth that they ought to know, as Paul saith

elsewhere: 1 Thes. iv. 13, `I would not have you ignorant, brethren,

concerning them that are asleep in the Lord,, &c. So some suppose James

speaketh as exhorting: Knowing, that is, I would have you know; or else

it is a report; knowing, that is, ye do know, being taught by the

Spirit and experience; or rather, lastly, it is a direction, in which

the apostle acquainteth them with the way how the Spirit settleth a joy

in the hearts of persecuted Christians, by a lively knowledge, or

spiritual discourse, by acting their thoughts upon the nature and

quality of their troubles; and so knowing is distinctly considering.

That the trial of your faith.--Here is a new word used for afflictions;

before it was peirasmois, temptations, which is more general. Here it

is dokimion, trial, which noteth such a trial as tendeth to

approbation. But here ariseth a doubt, because of the seeming

contradiction between Paul and James. Paul saith, Rom. v. 4, that

patience worketh dokime`n, trial or experience; and James seemeth to

invert the order, saying, that dokimion, `trial or experience worketh

patience., But I answer--(1.) There is a difference between the words:

there it is dokime`; here, dokimion; and so fitly rendered there

experience--here, trial. (2.) There Paul speaketh of the effect of

suffering, experience of God,s help, and the comforts of his Spirit,

which work patience; here, of the suffering itself, which, from its use

and ordination to believers, he calleth trial, because by it our faith

and other graces are approved and tried.

Of your faith; that is, either of your constancy in the profession of

the faith, or else of faith the grace, which is the chief tiling

exercised and approved in affliction.

Worketh patience.--The original word is katergazetai, perfecteth

patience. But this is a new paradox--how affliction or trial, which is

the cause of all murmuring or impatience, should work patience!

I answer--(1.) Some expound the proposition of a natural patience,

which, indeed, is caused by the mere affliction; when we are used to

them, they are the less grievous. Passions being blunted by continual

exercise, grief becometh a delight. But I suppose this is not in the

aim of the apostle; this is a stupidity, not a patience. (2.) Then, I

suppose the meaning is, that our trials minister matter and occasion

for patience. (3.) God,s blessing must not be excluded. The work of the

efficient is often given to the material cause, and trial is said to do

that which God doth. By trial he sanctifieth afflictions to us, and

then they are a means to beget patience. (4.) We must not forget the

distinction between punishment and trial. The fruit of punishment is

despair and murmuring, but of trial, patience and sweet submission. To

the wicked every condition is a snare. They are corrupted by

prosperity, and dejected by adversity; [34] but to the godly every

estate is a blessing. Their prosperity worketh thanksgiving, their

adversity patience. Pharaoh and Joram grew the more mad for their

afflictions, but the people of God the more patient. The same fire that

purgeth the corn bruiseth the stalk or reed, and in that fire in which

the chaff is burnt gold sparkleth. [35] So true is that of the

psalmist: Ps. xi. 5, `The Lord trieth the righteous; but the wicked,

and him that loveth violence, his soul hateth., Well, then, the sum of

all is, that afflictions serve to examine and prove our faith, and, by

the blessing of God, to bring forth the fruit of patience, as the quiet

fruit of righteousness is ascribed to the rod, Heb. xii. 11, which is

indeed the proper work of the Spirit. He saith, `The chastening

yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them that are

exercised thereby;, as our apostle saith, `The trial worketh patience.,

The notes are these:--

Obs. 1. From that knowing, ignorance is the cause of sorrow. When we do

not rightly discern of evils, we grieve for them. Our strength, as men,

lieth in reason; as Christians, in spiritual discourse. Paul was

instructed, Phil. iv. 11, and that made him walk with such an equal

mind in unequal conditions. Solomon saith, Prov. xxiv. 5, `A wise man

is strong, yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength;, and he saith

afterwards, ver. 10, `If thou faintest in affliction, thy strength is

but small;, that is, thou hast but little prudence or knowledge. There

lieth the weakness of our spirits. Children are scared with every

trifle. Did we know what God is, and whereto his dealings tend, we

should not faint. Well, then, labour for a right discerning. To help

you, consider:--(1.) General knowledge will not serve the turn. The

heathens had to gnoston, excellent notions concerning God in the

general, Rom i. 19; but they were `vain in their imaginations,, ver.

21--en tois dialogi'smois, in their practical inferences, when they

were to bring down their knowledge to particular cases and experiences.

They had a great deal of knowledge in general truths, but no prudence

to apply them to particular exigences and cases. Many can discourse

well in the general; as Seneca, when he had the rich gardens, could

persuade to patience, but fainted when himself came to suffer. [36] So

Eliphaz chargeth it upon Job, that he was able to instruct and

strengthen others, `But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it

toucheth thee, and thou art troubled,, Job iv. 45. Therefore it must

not only be a knowledge, but a prudence to make application of general

truths, that in particular cases we may not be disturbed and

discomposed. (2.) Our knowledge must be drawn out in actual thoughts

and spiritual discourse. This bringeth in seasonable succour and relief

to the soul, and therein lieth our strength. Observe it, and you shall

always find that the Spirit worketh by seasonable thoughts. Christ had

taught the apostles a great many comforts, and then he promiseth, John

xiv. 26, `The Comforter shall come; kai` anamne'sei, and he shall bring

all things to your remembrance which I shall say to you., That is the

proper office of the Comforter, to come in with powerful and seasonable

thoughts to the relief of the soul. The apostle ascribeth their

fainting to `forgetting the consolation,, Heb. xii. 5. Nay, observe it

generally throughout the word--our strength in duties or afflictions is

made to lie in our distinct and actual thoughts. Would we mortify

corruptions? It is done by a present acting of the thoughts, or by

spiritual discourse; therefore the apostle saith, Rom. vi. 6, `Knowing

this, that our old man is crucified with him;, so would we bear

afflictions cheerfully. See Heb. x. 34, `Ye took it joyfully, knowing

that you have a better and more enduring substance;, and Rom. v. 3,

`Knowing that tribulation worketh experience., And so in many other

places of scripture we find that the Spirit helpeth us by awakening and

stirring up proper thoughts and discourses in the mind. (3.) Those

thoughts which usually beget patience are such as these:--(1st.) That

evils do not come by chance, or the mere fury of instruments, but from

God. So holy Job: `The arrows of the Almighty are with in me,, Job vi.

4. Mark, `the arrows of the Almighty,, though Satan had a great hand in

them, as you may see, Job ii. 7--God,s arrows, though shot out of

Satan,s bow. And then, (2d.) That where we see anything of God, we owe

nothing but reverence and submission; for he is too strong to be

resisted, too just to be questioned, and too good to be suspected. But

more of this in the fifth chapter.

Obs. 2. From that dokimion, the trial, the use and ordination of

persecution to the people of God is trial. God maketh use of the worst

instruments, as fine gold is cast into the fire, the most devouring

element. Innocency is best tried by iniquity. [37] But why doth God try

us? Not for his own sake, for he is omniscient; but either--(1.) For

our sakes, that we may know ourselves. In trials we discern the

sincerity of grace, and the weakness and liveliness of it; and so are

less strangers to our own hearts. Sincerity is discovered. A gilded

potsherd may shine till it cometh to scouring. In trying times God

heateth the furnace so hot, that dross is quite wasted; every interest

is crossed, and then hirelings become changelings. Therefore, that we

may know our sincerity, God useth severe ways of trial. Sometimes we

discover our own weakness, Mat. xiii.; we find that faith weak in

danger which we thought to be strong out of danger; as the blade in the

stony ground was green, and made a fair show till the height of sum

mer. Peter thought his faith impregnable, till the sad trial in the

high priest,s hall, Mat. xxvi. 69. In pinching weather weak persons

feel the aches and bruises of their joints. Sometimes we discern the

liveliness of grace. Stars shine in the night that lie hid in the day.

It is said, Rev. xiii. 10, `Here is the patience and faith of the

saints;, that is, the time when these graces are exercised, and

discovered in their height and glory. Spices are most fragrant when

burnt and bruised, so have saving graces their chiefest fragrancy in

hard times. The pillar that conducted the Israelites appeared as a

cloud by day, but as a fire by night. The excellency of faith is

beclouded till it be put upon a thorough trial. Thus for ourselves,

that we may know either the sincerity, or the weakness, or the

liveliness of the grace that is wrought in us. (2.) Or for the world,s

sake. And so, (1st.) for the present to convince them by our constancy,

that they may be confirmed in the faith, if weak and staggering, or

converted, if altogether uncalled. It was a notable saying of Luther,

Ecclesia totum mundum convertit sanguine et oratione--the church

converteth the whole world by blood and prayer. We are proved, and

religion is proved, when we are called to sufferings. Paul,s bonds made

for the furtherance of the gospel: Phil. i. 12, 13, `Many of the

brethren waxed confident in my bonds, and are much more bold to speak

the word without fear., In prosperous times religion is usually stained

with the scandals of those that profess it; and then God bringeth on

great trials to honour and clear the renown of it again to the world,

and usually these prevail. Justin Martyr was converted by the constancy

of the Christians (Niceph. lib. iii. cap. 26). Nay, he himself

confesseth it. [38] When he saw the Christians so willingly choose

death, he reasoned thus within himself: Surely these men must be

honest, and there is somewhat eminent in their principles. So I

remember the author of the Council of Trent saith concerning Anne de

Burg, a senator of Paris, who was burnt for Protestantism, that the

death and constancy of a man so conspicuous did make many curious to

know what religion that was for which he had courageously endured

punishment, and so the number was much increased. [39] (2d.) We are

tried with a respect to the day of judgment: 1 Peter i. 7, `That the

trial of your faith may be found to praise and honour in the day of

Christ,s appearing., God will justify faith before all the world, and

the crown of patience is set upon a believer,s head in that solemn day

of Christ. You see the reasons why God trieth.

Use. Well, then, it teacheth us to bear afflictions with constancy and

patience; God trieth us by these things. For your comfort consider four

things:--(1.) God,s aim in your afflictions is not destruction, but

trial; as gold is put into the furnace to be fined, not consumed.

Wicked men,s misery is `an evil, and an only evil,, Ezek. vii. 5. In

their cup there is no mixture, and their plagues are not to fan, but

destroy. But to godly men, miseries have another property and habitude:

Dan. xi. 35, `They shall fall to try, and to purge, and to make white;,

that is, in times of many persecutions, as was that of Antiochus, the

figure of Antichrist. (2.) The time of trial is appointed: Dan. xi. 35,

`They shall fall to try, and to purge, and to make white, even to the

time of the end, because it is yet for a time appointed., You are not

in the furnace by chance, or at the will of your enemies; the time is

appointed, set by God. (3.) God sitteth by the furnace prying and

looking after his metal: Mal. iii. 3, `He shall sit as a refiner and

purifier of silver., It notes his constant and assiduous care, that the

fire be not too hot, that nothing be spilt and lost. It is a notable

expression that of Isa. xlviii. 9, 10: `For my praise will I refrain; I

have refined thee, but not as silver;, that is, not so thoroughly.

Silver or gold is kept in the fire till the dross be wholly wrought out

of it: if we should be fined as silver, when should we come out of the

furnace? Therefore God saith he will `choose us in the furnace,, though

much dross still remain. (4.) Consider, this trial is not only to

approve, but to improve; we are tried as gold, refined when tried: so 1

Peter i. 7, `That the trial of your faith, being much more precious

than gold that perisheth;, or more clearly in Job xxiii. 10, `When he

hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold: `the drossy and scorious

part or matter is severed, and the corruptions that cleave close to us

are purged and eaten out.

Obs. 3. From that, your faith. The chief grace which is tried in

persecution is faith: so in 1 Peter i. 7, `That the trial of your

faith, being more precious,, &c. Of all graces Satan hath a spite at

faith, and of all graces God delighteth that the perfection of it

should be discovered. Faith is tried, partly because it is the radical

grace that keepeth in the life of a Christian: Hab. ii. 4, `The just

shall live by faith: `we work by love, but live by faith; partly

because this is the grace most exercised, sometimes in keeping the soul

from using ill means, and unlawful courses: Isa. xxviii. 16, `He that

believeth doth not make haste;, that is, to help himself before God

will. It is believing that maketh the soul stand to its proof and

trial: Heb. xi. 35, `By faith those that were tortured would not accept

deliverance;, that is, which was offered to them upon ill terms, of

refusing God and his service. Sometimes it is exercised in bringing the

soul to live upon gospel-comforts in the absence of want of worldly,

and to make a Christian to fetch water out of the rock when there is

none in the fountain. Many occasions there are to exercise faith,

partly because it is the grace most oppugned and assaulted; all other

graces march under the conduct of faith: and therefore Satan,s

cunning^is to fight, not against small or great, but to make the brunt

and weight of his opposition to fall upon this grace: nay, God himself

seemeth an enemy, and it is faith,s work to believe him near, when to

sense he is gone and withdrawn. Well, then:--

Use 1. You that have faith, or pretend to it, must look for trials.

Graces are not crowned till they are exercised; never any yet went to

heaven without combats and conflicts. Faith must be tried before it be

`found to praise and honour., It is very notable, that wherever God

bestoweth the assurance of his favour, there presently followeth some

trial: Heb. x. 32, `After ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight

of afflictions., Some are cast upon troubles for religion soon after

their first conversion, like these, as soon as illuminated. When Christ

himself had received a testimony from heaven, presently Satan tempteth

him: `This is my beloved Son;, and presently he cometh with an, `If

thou be the Son of God,--Mat. iii. 17, with Mat. iv. 1, 3: after solemn

assurance he would fain make you question your adoption. So see Gen.

xxii. 1: `It came to pass that after these things God did tempt

Abraham., What things were those? Solemn intercourses between him and

God, and express assurance from heaven that the Lord would be his God,

and the God of his seed. When the castle is victualled, then look for a

siege.

Use 2. You that are under trials, look to your faith. Christ knew what

was most likely to be assailed, and therefore telleth Peter, Luke xxii.

32, `I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not., When faith

faileth, we faint; therefore we should make it our chief work to

maintain faith. Chiefly look after two things:--(1.) Hold fast your

assurance in the midst of the saddest trials: in the furnace call God

Father: Zech. xiii. 21, `I will bring them through the fire, and they

shall be refined as silver and gold is tried: and they shall say, The

Lord is my God., Let not any hard dealing make you mistake your

Father,s affection. One special point of faith, under the cross, is the

faith of our adoption: Heb. xii. 5, `The exhortation speaketh to you as

children; my son, despise not the chastening of the Lord., It is the

apostle,s own note that the afflicted are styled by the name of sons.

Christ had a bitter cup, but saith lie, My Father hath put it into my

hands: John xviii. 11, `The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I

not drink of it?, It is a bitter cup, but he is still my Father. (2.)

The next work of faith is, to keep your hopes fresh and lively:

believers always counter-balance the temptation with their hopes. There

is no grief or loss so great, but faith knoweth how to despise it in

the hope of the reward: therefore the apostle describeth faith to be,

Heb. xi. 1, hupostasis ton elpizomenon, `the substance of things hoped

for;, because it giveth a reality and present being to things absent

and to come, opposing hope to the temptation, and making the thing

hoped for as really to exist in the heart of the believer as if it were

already enjoyed. Well, then, let faith put your hopes in one balance,

when the devil hath put the world, with the terrors and profits of it,

in the other; and say, as Paul, logi'zomai, `I reckon, or compute, that

the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with

the glory that shall be revealed in us., Rom. viii. 18. All this is

nothing to our hopes: what is this to glory to come?

Obs. 4. From that katergazetai, worketh or perfecteth, many trials

cause patience, that is, by the blessing of God upon them. Habits are

strengthened by frequent acts; the more you act grace, the stronger;

and often trial puts us upon frequent exercise: the apostle saith,

chastening `yieldeth the quiet fruit of righteousness, tois

gegumnasmenois, to them that are exercised thereby,, Heb. xii. 11. The

fruit of patience is not found after one affliction or two, but after

we are exercised and acquainted with them: the yoke after a while

beginneth to be well settled, and by much bearing, we learn to bear

with quietness, for use perfecteth; as we see those parts of the body

are most solid that are most in action, [40] and trees often shaken are

deeply rooted. Well, then: (1.) It showeth how careful you should be to

exercise yourselves under every cross; by that means you come to get

habits of grace and patience: neglect causeth decay, and God

withdraweth his hand from such as are idle: in spirituals, as well as

temporals, `diligence maketh rich,, Prov. x. 4. (2.) It showeth that if

we murmur or miscarry in any providence, the fault is in our own

hearts, not in our condition. Many blame providence, and say they

cannot do otherwise, their troubles are so great and sharp. Oh!

consider, trials, yea, many trials, where sanctified, work patience:

that which you think would cause you to murmur, is a means to make you

patient. The evil is in the unmortifiedness of your affections, not in

the misery of your condition. By the apostle,s rule, the greater the

trial the greater the patience, for the trial worketh patience. There

is no condition in the world but giveth occasion for the exercise of

grace.

Obs. 5. From that patience, the apostle comforteth them with this

argument, that they should gain patience; as if that would make amends

for all the smart of their sufferings. The note is, that it is an

excellent exchange to part with outward Comforts for inward graces.

Fiery trials are nothing if you gain patience. Sickness, with patience,

is better than health; loss, with patience, is better than gain. If

earthly affections were more mortified, we should value inward

enjoyments and experiences of God more than we do. Paul saith, 2 Cor.

xii. 9, `I will glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may

rest upon me: `misery and calamities should be welcome, because they

gave him further experiences of Christ. Certainly, nothing maketh

afflictions burthensome to us but our own carnal affections.

Obs. 6. From the same, we may observe more particularly, that patience

is a grace of an excellent use and value. We cannot be Christians

without it; we cannot be men without it: not Christians, for it is not

only the ornament, but the conservatory of other graces. How else

should we persist in well-doing when we meet with grievous crosses?

Therefore the apostle Peter biddeth us, 2 Peter i. 5, 6, to `add to

faith, virtue; to virtue, knowledge; to knowledge, temperance; to

temperance, patience., Where are all the requisites of true godliness?

It is 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. You see we cannot be

Christians without it; so, also, not men. Christ saith, `In patience

possess your souls,, Luke xxi. 19. A man is a man, and doth enjoy

himself and his life by patience: otherwise we shall but create

needless troubles and disquiets to ourselves, and so be, as it were,

dispossessed of our own lives and souls that is, lose the comfort and

the quiet of them.

Ver. 4. But let patience have her perfect work, that you may be perfect

and entire, wanting in nothing.

Here he cometh to show what patience is right, by way of exhortation,

pressing them to perseverance, integrity, and all possible perfection.

I will open what is difficult in the verse.

Ergon teleion, her perfect work. For the opening of this, know that in

the apostle,s time there were divers that with a great deal of zeal

bore out the first brunt, but being tired, either with the diversity or

the length of evils, they yielded and fainted; therefore he wisheth

them to tarry till patience were thoroughly exercised, and its

perfection discovered. The highest acts of graces are called the

perfection of them: as of Abraham,s faith we say, in ordinary speech,

there was a perfect faith; so when patience is thoroughly tried by

sundry and long afflictions, we say there is a perfect patience. So

that the perfect work of patience is a resolute perseverance,

notwithstanding the length, the sharpness, and the continual succession

of sundry afflictions. One trial discovered patience in Job; but when

evil came upon evil, and he bore all with a meek and quiet spirit, that

discovered patience perfect, or sufficiently exercised. It followeth:--

That you may be perfect and entire, wanting in nothing. The apostle,s

intent is not to assert a possibility of perfection in Christians: `We

all fail in many things,, James iii. 2. And all that we have here is

but in part: 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 10, `We know in part, and we prophesy in

part; but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in

part shall be done away., Here grace must needs be imperfect, because

the means are imperfect. But his meaning is either that we should be

sincere, as sincerity is called perfection in scripture: Gen. xvii. 1,

`Walk before me, and be thou perfect;, so it is in the original and

marginal reading, what in our translation is, `be thou upright;, or

else it is meant of the perfection of duration and perseverance; or

rather, lastly, that perfection is intended which is called the

perfection of parts,--that we might be so perfect, or entire, that no

necessary grace might be lacking--that, having other gifts, they might

also have the gift of patience, and the whole image of Christ might be

completed in them--that nothing might be wanting which is necessary to

make up a Christian. Some, indeed, make this a legal sentence, as

implying what God may in justice require, and to what we should in

conscience aim to wit, exact perfection, both in parts and degrees. It

is true this is beyond our power; but because we have lost our power,

there is no reason God should lose his right. It is a saying of Austin,

[41] O homo, in praeceptione cognosce quid debeas habere, et in

correptione cognosce tuo te vitio non habere. Such precepts serve to

show God,s right, and quicken us to duty, and humble us with the sense

of our own weakness. So much God might require, and so much we had

power to perform, though we have lost it by our own default. This is

true, but the former interpretations are more simple and genuine.

The notes are these:--

Obs. 1. The perfection of our graces is not discovered till we are put

upon many and great trials. As a pilot,s skill is discerned in a storm,

so is a Christian,s grace in many and great troubles. [42] Well, then,

in all that doth befall you, say, Yet patience hath not had its perfect

work. Expectation of a worse thing maketh lesser troubles more

comportable; yet trust and patience is not drawn out to the height. The

apostle saith, Heb. xii. 4, `Yet ye have not resisted unto blood,

striving against sin., Should we faint in a lesser trial, before the

perfect work cometh to be discovered? Job was in a sad condition, yet

he putteth a harder case: Job xiii. 15, `If he should kill me, yet I

will trust in him: `in a higher trial I should not faint or murmur.

Obs. 2. That the exercise of grace must not be interrupted till it be

full and perfect--till it come to ergon teleion, a perfect work.

Ordinary spirits may be a little raised for a time, but they fall by

and by again: Gal. v. 7, `Ye did run well; who hindered you?, You were

in a good way of faith and patience, and went happily forward; but what

turned you out of the way? Implying there was as little, or rather

less, reason to be faint in the progress as to be discouraged in the

beginning. Common principles may make men blaze and glare for a while,

yet afterward they fall from heaven like lightning. It is true of all

graces, but chiefly of the grace in the text. Patience must last to the

end of the providence, as long as the affliction lasteth; not only at

first, but when your evils are doubled, and the furnace is heated seven

times hotter. Common stubbornness will bear the first onset, but

patience holdeth out when troubles are continued and delayed. The

apostle chideth the Galatians because their first heat was soon spent:

Gal. iii. 3, `Are ye so foolish? having begun in the spirit, are ye

made perfect in the flesh?, It is not enough to begin; our proceedings

in religion must be answerable to our beginnings. [43] To falter and

stagger after much forwardness, [44] showeth we are `not fit for the

kingdom of God,, Luke ix. 62. The beasts in the prophet always went

forward (see Ezek. i. 11); and crabs, that go backward, are reckoned

among unclean creatures, Lev. xi. 10. Nero,s first five years are

famous; and many set forth well, but are soon discouraged. Liberius,

the Bishop of Home, was zealous against the Arians, and was looked upon

as the Samson of the church, the most earnest maintainer of

orthodoxism; suffered banishment for the truth; but alas! he after

failed, and to recover his bishopric (saith Baronius [45] ), sided with

the Arians. Well, then, while you are in the world, go on to a more

perfect discovery of patience, and follow them that, `through faith,

and a continued patience, have inherited the promises,, Heb. vi .12.

Obs. 3. That Christians must aim at, and press on to perfection. The

apostle saith, `That ye may be perfect and entire, nothing wanting,,

(1.) Christians will be coveting, and aspiring to, absolute perfection.

We are led on to growth by this aim and desire: they hate sin so

perfectly, that they cannot be quiet till it be utterly abolished.

First, they go to God for justification, ne damnet, that the damning

power of sin may be taken away; then for sanctification, ne regnet,

that the reigning power of sin may be destroyed; then for

glorification, ne sit, that the very being of it may be abolished. And

as they are bent against sin with a mortal and keen hatred, so they are

carried on with an earnest and importunate desire of grace. They that

have true grace will not be contented with a little grace; no measures

will serve their turn. `I would by any means attain to the resurrection

of the dead,, saith Paul, Phil. iii. 11; that is, such a state of grace

as we enjoy after the resurrection. It is a metonymy of the subject for

the adjunct. Free grace, you see, hath a vast desire and ambition; it

aimeth at the holiness of the glorious and everlasting state; and,

indeed, this is it which makes a Christian to press onward, and be so

earnest in his endeavours; as Heb. vi. 1, with 4, `Let us go on to

perfection;, and then ver. 4, `It is impossible for those that were

once enlightened,, &c., implying that men go back when they do not go

on to perfection; having low aims, they go backward, and fall off. (2.)

Christians must be actually perfect in all points and parts of

Christianity. As they will have faith, they will have patience; as

patience, love and zeal. In 1 Peter i. 15, the rule is, `Be ye holy, as

I am holy, in all manner of conversation., Every point and part of life

must be seasoned with grace, therefore the apostle saith, en pase

anastrophe, in every creek and turning of the conversation: so 2 Cor.

viii. 7, `As ye abound in everything, in faith, and utterance, and

knowledge, and in all diligence, see that ye abound in this grace

also., Hypocrites are always lacking in one part or another. The

Corinthians had much knowledge and utterance, and little charity; as

many professors pray much, know much, hear much, but do not give much;

they do not `abound in this also., As Basil saith in his sermon ad

Divites, I know many that fast, pray, sigh, pa'san te`n ada'panon

eula'beian ekdianume'nous, love all cheap acts of religion, and such as

cost nothing but their own pains, but are sordid and base, withholding

from God and the poor, ti` ophe'los toutois tes loi'pes aretes. What

profit have they in their other graces when they are not perfect? There

is a link and cognation between the graces; they love to go hand in

hand, to come up as in a dance, and consort, as some expound the

apostle,s word, epichoregesate: 2 Peter i. 5, `Add to faith, virtue.,

Ac. One allowed miscarriage or neglect may be fatal. Say, then, thus

within yourselves--A Christian should be found in nothing wanting. Oh!

but how many sad defects are there in my soul! if I were weighed in

God,s balance, I should be found much wanting! Oh, strive to be more

entire and perfect. (3.) They aim at the perfection of duration, that,

as they would be wanting in no part of duty, so in no part of their

lives. Subsequent acts of apostasy make our former crown to wither;

they lose what they have wrought, 2 John 8. All their spiritual labour

formerly bestowed is to no purpose, and whatever we have done and

suffered for the gospel, it is, in regard of God, lost and forgotten.

So Ezek. xviii. 24, `When he turneth to iniquity, all the righteousness

that he hath done shall not be mentioned., As under the law, if a

Nazarite had defiled himself, he was to begin all anew: Num. vi. 12,

`The days that were before shall be lost, because his separation was

denied;, as if he had fulfilled the half part of his vow, or three

parts of his vow, yet all was to be null and lost upon every pollution,

and he was to begin again. So it is in point of apostasy; after, by a

solemn vow and consecration, we have separated ourselves to Christ, if

we do not endure to the end, all the righteousness, zeal, and patience

of our former profession is forgotten.

Ver. 5. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to

all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

The apostle, having spoken of bearing afflictions with a mind above

them, cometh here to prevent an objection, which might be framed thus:

This is a hard saying, to keep up the spirit not only in patience, but

joy; when all things are against us, who can abide it? .Duty is soon

expressed, but how shall we get it practised? The apostle granteth it

is hard, and it will require a great deal of spiritual skill and

wisdom, which, if you want (saith he), God will furnish you, if you ask

it of him; and upon this occasion digresseth into the rules and

encouragements of prayer: in this verse he encourageth them by the

nature and promise of God. But to the words.

If any of you--This if doth not argue doubt, but only inferreth a

supposition. [46] But why doth the apostle speak with a supposition?

Who doth not lack wisdom? May we not ask, in the prophet,s question,

`Who is wise? who is prudent?, Hosea xiv. 9. I answer--(1.) Such

expressions do more strongly aver and affirm a thing, as Mal. i. 6: `If

I be a father, where is my honour? If I be a master, where is my fear?,

Not as if God would make a doubt of these things, but such suppositions

are the strongest affirmations, for they imply a presumption of a

concession: you will all grant, I am a father and a master, &c. So

here, if you lack wisdom: you will grant you all lack this skill. So

Rom. xiii. 9, `If there be any other commandment,, &c. The apostle knew

there was another commandment, but he proceeded upon that grant. So 2

Thes. i. 6, ei'per, `If it be a righteous thing,, &c. The apostle

taketh it for granted it is righteous to render tribulation to the

troubler, and proceedeth upon that grant: and therefore we render it

affirmatively, `seeing it is,, &c. So James v. 15, `If he hath

committed sins., Why, who hath not? It is, I say, a proceeding upon a

presumption of a grant. (2.) All do not lack in a like manner: some

want only further degrees and supplies; therefore, if you lack; with a

supposition, if you lack it wholly, or only more measures.

Wisdom. It is to be restrained to the circumstances of the text, not

taken generally: he intendeth wisdom or skill to bear afflictions; for

in the original the beginning of this verse doth plainly catch hold of

the heel of the former, en medeni leipomenoi and then ei de tis humon

leipetai--`lacking nothing,, and presently, `if any of you lack.,

Let him ask it; that is, by serious and earnest prayer.

Of God; to whom our addresses must be immediate.

That giveth to all men.--Some suppose it implieth the natural

beneficence and general bounty of God, as indeed that is an argument in

prayer; God, that giveth to all men, will not deny his saints: as the

psalmist maketh God,s common bounty to the creatures to be aground of

hope and confidence to his people, Ps. cxlv. 16, `Thou satisfiest the

desire of every living thing;, and upon this his trust groweth, ver.

19, `He will fulfil the desires of them that fear him., He that

satisfieth every living thing certainly will satisfy his own servants.

There is a general bounty of God, which though liberally dispensed, yet

is not specially. But this sense the context will not bear. By all men,

then, may be understood all kinds of persons--Jew, Greek, or barbarian,

high or low, rich or poor. God giveth not with a respect to outward

excellency; he giveth to all men: or else, (3.) and so most suitably to

the context, to all askers, all that seek him with earnestness and

trust; however, it is thus generally expressed, that none might be

discouraged, but apply himself to God with some hope.

Liberally.--The word in the original is haplos, which properly

signifieth simply, but usually in matters of this nature it is taken

for bountifully. I note it the rather to explain many other places; as

Mat. vi. 22: Christ would have the `eye single,, that is, bounteous,

not looking after the money we part with: so Rom. xii. 8, `He that

giveth, let him do it en haploteti, with simplicity,, we read, but in

the margin, `liberally, or bountifully., So Acts ii. 46, `They did eat

their bread with all singleness of heart;, that is, bounteously,

liberally, as we translate the word in other places, as 2 Cor. viii. 2,

`The riches of your singleness,, we translate `liberality:, so 2 Cor.

ix. 11, the same word is used for bounty; and this word simplicity is

so often put for bounty, to show--(1.) That it must come from the free

and single motion of our hearts; as they that give sparingly give with

a hand half shut and a heart half willing; that is, not simply, with a

native and free motion. (2.) That we must not give deceitfully, as

serving our own ends, or with another intent than our bounty seemeth to

hold forth: so God gives simply, that is, as David expresseth it, 2

Sam. vii. 21, according to his own heart.

And upbraideth no man.--Here he reproveth another usual blemish of

man,s bounty, which is to upbraid others with what they have done for

them, and that eateth out all the worth of a kindness: the laws of

courtesy requiring that the receiver should remember, and the giver

forget: [47] but God upbraideth not. But you will say, what is the

meaning then of those expostulations concerning mercies received? and

why is it said, Mat. xi. 20, `Then he began to upbraid the cities, in

which many of his mighty works were done,? Because of this objection,

some expound this clause one way, some another; some suppose it

implieth he doth not give proudly, as men use to do, up braiding those

that receive with their words or looks: so God upbraideth not, that is,

doth not disdainfully reject the asker, or twit him with his

unworthiness, or doth not refuse because of present failings, or former

infirmities. But I think it rather noteth God,s indefatigableness to do

good: ask as oft as you will, he upbraideth you not with the frequency

of your accesses to him: he doth not twit us with asking, though he

twitteth us with the abuse of what we have received upon asking. He

doth upbraid, not to begrudge his own bounty, but to bring us to a

sense of our shame, and to make us own our ingratitude.

And it shall be given him.--Besides the nature of God, here he urgeth a

promise, `Let him ask of God, and it shall be given him., The

descriptions of God help us to form right thoughts of him, and the

promise, to fasten upon him by a sure trust.

The notes are these:--

Obs. 1. That all men are concluded and shut up under an estate of

lacking: `If any of you., This supposition, as we showed before, is a

universal affirmative. God,s wisdom suffereth the creatures to lack,

because dependence begetteth observance; if we were not forced to hang

upon heaven, and live upon the continued supplies of God, we would not

care for him. We see this--the less sensible men are of the condition

of mankind, the less religious. Promises usually invite those that are

in want, because they are most likely to regard them: Isa. lv. 1. `Ho,

every one that thirsteth, and he that hath no money;, Mat. xi. 28, `The

weary and heavy laden., In the 5th of Matthew, `The poor in spirit,,

and `they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: `being humbled by

their own wants and needs, they are most pliable to God,s offers. Well,

then, do not think your lot is above the lot of the rest of the

creatures. God only is auta'rkes, self-happy, self-sufficient; other

things are encompassed with wants, that they may look after him: Ps.

cxlv. 15, 16, `The eyes of all things are upon thee, and thou

satisfiest the desire of every living thing., The creatures are made up

of desires, that their eyes may be upon God. Certainly they want most

that want nothing: be sensible of your condition.

Obs. 2. From that lack, want and indigence put us upon prayer, and our

addresses to heaven begin at the sense of our own needs. The father

should not have heard from the prodigal, had he not `begun to be in

want,, Luke xv. 16. Observe it: the creature first beginneth with God

out of self-love. The first motive and allurement is the supply of our

wants. But, remember, it is better to begin in the flesh and end in the

spirit, than to begin in the spirit and end in the flesh. It is well

that God sanctifieth our self-love to so blessed a purpose. If there

had not been so many miseries, of blindness, lameness, possessions,

palsies, in the days of Christ,s flesh, there would not have been such

great resort to him. The first motive is want.

Obs. 3. From that wisdom, considered with respect to the context; and

the note is, that there is need of great wisdom for the right managing

of afflictions. Cheerful patience is a holy art and skill which a man

learneth of God: `I have learned to abound, and to be abased,, Phil.

iv. 10. Such an hard lesson needeth much learning. There is need of

wisdom in several respects:--(1.) To discern of God,s end in it, to

pick out the language and meaning of the dispensation: Micah vi. 9,

`Hear the rod., Every providence hath a voice, though sometimes it be

so still and low that it requireth some skill to hear it. Our spirits

are most satisfied when we discern God,s aim in everything. (2.) To

know the nature of the affliction, whether it be to fan or to destroy;

how it is intended for our good; and what uses and benefits we may make

of it: `Blessed is the man whom thou chastisest, and teachest out of

thy law,, Ps. xciv. 12. The rod is a blessing when instruction goeth

along with it (3.) To find out your own duty; to know the things of

obedience in the day of them: `Oh! that thou wert wise in this thy

day,, Luke xix. 41. There are seasonable and proper duties which become

every providence: it is wisdom to find them out; to know what to do in

every circumstance. (4.) To moderate the violences of our own passions.

[48] He that liveth by sense, will, and passion, is not wise. Skill is

required of us to apply apt counsels and comforts, that our hearts may

be above the misery that our flesh is under. The Lord `giveth counsel

in the reins,, and that calmeth the heart. Well, then: (1.) Get wisdom,

if you would get patience. Men of understanding have the greatest

command of their affections. Our hastiness of spirit cometh from folly,

Prov. xiv. 29; for where there is no wisdom, there is nothing to

counterbalance affection. Look, as discretion sets limits to anger, so

it doth to sorrow. Solomon saith, Prov. xix. 11, `The discretion of a

man deferreth his anger;, so it doth check the excesses of his grief.

(2.) To confute the world,s censure; they count patience, simplicity,

and meekness under injuries, to be but blockishness and folly. No; it

is a calmness of mind upon holy and wise grounds; but it is no new

thing with the world to call good evil, and to baptize graces with a

name of their own fancying. As the astronomers call the glorious stars

bulls, snakes, dragons, &c., so they miscall the most shining and

glorious graces. Zeal is fury; strictness, nicety; and patience, folly!

And yet James saith, `If any lack wisdom,, meaning patience. (3.) Would

ye be accounted wise? Show it by the patience and calmness of your

spirits. We naturally desire to be thought sinful rather than weak.

`Are we blind also?, John ix. 40. We all affect the repute of wisdom,

and would not be accounted blind or foolish. Consider, a man of

boisterous affections is a fool, and he that hath no command of his

passions hath no understanding.

Obs. 4. From that of God, in all our wants we must, immediately repair

to God. The scriptures do not direct us to the shrines of saints, but

to the throne of grace. You need not use the saints, intercession;

Christ hath opened a way for you into the presence of the Father.

Obs. 5. More particularly observe, wisdom must be sought of God. He is

wise, the fountain of wisdom, an unexhausted fountain. His stock is not

spent by misgiving. See Job xxxii. 8, `There is a spirit in man; but

the inspiration of the Almighty giveth understanding., Men have the

faculty, but God giveth the light, as the dial is capable of showing

the time of the day when the sun shineth on it. It is a most spiritual

idolatry to `lean to our own understanding., True wisdom is a divine

ray, and an emanation from God. Men never obtain it but in the way of a

humble trust. When we see our insufficiency and God,s all-sufficiency,

then the Lord undertaketh for us, to direct us and guide us: Prov. iii.

5, 6, `Acknowledge the Lord in all thy ways, and he shall direct thy

paths., When men are conceited, and think to relieve their souls by

their own thoughts and care, they do but perplex themselves the more.

God will be acknowledged, that is, consulted with, in all our

undertakings and conflicts, or else we shall miscarry. The better sort

of heathens would not begin anything of moment without asking counsel

at the oracle. As all wisdom is to be sought of God, so especially this

wisdom, to bear afflictions. There is nothing more abhorrent from

reason than to think ourselves happy in misery. We must go to another

school than that of nature. I confess reason and nature may offer some

rules that may carry a man far in the art of patience; but what is an

inferior or grammar school to a university? The best way will be, not

to go to nature, but Christ, `in whom are hid all the treasures of

wisdom and knowledge,, Col. ii. 3.

Obs. 6. From that let him ask, God will have everything fetched out by

prayer; he giveth nothing without asking. It is one of the laws

according to which heaven,s bounty is dispensed: Ezek. xxxvi. 37, `I

will be sought to by the house of Israel for this thing., God will have

us see the author of every mercy by the way of obtaining it. It is a

comfort and a privilege to receive mercies in a way of duty; it is

better to ask and not receive, than to receive and not ask. [49] Prayer

coming between our desires and the bounty of God is a means to beget a

due respect between him and us: every audience increaseth love, thanks,

and trust, Ps. cxvi. 1, 2. We usually wear with thanks what we win by

prayer; and those comforts are best improved which we receive upon our

knees. Well, then, wisdom and every good gift is an alms--you have it

for the asking. Mercies at `that rate do not cost dear. Oh! who would

not be one of that number whom God calleth his suppliants? Zeph. iii.

10; of `the generation of them that seek him,? Ps. xxiv. 6.

Obs. 7. Asking yieldeth a remedy for the greatest wants. Men sit down

groaning under their discouragements, because they do not look further

than themselves. Oh! you do not know how you may speed in asking. God

humbleth us with much weakness, that he may put us upon prayer. That is

easy to the Spirit which is hard to nature. God requireth such

obedience as is above the power of our natures, but not above the power

of his own grace. It was a good saying that, Da quod jubes, et jube

quod vis--Give what thou commandest, and command what thou wilt. If God

command anything above nature, it is to bring you upon your knees for

grace. He loveth to command that you may be forced to ask; and, indeed,

if God hath commanded, you may be bold to ask. There is a promise goeth

hand-in-hand with every precept: `Let him ask.,

Obs. 8. That giveth. God,s dispensations to the creatures are carried

in the way of a gift. Who can make God his debtor, advantage his being,

or perform an act that may be obliging and meritorious? Usually God

bestoweth most upon those who, in the eye of the world, are of least

desert, and least able to requite him. Doth not he invite the worst

freely? Isa. lv. 1, `He that hath no money, come and buy, without money

and without price., Nazianzen, [50] I remember, notably improveth this

place, o' tes eucholi'as tou sunalla'gmatos--Oh, this easy way of

contract! di'dosin e'dion e` lamba'nousin e'teroi--he giveth more

willingly than others sell; o'nion soi` to` thelesai mo'non to`

a'gathon--if thou wilt but accept, that is all the price; though you

have no merits, nothing in yourselves to encourage you, yet will you

accept? So in the Gospel, the blind and the lame were called to the

wedding, Mat. xxii. Whatever is dispensed to such persons must needs be

a gift. Well, then, silence all secret thoughts, as if God did see more

in you than others, when he poureth out more of himself to you. Merit

is so gross a conceit, that, in the light of the gospel, it dareth not

appear in so many downright words; but there are implicit whisperings,

some thoughts which are verba mentis, the words of the mind, whereby we

think that there is some reason for God,s choice; and therefore it is

said, Deut. ix. 4, `Say not in thy heart, For my own righteousness:, as

you dare not say it outwardly, so do not say it in your hearts. Be not

conscious to the sacrilege of a privy silent thought that way.

Obs. 9. To all men. The proposals of God,s grace are very general and

universal. It is a great encouragement that in the offer none are

excluded. Why should we, then, exclude ourselves? Matt. xi. 28, 4 Come

unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden., Mark, poor soul, Jesus

Christ maketh no exceptions. He did not except thee that hast an heavy

load and burden of guilt upon thy back: `Come, all ye., So here; the

lack is general, `If any;, and the supply is general, `He giveth to all

men., God never told thee that this was never intended to thee, and

that thy name was left out of the Lamb,s book. And it is a base

jealousy to mistrust God without a cause.

Obs. 10. From that liberally, God,s gifts are free and liberal. Many

times he giveth more than we ask, and our prayers come far short of

what grace doth for us. There is an imperfect modesty in our thoughts

and requests. We are not able to rise up to the just excess and

infiniteness of the divine goodness. The apostle saith, God will `do

above what we can ask or think,, Eph. iii. 20. As it is good to observe

how the answers of prayer have far exceeded the desires of the

creature, which usually are vast and capacious, let me give you some

instances. Solomon asked wisdom, and God gave liberally; he gave him

wisdom, and riches, and honour in great abundance, 1 Kings iii. 13.

Jacob asked but food and raiment for his journey, and God multiplieth

him from his staff into two bands, Gen. xxviii. 20, with xxxii. 10.

Abraham asked but one son, and God gave him issue as the stars in the

heavens, and the sand on the sea-shore. Gen. xv. with xxii. Saul came

to Samuel for the asses, and he heareth news of a kingdom. The prodigal

thought it much to be received as an hired servant, and the father is

devising all the honour and entertainment that possibly he can for

him--the calf, the ring, the robe, &c., Luke xv. In Mat. xviii. 26, the

debtor desired but forbearance for a little time: `Have a little

patience, and I will pay thee all: `and in the next verse his master

`forgave the debt., Certainly God,s bounty is too large for our

thoughts. The spouse would be drawn after Christ, but the King brought

her into his chambers, Cant. i. 4. David desired to be delivered out of

the present danger: Ps. xxxi. 4, `Pull me out of the net;, and God

advanced him to honour and dignity: `Thou hast put my feet in a large

room,, ver. 8. Well, then: (1.) Do not straiten God in your thoughts:

`Open your mouths, and I will fill them,, Ps. lxxxi. 10. God,s hand is

open, but our hearts are not open. The divine grace, like the

olive-trees in Zechariah, is always dropping; but we want a vessel.

That expression of the virgin is notable: Luke i. 46, `My heart doth

magnify the Lord,, megalunei, that is, make more room for God in my

thoughts. When God,s bounty is not only ever-flowing, but overflowing,

we should make our thoughts and hopes as large and comprehensive as

possibly they can be. When the King of glory is drawing nigh, they are

bidden to set open the doors, Ps. xxiv. 7. No thoughts of ours can

search out God to perfection; that is, exhaust and draw out all the

excellency and glory of the Godhead; but certainly we should rise and

ascend more in our apprehensions. (2.) Let us imitate our heavenly

Father, give liberally, haplos--that is the word of the text--with a

free and a native bounty: give simply, not with a double mind. Some men

have a backward and a close heart, liberal only in promises. Consider,

God doth not feed you with empty promises. Others eye self in all their

kindness, make a market of their charity; [51] this is not simply, and

according to the divine pattern. Some men give grudgingly, with a

divided mind, half inclining, half forbearing; this is not like God

neither. Others give in guile, and to deceive men; [52] it is kindness

to their hurt, dora a'dora, giftless gifts;--their courtesy is most

dangerous. [53] Give like your heavenly Father, liberally, simply.

Obs. 11. From that and upbraideth not. Men are apt to do so, but God

giveth in another manner. Observe from hence, First, in the general,

that God giveth quite in another manner than man doth. It is our fault

to measure infiniteness by our last, and to muse of God according as we

use ourselves. The soul, in all her conclusions, is directed by

principles and premises of sense and experience; and because we

converse with limited natures and dispositions, therefore we do not

form proper and worthy thoughts of God. It was the gross idolatry of

the heathens to `turn the glory of the incorruptible God into the image

of a man., Rom. i. 23; that is, to fancy God according to the shape and

figure of our bodies. And so it is the spiritual idolatry of Christians

to fancy God according to the model and size of their own minds and

dispositions. I am persuaded there doth nothing disadvantage us so much

in believing as this conceit that `God is altogether like ourselves,,

Ps. 1. 21. We, being of eager and revengeful spirits, cannot believe

his patience and pardoning mercy; and that, I suppose, was the reason

why the apostles (when Christ talked of forgiving our brother seven

times in one day), cried out, Luke xvii. 5, `Lord, increase our faith,,

as not being able to believe so great a pardoning mercy either in

themselves or God. And therefore, also, I suppose it is that God doth

with such vehemency show everywhere that his heart hath other manner of

dispositions than man,s hath: Isa. lv. 8, 9, `My thoughts are not as

your thoughts, nor my ways as your ways; as far as the heavens are

above the earth, so are my thoughts above your thoughts: `I am not

straitened in bowels, nor hardened, nor implacable, as men are; as

there is a vast space and distance between the earth and the firmament,

so between your drop and my ocean. So Hosea xi. 9, `I am God, and not

man; and therefore Ephraim shall not be destroyed;, that is, I have not

such a narrow heart, such wrathful implacable dispositions as men have.

Well, then, consider^ when God giveth, he will give like himself. Do

not measure him by the wretched straitness of your own hearts, and

confine God within the circle of the creatures. It is said of Araunah

that he gave as a king to David, 2 Sam. xxiv. 23. Whatever God doth, he

will do as a God, above the rate and measure of the creatures,

something befitting the infiniteness and eternity of his own essence.

Obs. 12. From the same clause, upbraideth not, you may more

particularly observe, that God doth not reproach his people with the

frequency of their addresses to him for mercy, and is never weary doing

them good. It is man,s use to excuse himself by what he hath done

already. They will recount their former favours to deny the present

requests. Men,s stock is soon spent; they waste by giving, and

therefore they soon grow weary. Yea, we are afraid to press a friend

too much, lest, by frequent use, kindness be worn out. You know it is

Solomon,s advice, Prov. xxv, 17, `Let thy foot be seldom in thy

neighbour,s house, lest he be weary of thee, and so hate thee., Thus it

is with men; either oat of penury or satiety, they are soon full of

their friends. But oh! what a difference there is between our earthly

and our heavenly friend. The oftener we come to God, the welcomer; and

the more we `acquaint ourselves with him,, the more `good cometh to

us,, Job xxii. 21. His gates are always open, and he is still ready to

receive us. We need not be afraid to urge God to the next act of love

and kindness: 2 Cor. i. 10, `Who delivered us from so great a death,

and doth deliver; in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us., One

mercy is but a step to another, and if God hath, we may again trust

that he will. With men, renewed addresses and often visitings are but

impudence, but with God they are confidence. God is so far from

upbraiding us with what he hath done already, that his people make it

their usual argument, `He hath delivered me from the lion and the bear,

therefore he shall from the uncircumcised Philistine,, 1 Sam. xvii. 37.

Well, then: (1.) Whenever you receive mercy upon mercy, give the Lord

the praise of his unwearied love. When God promised to keep up honour

upon honour, and privilege upon privilege on David and his line, David

saith, 2 Sam. vii. 19, `And is this the manner of man, O Lord God?,

Would man do thus? Is this according to his use and custom, to grant

request after request, and to let his grace run in the same eternal

tenor of love and sweetness? Should we .go to man as often as we go to

God, we should soon have a repulse, but we cannot weary infiniteness.

(2.) If God be not weary of blessing you, be not you weary of serving

him. Duty is the proper correlate of mercy. God is not weary of

blessing, so be not you `weary of well-doing,, Gal. vi. 9. Let not your

zeal and heat be spent, as his bounty is not.

Obs. 13. From that and it shall be given him. Due asking will prevail

with God. God always satisfieth prayer, though he doth not always

satisfy carnal desires: `Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye

shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you,, Mat. vii. 7. If we

do not receive at asking, let us go to seeking; if not at seeking, let

us go on to knocking. It is good to continue fervency till we have an

answer. But you will say, Are these promises true? The sons of Zebedee,

they asked, and could not find, Mat. xx. 22. The foolish virgins, they

knocked, and it was not opened to them, Mat. xxv. 8. So the church

seeketh Christ: Cant iii. 1, `By night on my bed I sought him whom my

soul loveth; I sought him, and found him not., How, then, can these

words of Christ be made good? I shall answer by stating the general

case. Prayers rightly qualified want not success; that is, if they come

from a holy heart, in a holy manner, to a holy purpose. I remember one

prettily summeth up all the requisites of prayer thus, Si bonum petant

boni, bene, ad bonum. [54] These are the limitations: (1.) Concerning

the person. God looketh after, not only the property of the prayer, but

the propriety and interest of the person. Our apostle, chap. v. 16,

`The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much., deesis

energoumene--a prayer driven with much force and vehemency; but it must

be of a righteous person. The Jews propound it as a known rule, John

ix. 31, `God heareth not sinners., It is so frequently inculcated in

scripture, that they urge it as a proverb--An unclean person polluteth

his own prayers. But of this hereafter. (2.) That which they ask must

be good: 1 John v. 14, `Whatever we ask according to his will, he

heareth us., It must be according to his revealed will, that is

obedience; and with submission to his secret will, that is

patience--neither according to our own lusts, nor our own fancies. To

ask according to our lusts is an implicit blasphemy, like Balaam,s

sacrifices, performed out of a hope to draw heaven into the confederacy

of his cursed designs. And to make our fancy the highest rule is a

presumptuous folly. God knoweth what is best for us. Like children, we

desire a knife; like a wise Father he giveth us bread. God always

heareth his people when the request is good. But we must remember God

must judge what is good, not we ourselves. There cannot be a greater

judgment than always to have our own will granted. [55] (3.) We must

ask in a right manner, with faith, as in the next verse; with fervency,

see chap. v. 16; with patience and constancy, waiting for God,s time

and leisure. God,s discoveries of himself are not by-and-by to the

creature. A sack stretched out containeth the more; and when the

desires are extended and drawn out to God, the mercy is usually the

greater: Ps. xl. 1, `I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined

unto me, and heard my cry., God loveth to dispense mercies after our

waiting. (4.) It must be ad bonum; you must pray to a good end, with an

aim and reference to the Lord,s glory. There is a difference between a

carnal desire and a gracious supplication: James iv. 3, `You ask and

have not, because you ask amiss, to spend it on your lusts., Never let

your requests terminate in self. That was but a brutish request, Exod.

xvii. 2, `Give us water that we may drink., A beast can aim at

self-preservation. Prayer, as every act of the Christian life, must

have an ordination to God. Well, then, pray thus, and you shall be sure

to speed. Carnal requests are often disappointed, and therefore we

suspect gracious prayers, and faith is much shaken by the

disappointment of a rash confidence. Consider that, John xvi. 23,

`Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever you ask the Father in my

name, he shall give it you., Mark, Christ speaketh universally,

`whatsoever,, to raise our hopes; earnestly, `verily, verily,, to

encourage our faith. We are apt to disbelieve such promises.

Obs. 14. Lastly, from that it shall be given. He bringeth an

encouragement not only from the nature of God, but the promise of God.

It is an encouragement in prayer, when we consider there is not only

bounty in God, but bounty engaged by promise. What good will the

general report do without a particular invitation? There is a rich King

giveth freely; ay! but he giveth at pleasure; no, he hath promised to

give to thee. The psalmist argueth from God,s nature, `Thou art good,

and dost good,, Ps. cxix. 68. But from the promise we may reason thus,

`Thou art good, and shalt do good., God at large, and discovered to you

in loose attributes, doth not yield a sufficient foundation for trust;

but God in covenant, God as ours. Well, then, let the world think what

it will of prayer, it is not a fruitless labour: you have promises for

prayer, and promises to prayer; and therefore when you pray for a

blessing promised, God doth, as it were, come under another engagement:

`Ask, and it shall be given.,

Ver. 6. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering; for he that

wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed.

Here he proposeth a caution, to prevent mistakes about what he had

delivered: every asking will not serve the turn; it must be an asking

in faith.

But let him ask in faith.--Faith may be taken--(1.) For confidence in

God, or an act of particular trust, as Eph. iii. 12: `We have boldness

and access with confidence through the faith of him,, (2.) It may

import persuasion of the lawfulness of the things that we ask for; that

is one acceptation of faith in scripture, Rom. xiv. 23: `Whatever is

not of faith, is sin;, that is, if we practise it before we are

persuaded of the lawfulness of it. Or, (3.) In faith, that is, in a

state of believing; for God will hear none but his own, those that have

interest in Jesus Christ, `in whom the promises are yea and amen,, 2

Cor. i. 20. All these senses are considerable, but I think the first is

most direct and formal; for faith is here opposed to doubting and

wavering, and so noteth a particular act of trust.

Nothing wavering, meden diakrinomenos.--What is this wavering? The word

signifieth not disputing or traversing the matter as doubtful in the

thoughts. The same phrase is used Acts x. 20, `Arise, go with them,

meden diakrinomenos, nothing doubting;, that is, do not stand disputing

in thy thoughts about thy calling and the good success of it. The word

is often used in the matter of believing; as Rom. iv. 20, `He staggered

not through unbelief; in the original ou diekrithe `He disputed not,,

did not debate the matter, but settled his heart upon God,s power and

promise: Mat. xxi. 21: `If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall say

to this mountain, Be thou removed into the depths of the sea,, &c. If

they could but remove the anxiousness and uncertainty of their

thoughts, and settle their hearts upon the warrant, they should do

miracles.

For he that doubteth is like a wave of the sea, that is tossed to and

fro.--An elegant similitude to set out their estate, used by common

authors in the same matter, [56] and by the prophet Isaiah, chap. lvii.

20. James saith here, the doubter, eoiken kludoni, is `like a wave of

the sea;, and the prophet saith of all wicked men, kludonisthesontai

(as the Septuagint render it), `These shall be like troubled waves,

whose waters cannot rest.,

The notes are these:--

Obs. 1. That the trial of a true prayer is the faith of it. Cursory

requests are made out of fashion, not in faith; men pray, but do not

consider the bounty of him to whom they pray: prayer is a means, not a

task; therefore, in prayer there should be distinct reflections upon

the success of it. Well, then, look to your prayers; see you put them

up with a particular hope and trust; all the success lieth on that: `O

woman! great is thy faith; be it to thee as thou wilt,, Mat. xv. 28:

God can deny faith nothing; `Be it to you as you will., So Mark xi. 24,

`Whatsoever things ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye shall

receive them, and ye shall have them., Mark that, `Believe, and ye

shall have., God,s attributes, when they are glorified, they are

exercised, and by our trust his truth and power is engaged. But you

will say, How shall we do to pray in faith? I answer--There is

something presupposed, and that is an interest in Christ. But that

which is required in every prayer is:--

1. An actual reliance upon the grace and merits of Jesus Christ: Eph.

ii. 18, `Through him we have access with confidence unto the Father.,

We cannot lift up a thought of hope and trust but by him. If you have

not assurance, yet go out of yourselves, and look for your acceptance

in his merits. Certainly this must be done; none can pray aright but

believers. How can they comfortably be persuaded of a blessing, that

have never a promise belonging to them? Therefore, at least you must

honour Christ in the duty: you must see that such worthless creatures

as you may be accepted in him: Heb. iv. 16, `Let us therefore come

boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find help

in time of need., Through Christ we may come freely and boldly: I am a

sinner, but Jesus Christ, my intercessor, is righteous. Men will say,

they do not doubt of God, but of themselves: I am a wretched sinner,

will the Lord hear me? I answer--This is but Satan,s policy to make us

say we doubt of ourselves^ not of God; for, in effect, it is a doubting

of God; of his mercy, as if it were not free enough to pardon and save;

of his power, as if it were not great enough to help. We must come

humbly; we are sinners: but we must come in faith also; Christ is a

Saviour: it is our folly, under colour of humbling ourselves, to have

low thoughts of God. If we had skill, we should see that all graces,

like the stones in the building, have a marvellous symmetry and

compliance one with another; and we may come humbly, yet boldly in

Christ.

2. We must put up no prayer but what we can put up in faith: prayer

must be regulated by faith, and faith must not wander out of the limits

of the word. If you have a promise, you may be confident that your

requests will be heard, though in God,s season: you cannot put up a

carnal desire in faith. The apostle,s words are notably pertinent to

state this matter: 1 John v. 14, `This is the confidence that we have

concerning him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he

heareth us., All things are to be asked in faith; some things

absolutely, as spiritual blessings,--I mean, as considered in their

essence, not degree. Degrees are arbitrary. Other things condition

ally, as outward blessings. Let the prayer be according to the word,

and the success will be according to the prayer.

3. The soul must actually magnify God,s attributes in every prayer, and

distinctly urge them against the present doubt and fear. Usually we do

not doubt for want of a clear promise, but out of low thoughts of God;

we cannot carry his love, power, truth, above the present temptation,

and believe that there is love enough to justify us from so many sins,

power enough to deliver us from so great a death or danger, 2 Cor. i.

10; and bounty enough to bestow so great a mercy. This is to pray in

faith, to form proper and right thoughts of God in prayer, when we see

there is enough to answer the particular doubt and exigency: as Mat.

viii. 28, 29, Jesus saith to the two blind men, `Believe ye that I am

able to do this? and they said, Yea, Lord: then touched he their eyes,

saying, According to your faith, be it unto you., Christ asked first

whether they had a right estimation of his power, and then, in the next

place, he calleth it faith, and gave them the blessing. Those that come

to God had need conceive rightly of him; Christ requireth nothing more

of the blind man but a sealing to the greatness of his power.

`Believest thou that I am able?, `Yea, Lord;, and that was all. But you

will say, Tell us more distinctly, what faith is required in every

prayer? I answer--The question has been in a great part already

answered.

But, for further satisfaction, take these rules:--[1.] That where we

have a certain promise, we must no way doubt of his will; for the doubt

must either proceed from a suspicion that this is not the word or will

of God, and that is atheism; or from a jealousy that God will not. make

good his word, and that is blasphemy; or a fear that he is not able to

accomplish his will, and that is downright distrust and unbelief.

Therefore, where we have a clear sight of his will in the promise, we

may have a confidence towards him, 1 John v. 14.

[2.] Where we have no certain assurance of his will, the work of faith

is to glorify and apply his power. Unbelief stumbleth most at that,

rather at God,s can than will; as appeareth partly by

experience.--Fears come upon us only when means fail and the blessings

expected are most unlikely; which argueth that it is not the

uncertainty of God,s will, but the misconceit of his power, that maketh

u doubt. The present dangers and difficulties surprise us with such a

terror that we cannot comfortably use the help of prayer out of a faith

in God,s power:--partly by the testimony of the scriptures. Search, and

you shall find that God,s power and all-sufficiency is the first ground

and reason of faith. Abraham believed, because `God was able to

perform., Rom. iv. 21. And that unbelief expresseth itself in such

language as implieth a plain distrust of God,s power; as Ps. lxxviii.

19, `Can the Lord prepare a table in the wilderness?, It is not will,

but can: 2 Kings vii. 2, `If the Lord should open the windows of

heaven, how can this be?, So the Virgin Mary: Luke i. 34, `How can

these things be?, and so in many other instances. Men deceive

themselves when they think they doubt because they know not the will of

God: their main hesitancy is at his power. Look, as in the case of

conversion, we pretend a cannot, when indeed we will not; [57] so,

oppositely, in the case of faith, we pretend we know not God,s will,

when we indeed doubt of his can. Therefore the main work of your faith

is to give him the glory of his power, leaving his will to himself.

Christ putteth you, as he did the blind men (Mat. ix. 28), to the

question, `Am I able?, Your souls must answer, `Yea, Lord., And in

prayer you must come as the leper: Mat. viii. 2, `Lord, if thou wilt,

thou canst make me clean., Whether he grant you or not, believe; that

is, say in your thoughts, Lord, thou canst.

[3.] In these cases, his power is not only to be glorified, but also

his love. But you will say, in an uncertain case, How must we glorify

his love? I answer--Two ways; faith hath a double work. (1.) To compose

the soul to a submission to God,s pleasure. He is so good, that you may

refer yourself to his goodness. Whether he grant or not, he is a wise

God and a loving father, and will do what is best; so that, you see, in

no case we must dispute, but refer ourselves to God, as the leper was

not troubled about God,s will, but said, `Lord, thou canst., Cast

yourselves upon his will, but conjure him by his power; this is the

true and genuine working of faith. When you dare leave your case with

God,s love, `let him do what seemeth good in his eyes,, good he will

do; as in scripture the children of God in all temporal matters do

resign themselves to his disposal, for they know his heart is full of

love, and that is best which their heavenly Father thinketh best, and

this taketh off the disquiet and perplexity of the spirit: Prov. xvi.

3, `Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be

established., They wait with serenity when they have committed their

works to God,s will with submission. (2.) To incline and raise the soul

into some hope of the mercy prayed for. Hope is the fountain of

endeavours, and we should neither pray nor wait upon God were it not

that we may look up to him because there is hope, Lam. iii. 29. The

hypocrite,s prejudice was, `It is in vain to seek God,, Job xxi. 15.

There are some particular promises, you know, concerning preservation

in times of pestilence, oppression, famine, &c. (Mal. iii. 14), which,

though they are not always made good in the rigour of the letter, yet

they are in a great measure fulfilled, and epi` to` pleiston, for the

most part take place. I say, though they are to be expounded with the

exception and reservation of the cross (for God is no further obliged

than he is obliged by the covenant of grace, and in the covenant of

grace he hath still kept a liberty of `visiting their iniquity with

rods,, Ps. lxxxix. 33), yet because the children of God have many

experiences of their accomplishment, they cannot choose but conceive

some hope towards God, and incline rather to think that God will grant.

The least that these promises do is to beget some loose hope, they

being so express to our case, and being so often accomplished. Nay, how

can we urge these in prayer to a good God, and not say, as David,

`Remember thy word unto thy servant, wherein thou hast caused me to

hope,, Ps. cxix. 49? I do not say we should prescribe to God, and limit

his will to our thoughts, but only conceive a hope with submission,

because of the general reservation of the cross.

[4.] Some, that have more near communion with God, may have a

particular faith of some particular occurrences. By some special

instincts in prayer from the Spirit of God they have gone away and said

with David, Ps. xxvii. 3, `In this I will be confident., I do not say

it is usual, but sometimes it may be so; we cannot abridge the Spirit

of his liberty of revealing himself to his people. But, remember,

privileges do not make rules; these are acts of God,s prerogative, not

according to his standing law and rule. However, this I conceive is

common: that, in a particular case, we may conceive the more hope, when

our hearts have been drawn out to God by an actual trust; that is, when

we have urged a particular promise to God in prayer with submission,

yet with hope; for God seldom faileth a trusting soul. They may lay

hold on God by virtue of a double claim; partly by virtue of the single

promise that first invited them to God, and then by virtue of another

promise made to their trust; as Isa. xxvi. 3, `Thou keepest him in

perfect peace who putteth his trust in^thee, because he trusteth in

thee., An ingenious man will not disappoint trust; and God saith, eo

nomine, for that reason, because they trust in him, he will do them

good; therefore, now having glorified God,s power, and with hope

referred themselves to his will, they have a new argument of hope

within themselves. It is notable that in Ps. xci. 2, 3, there is a

dialogue between the Spirit of God and a believing soul. The soul

saith, `I will say of the Lord, he is my refuge and my fortress, my

God; in him will I trust., There is a resolution of a humble and actual

trust. The Spirit answereth, ver. 3, `Surely he shall deliver thee from

the snare of the fowler, and from a noisome pestilence., There is a

promise under an averment, surely, which certainly would do nothing, if

it did not at the least draw out the more hope.

Thus I have given you my thoughts of this common and useful

case,--praying in faith.

Obs. 2. From that nothing wavering, or disputing, as it is in the

original, man,s nature is much given to disputes against the grace and

promises of God. The pride of reason will not stoop to a revelation;

and where we have no assurance but the divine testimony, there we are

apt to cavil. All doubts are but disputes against a promise; therefore

what is said in our translation, `Lift up pure hands, without wrath and

doubting, (1 Tim. ii. 8), is in the original choris dialogi'smou,

without reasoning or dispute. A sure word is committed to the

uncertainty of our thoughts and debates, and God,s promises ascited

before the tribunal of our reason. Well, then, cast down those

logi'smous, those imaginations, or reasonings rather (for so the word

properly signifieth), which exalt themselves against the knowledge of

God in Christ. Carnal reason is faith,s worst enemy. It is a great

advantage when we can make reason, that is an enemy to faith, to be a

servant to it; logizesthe, saith the apostle: Rom. vi. 11, `Reckon, or

reason yourselves to be dead to sin, and alive to God., Then is our

reason and discourse well employed, when it serveth to set on and urge

conclusions of faith.

Obs. 3. From the same--That the less we doubt, the more we come up to

the nature of true faith. The use of grace is to settle the heart upon

God; to be fast and loose argueth weakness: `Why doubt ye, O ye of

little faith?, I do not say it is no faith, but it is a weak faith: a

trembling hand may hold somewhat, but faintly. Well, then, seek to lay

aside your doubts and carnal debates, especially in prayer; come

`without wrath and doubting: `without wrath to a God of peace, without

doubting to a God of mercy. Do not debate whether it be better to cast

yourselves upon God,s promise and disposal, or to leave yourselves to

your own. carnal care; that is no faith when the heart wavereth between

hopes and fears, help and God. Our Saviour saith, Luke xii. 29, me

meteorizesthe, `Be not of doubtful mind, what ye shall eat and drink;,

do not hang between two, like a meteor hovering in the air (so the word

signifieth), not knowing what God will do for you. A thorough belief of

God,s attributes, as revealed in Christ, taketh off all disquiets and

perplexities of spirit. Well, then, get a clear interest in Christ, and

a more distinct apprehension of God,s attributes. Ignorance perplexeth

us, and filleth the soul with misty dark reasonings; but faith settleth

the soul, and giveth it a greater constancy.

Obs. 4. From that like a wave of the sea, tossed to and fro, doubts are

perplexing, and torment the mind. An unbeliever is like the waves of

the sea, always rolling; but a believer is like a tree, much shaken,

but firm at root. We are under misery and bondage as long as we are

tossed upon the waves of our own affections; and till faith giveth a

certainty, there is no rest and peace in the soul: `Return to thy rest,

O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee,, Ps. cxvi. 7.

Faith shedding abroad God,s love in our sense and feeling, begetteth a

calm: they that teach a doctrine of doubting--exercent carnificinam

animarum, saith Calvin--they do but keep conscience upon the rack, and

leave men to the torment of their own distracted thoughts. Romish

locusts are like scorpions (Rev. ix. 10), with `stings in their tails;,

and `men shall desire death, (ver. 6) that are stung with them.

Antichristian doctrines yield no comfort and ease to the conscience,

but rather sting it and wound it, that, to be freed from their anxiety,

men would desire to die. Certainly there cannot be a greater misery

than for man to be a burden and a terror to himself; and there is no

torment like that of our own thoughts. Well, then, go to God, and get

your spirit settled: he that cherisheth his own doubts doth but hug a

distemper instead of a duty. ^

Ver. 7. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of

the Lord.

Let him not think.--It is either put to show that they can look for

nothing, nor rise up into any confidence before God; he doth not say,

`He shall receive nothing,, but `Let not that man think he shall

receive;, whatever God,s overflowing bounty may give them, they can

expect nothing. Or else, `Let not that man think,, to check their vain

hopes. Man deceiveth himself, and would fain seduce his soul into the

way of a carnal hope; therefore, saith the apostle, `Let not that man

think,, that is, deceive himself with a vain surmise.

That he shall receive anything.--Such doubting as endeth not in faith

frustrateth prayers, and maketh them altogether vain and fruit less.

There are doubts in the people of God, but they get the victory over

them; and, therefore, it is not to be understood as if any doubt did

make us incapable of any blessing, but only such as is allowed and

prevaileth.

Of the Lord, para tou? Kuriou; that is, from Christ; Lord, in the idiom

of the New Testament, being most usually applied to him, as mediator;

and Christ as mediator is to commend our prayers to God, and to convey

all blessings from God; therefore, the apostle saith, 1 Cor. viii. 6,

`To us there is but one God, the Father of all, by whom are all things,

and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and

we by him., The heathens, as they had many gods, many ultimate objects

of worship, so they had many lords, many intermediate powers, that were

to be as agents between the gods and men, to convey the prayers and

supplications of men to the gods, and the bounty and rewards of

devotion from the gods to men; `But to us,, saith the apostle, `there

is but one God,, one sovereign God, `the Father,, the first spring and

fountain of blessings; `and one Lord,, that is, one Mediator, `Jesus

Christ, di' hou ta` pa'nta kai` emeis di' autou, by whom are all

things, which come from the Father to us, and by whom alone we find

access to him.

The notes are these:--

Obs. 1. That unbelievers, though they may receive something, yet they

can expect nothing from God. Let him not think. They are under a double

misery:--(1.) They can lift up no thoughts of hope and comfort, for

they are not under the assurance of a promise. Oh, what a misery is

this, to toil, and still to be left to an uncertainty--to pray, and to

have no sure hope! When the task is over, they cannot look for

acceptance or a blessing. The children of God are upon^ more sure

terms: 1 Cor. ix. 26, `I run not as uncertainly;, that is, not as one

that is in danger or doubt of having run in vain. So Solomon saith,

Prov. xi. 18, `The righteous hath a sure reward;, they have God,s

infallible promise, and may expect a blessing; but the wicked, whether

they run or sit, they cannot form their thoughts into any hope; whether

they run, or sit still, they are in the same condition; [58] if they

run, they run uncertainly; if they pray, they pray uncertainly; like a

slave that doth his task, and knoweth not whether he shall please; so,

when they have done all, they are still left to the puzzle and

uncertainty of their own thoughts; and indeed it is a punishment that

well enough suiteth with their dispositions; they pray, and do not look

after the success of prayer; they perform duties, and do not observe

the blessing of duties, like children that shoot their arrows at

rovers, with an uncertain aim, and never look after them again. Those

that live best among carnal men, live by guess, and some loose devout

aims. (2.) If they receive anything, they cannot look upon it as coming

by promise, or as a return of prayers. When the children are fed, the

dogs may have crumbs: all their comforts are but the spillings and

overflowings of God,s bounty. And truly this is a great misery, when we

cannot see love in our enjoyments, and blessings are given us by chance

rather than covenant; they cannot discern mercy and truth in any of

their comforts, as Jacob did,, Gen. xxxii. 10. Well, then, let the

misery of this condition make us to come out of it; get a sure interest

in Christ, that you may be under a sure hope and expectation. Unbelief

will always leave you to uncertainty; doubting is a new provocation,

and when a man maketh a supplication a provocation, what can he look

for? A man may be ashamed to ask God, that is so backward to honour

him.

Obs. 2. From the other reason of the words, let him not think. Men

usually deceive themselves with vain hopes and thoughts: they are out

in their thinking: Mat. iii. 9, `Think not to say within yourselves, We

have Abraham to our father., Carnal confidence is rooted in some vain

principle and thought; so men think God is not just, hell is not so

hot, the devil is not so black, nor the scriptures so strict as they

are made to be. The apostles everywhere meet with these carnal

thoughts; as 1 Cor. vi. 9, `Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor

adulterers, nor idolaters,, &c. They were apt to deceive themselves

with some such hope; so Gal. vi. 7, `Be not deceived, God is not

mocked., Men are persuaded that if they can devise any shift to excuse

themselves from duty, all will be well enough. God is not mocked with

any pretences; this is but a vain thought. Well, then, look to your

privy thoughts. All corrupt actions are founded in some vain thought,

and this vain thought is strengthened with some vain word; therefore

the apostle saith, Eph. v. 6, `Let no man deceive you with vain words.,

All practical errors are but a man,s natural thoughts cried up for a

valuable opinion, and they all tend either to excuse sin, or to secure

us from judgment, or to seduce us into a vain hope; and thus foolish

man becometh his own cheater, and deceiveth himself with his own

thinking. In all natural and civil things we desire to know the truth;

many do deceive, but none would willingly be deceived; [59] but in

spiritual things we think ourselves never more happy than when we have

seduced our souls into a vain hope, or gotten them into a fool,s

paradise.

Obs. 3. From that, that he shall receive. The cause why we receive not

upon asking, is not from God, but ourselves; he `giveth liberally,, but

we pray doubtingly. He would give, but we cannot receive. We see men

are discouraged when they are distrusted, and suspicion is the ready

way to make them unfaithful; and, certainly, when we distrust God, it

is not reasonable we should expect aught from him. Christ said to

Martha, John xi. 40, `If thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the

glory of God;, that is, power, love, truth, discovered in their lustre

and glory. Omnipotency knoweth no restraint, only it is discouraged by

man,s unbelief; therefore it is said, Mark vi. 5, 6, `And he could do

no mighty work there, because of their unbelief;, he could not, because

he would not, not for want of power in him, but for want of disposition

in the people. So Mark ix. 22, 23: the father cometh for a possessed

child: `Master, if thou canst do anything, help us., Christ answereth,

`If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.,

The distressed father saith, `If thou canst do anything;, our holy Lord

saith, `If thou canst believe:, as if he had said, Do not doubt of my

power, but look to thy own faith; I can, if thou canst. If we were

disposed to receive as God is fitted to give, we should not be long

without an answer. Omnipotent power can save to the utter most,

infinite love can pardon to the uttermost, if we could but believe.

`All things are possible to him that believeth;, that is, God can do

all things for the comfort and use of believers; faith is his immutable

ordinance, and he will not go out of his own way. Well, then, if you

receive not, it is not for want of power in God, but want of faith in

yourselves.

Obs. 4. From that anything--neither wisdom nor anything else--that God

thinketh the least mercy too good for unbelievers: he thinketh. nothing

too good for faith, and anything too good for unbelief. It is

observable, in the days of Christ,s flesh, that faith was never

frustrate; he never let it pass without some effect; nay, some times he

offereth all that you can wish for: Mat. xv. 28, `Great is thy faith;

be it to thee even as thou wilt., Faith giveth Christ content, and,

therefore, he will be sure to give the believer content; crave what you

will, and he will give it. But, on the contrary, `Let not that man

think that he shall receive anything., How are the bowels of mercy

shrunk up at the sight of unbelief! Believers shall have all things,

and you nothing.

Obs. 5. From that from the Lord, that the fruit of our prayers is

received from the hands of Christ; he is the middle person by whom God

conveyeth blessings to us, and we return duty to him. See John xiv. 13,

`Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, that will I do, that

the Father may be glorified in the Son., Mark, `I will do it,, [60]

Christ receiveth the power to convey the blessing; we must ask the

Father, but it cometh to us through him: and all this, not that the

Father might be excluded, but glorified. We are unworthy to converse

with the Father, therefore Christ is the true mediator. God is

glorified when we come to him through Christ. In times of knowledge,

God would have your thoughts in prayer to be more distinct and

explicit; you must come to the Father in the Son,s name, and look for

all through the Spirit: and as the Spirit worketh as Christ,s Spirit,

to glorify the Son, John xvi. 4, so the Son, he will give to glorify

the Father. What an excellent ground of hope and confidence have we,

when we reflect upon these three things in prayer--the Father,s love,

the Son,s merit, and the Spirit,s power! No man cometh to the Son but

by the Father, John vi. 65: no man cometh to the Father but by the Son,

John xiv. 6: no man is united to the Son but by the Holy Ghost:

therefore do we read of `the unity of the Spirit,, Eph. iv. 3.

Ver. 8. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.

He proceedeth to a general consideration of the unhappiness of un

believers, and he saith two things of them--that they are double-minded

and unstable. Possibly there may be a secret antithesis, or opposition,

between the temper of these men and what he had said before of God. God

giveth aplos, with a single mind (ver. 5), and we expect with a double

mind, our trust being nothing so sure as his mercy is free. But let us

examine the words more particularly.

A double-minded man, dipsuchos aner.--The word signifieth one that hath

two souls; and so it may imply--(1.) A hypocrite, as the same word is

used to that purpose, James iv. 8: `Purify your hearts, ye

double-minded., dipsuchoi. As he speaketh to open sinners to cleanse

their hands, so to close hypocrites (whom he there calleth

double-minded, as pretending one thing and meaning another), to purify

their hearts, that is, to grow more inwardly sincere; and so it suiteth

very well with that phrase by which the Hebrews express a deceiver: Ps.

xii. 2, `With a double heart do they speak:, in the original, `With a

heart and a heart,, which is their manner of expression when they would

express a thing-that is double or deceitful, as divers or deceitful

weights is a weight and a weight in the original, Prov. xx. 23. As

Theophrastus saith of the partridges of Paphlagonia, that they had two

hearts; so every hypocrite hath two hearts or two souls. As I remember,

I have read of a profane wretch that bragged he had two souls in one

body, one for God, and the other for anything. [61] (2.) It implieth

one that is distracted and divided in his thoughts, floating between

two different ways and opinions, as if he had two minds, or two souls;

and certainly there were such in the apostle,s days, some Judaising

brethren, that sometimes would sort with the Jews, some times with the

Christians, and did not use all due endeavours to be built up in the

faith, or settled in the truth: as of ancient, long before this time,

it is said of others, 2 Kings xvii. 33, `They feared the Lord, and

served their own gods;, they were divided between God and idols, which

indifferency of theirs the prophet expresseth by a double or divided

heart: Hosea x. 2, `Their heart is divided, now shall they be found

faulty., Thus Athanasius applied this description to the Eusebians,

[62] that sometimes held one thing, and anon another, that a man could

never have them at any stay or certain pass. (3.) And, more expressly

to the context, it may note those whose minds were tossed to and fro

with various and uncertain motions; now lifted up with a billow of

presumption, then cast down in a gulf of despair, being divided between

hopes and fears concerning their acceptance with God. I prefer this

latter sense, as most suiting with the apostle,s purpose.

Is unstable, akatastatos.--Hath no constancy of soul, being as ready to

depart from God as to close with him; no way fixed and resolved in the

religion he professeth.

In all his ways.--Some apply it chiefly to prayer, because those that

are doubtful of success often intermit the practice of it, regarding it

only now and then in some zealous pangs, when conscience falleth upon

them: but I suppose rather it is a general maxim, and that prayer is

only intended by consequence, for the apostle saith, `in all his ways.,

Note, way, by a known Hebraism, is put for any counsel, action,

thought, or purpose; and so it implieth that all their thoughts,

motions, and actions do float hither and thither continually.

The notes are these:--

Obs. 1. That unbelieving hypocrites are men of a double mind; they want

the conduct of the Spirit, and are led by their own affections, and

therefore cannot be settled: fear, the love of the world, carnal hopes

and interests draw them hither and thither, for they have no certain

guide and rule. It is said of godly men, Ps. cxii. 7, `They shall not

be afraid of evil tidings; their heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord:,

they walk by a sure rule, and look to sure promises; and therefore,

though their condition is changed, their heart is not changed, for the

ground of their hopes is still the same. Carnal men,s hearts rise and

fall with their news, and when affairs are doubtful, their hopes are

uncertain, for they are fixed upon uncertain objects, `They are

confounded, for they have heard evil tidings,, saith the prophet, Jer,

xlix. 23: upon every turn of affairs, they have, as it were, another

heart and soul. That request of David is notable for the opening of

this double mind, Ps. lxxxvi. 11, `Unite my heart to fear thy name.,

The Septuagint read e'noson te`n kardian mou, `make my heart one,, that

is, apply it only and constantly to thy fear; implying, that where men

are divided between God and secular interests, they have, as it were,

two hearts; one heart inclineth them to a care of duty, the other heart

discourageth them by fears of the world: the heart is not monachos

(which is Aquila,s word in that place), after one manner and fashion.

This double mind in carnal men bewrayeth itself two ways in their hopes

and their opinions. (1.) In their hopes, they are distracted between

expectation and jealousy, doubts and fears; now full of confidence in

their prayers, and anon breathing forth nothing but sorrow and despair;

and possibly that may be one reason why the psalmist compareth the

wicked to chaff, Ps. i. 4, because they have no firm stay and

subsistence, but are driven to and fro by various and un certain

motions, leading their lives by guess, rather than any sure aim. (2.)

In their opinions, hypocrites usually waver and hang in suspense, being

distracted between conscience and carnal affections; their affections

carry them to Baal, their consciences to God; as the prophet saith to

such men, 1 Kings xviii. 21, `How long will ye halt between two

opinions?, They are usually guilty of a promiscuous compliance, which,

though used by them in carnal policy, yet often tendeth to their hurt;

for this indifferency is hateful to God and men. God loatheth it: Rev.

iii. 15, `I know thy works; I would thou wert either hot or cold; but

because thou art neither hot nor cold, I will spue thee out of my

mouth., Lukewarmness is that temper that is most ingrate to the

stomach, and therefore causeth vomits: so are lukewarm Christians to

God; his ways are not honoured but by a zealous earnestness. And man

hateth it. Solon did not judge him a good citizen that in a civil war

took neither part; usually such middling men, [63] like those that come

between two fencers, suffer on both sides. I confess, sometimes godly

persons may be at a stand; those that make conscience of things are not

rash in choice, and therefore usually there is some hesitancy before

engagement, which, though it be an infirmity, yet God winketh at it as

long as they endeavour satisfaction: but certainly a child of God

should not rest in such a frame of spirit: sincerity is much tried by

an `establishment in the present truth,, 2 Peter i. 12; that is, by up

rightness in the controversies of our age and time. Antiquated

opinions, that are altogether severed and abstracted from present

interests, are no trial, therefore it is good to be positive and

settled, en te parou'se alethei'a, `in the truth that now is., I

confess, such cases may happen, where the pretences of both sides are

so fair, and the miscarriages so foul, that we know not which to

choose; and (as Cato said of the civil wars between Caesar and Pompey,

quem fugiam video, quem sequar non video), we can better see whom to

avoid, than whom to close with and follow; and thereupon there may be

hesitancy and indifferency; but this is neither allowed for the

present, nor continued out of interest, but conscience, and never

descendeth to any base compliances for advantage. [64]

Obs. 2. That doubtfulness of mind is the cause of uncertainty in our

lives and conversations. Their minds are double, and therefore their

ways are unstable. First, there is (as Seneca saith), nusquam

residentis animi volutatio, uncertain rollings of spirit; and then vita

pendens, a doubtful and suspensive life. [65] For our actions do oft

bear the imnge and resemblance of our thoughts, and the heart not being

fixed, the life is very uncertain. The note holdeth good in two

cases:--(1.) In fixing the heart in the hopes of the gospel; (2.) In

fixing the heart in the doctrine of the gospel; as faith sometimes

implieth the doctrine which is believed, sometimes the grace by which

we do believe. [66] A certain expectation of the hopes of the gospel

produceth obedience, and a certain belief of the doctrine of the gospel

produceth constancy.

1. None walk so evenly with God as they that are assured of the love of

God. Faith is the mother of obedience, and sureness of trust maketh way

for strictness of life. When men are loose from Christ, they are loose

in point of duty, and their floating belief is soon discovered in their

inconstancy and unevenness of walking. We do not with any alacrity or

cheerfulness engage in that of whose success we are doubtful; [67] and

therefore, when we know not whether God will accept us or no, when we

are off and on in point of trust, we are just so in the course of our

lives, serve God by fits and starts, only when some zealous moods and

pangs come upon us. It is the slander of the world to think assurance

is an idle doctrine. Never is the soul so quickened and enabled for

duty as it is by `the joy of the Lord:, Neh. viii. 10, `The joy of the

Lord is your strength., Faith, filling the heart with spiritual joy,

yieldeth a strength for all our duties and labours; and we are carried

on with life and vigour when we have most lively apprehensions of the

divine grace.

2. None are so constant in the profession of any truth as they that are

convinced and assured of the grounds of it. When we are but half

convinced, we are usually unstable. I remember the apostle speaketh of

a thing which he calleth i'dion ste'rigmon, `our own steadfastness,, 2

Peter iii. 17, `Lest ye fall from your own steadfastness into the error

of the wicked., Every believer hath, or should have, a proper ballast

in his own spirit, some solid, rational grounds that may stay and

support him; otherwise, when the chain of consent is broken, we shall

soon be scattered. So elsewhere a believer is bidden to render lo'gon,

`a reason of the hope that is in him,, 1 Peter iii. 15; that is, those

inward motives that constrained his assent to the truth. Thus also the

apostle Paul chargeth us, 1 Thes. v. 21, first to `prove all things,,

and then to `hold fast that which is good., It is unsafe to engage till

a full conviction, or to resolve without evidence, for there is no

likelihood of holding fast till we have proved. Well, then, labour to

understand the grounds of your religion. If you love a truth

ignorantly, you cannot love it constantly. There is still a party left

in the soul to betray it into the hands of the opposite error. To take

up ways without any trial is but a simple credulity, which will soon be

abused and misled; and to take up ways upon half conviction is

hypocrisy, which by that other part of the mind not yet gained will be

soon discovered. Look upon it, then, as brutish to follow the track,

and base to profess before you are ascertained.

Ver. 9. Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted.

The apostle having finished that necessary digression about prayer,

returneth to the main matter in hand, which is bearing of afflictions

with joy; and urgeth another reason in this verse, because, to be

depressed in the world for righteousness, sake, is to be exalted

towards God; and in consideration of their spiritual comforts and

privileges, they had rather cause to boast and glory than to be made

sorry. Lot us see the force of the words.

Let the brother; that is, a Christian. The people of God are expressed

by that term, because the truest friendship and brotherhood is inter

bonos, among the good and godly. Combinations of wicked men are rather

a faction and a conspiracy than a brotherhood; therefore you find this

in scripture notion always appropriated to the people of God. When it

is said indefinitely `a brother,, you may understand a saint; as here

James doth not say `a Christian,, but `let the brother., So Paul, 1

Cor. xvi. 20, `All the brethren salute you;, that is, all the saints.

And sometimes it is expressed with this addition, `holy brethren,, 1

Thes. v. 27; whereas in the same place, in ver. 26, he had said, `Greet

all the brethren., This loving compellation and use of calling one

another brothers and sisters continued till Tertullian,s time, as we

showed before.

Of low degree. In the original it is ta'peinos, which, as the Hebrew

word nv, signifieth both humble and base, the grace and the condition,

affliction and humility. It is here put for the condition, not the

grace, and therefore we well render it `of a low degree;, for it is

opposed to the term `rich `in the next verse; and so it is taken else

where, as Prov. xvi. 19, `Better be of an humble spirit with the lowly,

than to divide the spoil with the proud., By lowly he meaneth the lowly

in condition, not in heart; for it is opposed to `dividing the spoil.,

So Luke i. 48, `He hath regarded the low estate of his handmaid;,--it

is te`n tapei'nosin, the humility of his handmaid. The grace and the

condition are expressed by the same term, because a low estate is the

great engagement to a lowly heart. But remember, by low degree is not

intended one that is poor simply, but one that is poor for Christ, as

persecutions and afflictions are often expressed by the word humility

and humiliation; thus Ps. ix. 12, 13, `He forgetteth not the cry of the

humble,--the margin readeth afflicted; and in ver. 13, `Consider my

trouble which I suffer from them that hate me,--in the original, my

`humiliation., So here, a'delphos ho ta'peinos, `the humble brother, is

one that is humbled or made low by the adversaries of religion.

Rejoice.--In the original kauchastho, `boast, or `glory,, as it is in

the margin. It is the highest act of joy; even when joy beginneth to

degenerate, and pass the limits and bounds of reason. I say, it is the

first degeneration of joy, and argueth the soul to be surprised with

great excess and height of affection, for the next step beyond this is

verily wicked. Joy beginneth to exceed when it cometh to exultation,

but when it cometh to insultation, it is stark naught. Therefore, how

should they boast or glory? Is that lawful? I answer--(1.) It may be

understood as a concession of the lesser evil, thus: Rather than murmur

under afflictions, or faint under them, or endeavour to come out of

them by ill means, you may rather boast of them; rather than groan

under them as a burden, you may boast of them as a privilege it is the

lesser evil. Such concessions are frequent in scripture, as Prov. v.

19, `Thou shalt err in her love;, so in the original, and in the

Septuagint, te? philia autes peripheromenos po'llostos ese, `Thou shalt

be overmuch in her love., We translate, `He shall be ravished with her

love,, which certainly implieth an unlawful degree, for ecstasies and

ravishments in carnal matters are sinful. How is it, then, to be

understood? Doth the scripture allow any vitiosity and excess of

affection? No; it is only a notation of the lesser evil. Rather than

lose thyself in the embraces of an harlot, `let her breasts satisfy

thee,, be overmuch, or `err in her love,, (2.) It may only imply the

worth of our Christian privileges: let him look upon his privileges as

matter of boasting. How base and abject soever your condition seem to

the world, yet suffering for Christianity is a thing whereof you may

rather boast than be ashamed. (3.) It may be the word is to be

mollified with a softer signification, as our translators, instead of

`let him boast, or glory, say, `let him rejoice,, though, by the way,

there is no necessity of such a mitigated sense; for the apostle Paul

saith directly, in the same terms, Rom. v. 3, `We boast, or glory, in

tribulations,, &c. But more of this in the observations.

In that he is exalted, en to hupsei autou, in his sublimity. This may

be understood two ways: (1.) More generally, in that he is a brother or

a member of Christ, as the worth and honour of the spirit ual estate is

often put to counterpoise the misery and obscurity of afflictions; thus

Rev. ii. 9, `I know thy poverty, but thou art rich,, poor outwardly,

but rich spiritually. (2.) More particularly, it may note the honour of

afflictions, that we are thought worthy to be sufferers for anything in

which Christ is concerned, which is certainly a great preferment and

exaltation.

The notes are these:--

Obs. 1. That the people of God are brethren. I observed it before, but

here it is direct, `Let the brother of low degree,, &c. They are

begotten by the same Spirit, by the same immortal seed of the word.

They have many engagements upon them to all social and brotherly

affection. Jure matris naturae [68] (as Tertullian saith)--by the

common right of nature, all men are brethren. But, Vos mali fratres,

quia parum homines (saith he to the persecutors)--the church can ill

call you brethren, because ye are scarce men. Well, then, consider your

relation to one another. You are brethren, a relation of the greatest

endearment, partly as it is natural--not founded in choice, as

friendship, but nature; partly as it is between equals. The respect

between parents and children is natural; but in that part of it which

ascendeth from inferiors to superiors, there is more of reverence than

sweetness. In equals there is (if I may so speak) a greater symmetry

and proportion of spirit, therefore more love. Ah! then, live and love

as brethren. Averseness of heart and carriage will not stand with this

sweet relation. The apostle speaketh with admiration: 1 Cor. vi. 6,

`Brother goeth to law with brother, and that before unbelievers!, There

are two aggravations one from the persons striving, brother with

brother; the other, before whom they made infidels conscious of their

contention. So Gen. xiii. 7, 8, `And there was a strife between the

herdmen of Abram,s cattle and the herdmen of Lot,s cattle, and the

Canaanite and Perizzite was yet in the land., The Canaanite was yet

unsubdued, ready to take advantage of their divisions, yet they strove.

But see how Abram taketh up the matter. `We be brethren, let there be

no more strife., Oh! consider, no discords are like those of brethren.

The nearer the union, the greater the separation upon a breach; for

natural ties being stronger than artificial, when they are once broken

they are hardly made up again; as seams when they are ripped may be

sewed again, but rents in the whole cloth are not so easily remedied.

And so Solomon saith, Prov. xviii. 19, `A brother offended is harder to

be won than a strong city: their contentions are like the bars of a

castle;, that is, they are as irreconcilable as a strong castle is

impregnable. But this is not all that is required, as to avoid what

misbecometh the relation, but we must also practise the duty that it

enforceth. There should be mutual endeavours for each others, good: Ps.

cxxii. 8, `For my brethren and companions, sake, I will now say, Peace

be within thee;, that is, because of the relation, he would be earnest

with God in prayer for their welfare.

Obs. 2. The brother of low degree.--He saith of low degree, and yet

brother. Meanness doth not take away church relations. Christian

respects are not to be measured by these outward things; a man is not

to be measured by them, therefore certainly not a Christian, I had

almost said, not a beast. We choose a horse sine phaleris et ephippio,

by his strength and swiftness, not the gaudiness of his trap pings:

that which Christians should look at is not these outward additaments,

but the eminency of grace: James ii. 1, `Have not the faith of our Lord

Jesus Christ in respect of persons;, that is, do not esteem their grace

according to the splendour or meanness of the outward state and

condition. Despising the poor is called a despising the church of God:

1 Cor. xi. 22, `Have ye not houses to eat and drink in? Or despise ye

the church of God, and shame them that have not?, At their love feasts

they were wont to slight the poor, and discourage those that were not

able to defray part of the charge, which, the apostle saith, is a

despising the church that is, those that are members of Christ and the

church, as well as themselves; [69] for he doth not oppose ekklesi'an

to oikon, as a public place to a private, but a public action to a

private action; as if he had said thus: In your houses you have a

liberty to invite whom you please, but when you meet in a public

assembly, you must not exclude such a considerable part of the church

as the poor are.

Obs. 3. Again, from that the brother of a low degree. Not a man of low

degree, but a brother. It is not poverty, but poor Christianity that

occasioneth joy and comfort. Many please themselves because they suffer

afflictions in this world; and therefore think they should be free in

the world to come, as many ungodly poor men think death will make an

end of their troubles, as if they could not have two hells. Oh!

consider, it is not mere meanness that is a comfort; the brother only

can rejoice in his misery and low estate. You shall see it is said,

Exod. xxiii. 3, `Thou shalt not countenance a poor man in his cause:, a

man would have thought it should have been rather said, `the rich;, but

there is a foolish pity in man, and we are apt to say, he is a poor

man, and so omit justice. Well, then, God, that condemneth it in man,

will not pity you for your mere poverty: Mat. v. 3, `Blessed are the

poor in spirit;, mark that pneumati, in spirit, not in purse. Many

men,s sufferings here are but the pledges and prefaces of future

misery, the `beginning of sorrows,, Mat. xxiv. 8. For the present your

families are full of wants, your persons oppressed with misery and

reproach, but all this is but a shadow of hell that cometh after; every

Lazarus is not carried into Abraham,s bosom; you may be miserable here

and hereafter too; God will not pity you because of your suffering, but

punish you rather, for these give you warning. Oh! consider, then, is

it not sad to you, when you see the naked walls, the ragged clothes,

and hear the cries of the hungry bellies within your families, you

yourselves much bitten and pinched with want, and become the scorn and

contempt of those that dwell about you? Ay! but it will be more sad to

consider that these are the beginnings of sorrows; you cry for a bit

now, and then you may howl for a drop to cool your tongue; now you are

the scorn of men, then the scorn of God, men, and angels. Oh! be wise;

now you may have Christ as well as others; as the poor and rich were to

pay the same ransom to make an atonement for their souls, Exod. xxx.

15: but if not, you will perish as well as others; as God will not

favour the rich, so he will not pity the poor.

Obs. 4. From the word ta'peinos--it signifieth both humble, and of low

degree--observe, that the meanest have the greatest reason and

engagement to be humble; their condition always maketh the grace in

season--poverty and pride are most unsuitable. It was one of Solomon,s

odd sights, Eccles. x. 7, to see `servants on horseback, and princes

going on foot., A poor proud man is a prodigy and wonder of pride; he

hath less temptation to be proud, he hath more reason to be humble.

Nebuchadnezzar was more excusable, for he had a great Babel, and that

was a great temptation. Besides what should be in your affections,

there is somewhat in your condition to take down the height of your

spirits: it is not fit for those of the highest rank to turn

fashionists, and display the ensigns of their own vanity; but when

servants and those of a low degree put themselves into the garb, it is

most intolerable. But alas! thus we often find it; men usually walk

unsuitably to their condition, as if they would supply in pride what is

lacking in estate and sufficiency; whereas others that excel in

abilities are most lowly in mind, as the sun at highest casteth least

shadows.

Obs. 5. Again, from that of low degree. God may set his people in the

lowest rank of men. A brother may be ta'peinos, base and abject, in

regard of his outward condition. `The Captain of salvation,, the Son of

God himself, was, Isa. liii. 3, `despised and rejected of men;, as we

render it in the original, chadal ischim, desitio virorum, that is, the

leaving-off of men; implying that he appeared in such a form and rank

that he could scarce be said to be man, but as if he were to be

reckoned among some baser kind of creatures; as Ps. xxii. 6, David

saith, as a type of him, `I am a worm, and no man;, rather to be

numbered among the worms than among men, of so miserable a being that

you could scarce call him man; rather worm, or some other notion that

is fittest to express the lowest rank of creatures. Well, then, in the

greatest misery say, I am not yet beneath the condition of a saint--a

brother may be base and abject.

Obs. 6. From that let the brother of low degree glory. That the vilest

and most abject condition will not excuse us from murmuring: though you

be ta'peinos, base, yet you may rejoice and glory in the Lord. A man

cannot sink so low as to be past the help of spiritual comforts. In

`the place of dragons, there is somewhat to check murmurings, somewhat

that may allay the bitterness of our condition, if we had eyes to see

it: though the worst thing were happened to you, poverty, loss of

goods, exile, yet in all this there is no ground of impatiency: the

brother of low degree may pitch upon something in which he may glory.

Well, then, do not excuse passion by misery, and blame your condition

when you should blame yourselves: it is not your misery, but your

passions, that occasion sin; wormwood is not poison. But alas! the old

Adam is found in us: `The woman, which thou gavest me, gave me, and I

did eat., We blame providence when we should smite upon our own thighs.

It is but a fond excuse to say, Never such sufferings as mine: Lam. i.

12, `Is there any sorrow like unto my sorrow?, Men pitch upon that

circumstance, and so justify their murmurings. But remember, the

greatness of your sufferings cannot give allowance to the exorbitancies

of your passions: the low degree hath its comforts.

Obs. 7. From that rejoice, or glory, or boast. There is a concession of

some kind of boasting to a Christian; he may glory in his privileges.

To state this matter, I shall show you:--

1. How he may not boast. (1.) Not to set off self, self-worth,

self-merits; so the apostle,s reproof is just, 1 Cor. iv. 7, `Why dost

thou glory, (the same word that is used here) `as if thou hadst not

received what thou hast?, That is an evil glorying, to glory in

ourselves, as if our gifts and graces were of our own purchasing, and

ordained for the setting off of our own esteem; all such boasting is

contrary to grace, as the apostle saith, Rom. iii. 27, Pou oun he

kauchesis, `Where is boasting? It is excluded by grace., (2.) Not to

vaunt it over others; the scripture giveth you no allowance to feed

pride: it is the language of hypocrites, Isa. lxv. 5, `Stand by

thyself; I am holier than thou., To despise others, as carnal, as men

of the world, and to carry ourselves with an imperious roughness

towards them, it is a sign we forget who made the difference. The

apostle chideth such kind of persons, Rom. xiv. 10, ti exoutheneis,

`Why dost thou set at naught thy brother?, Tertullian readeth it, Cur

nullificas?--why dost thou nothing him? He that maketh nothing of

others, forgetteth that God is `all in all, to himself. Grace is of

another temper: Titus iii. 3, `Show meekness to all men, for we

ourselves in times past were foolish and disobedient., So think of what

you are, that you may not forget what you were, before grace made the

distinction.

2. How he may boast. (1.) If it be for the glory of God, to exalt God,

not yourselves: Ps. xxxiv. 2, `My soul shall make her boast of God;, of

his goodness, mercy, power. This is well, when we see we have nothing

to boast of but our God; neither wealth, nor riches, nor wisdom, but of

the Lord alone: Jer. ix. 23, 24, `Let not the wise man glory in his

wisdom, nor the mighty man glory in his strength; but let him that

glorieth glory in this, that he knoweth me, saith the Lord., This doth

not only quicken others to praise him, but argueth much affection in

yourselves; as, when we prize a thing, we say we have nothing to glory

of but that; so it is a sign the soul sets God above all when it will

glory in none other. (2.) To set out the worth of your privileges. The

world thinketh you have a hard bargain to have a crucified

Christ;--glory in it. Thus Rom. v. 3, `We glory in tribulations., The

apostle doth not say, We must glory or boast of our tribulations or

sufferings, but glory in tribulations. There is poor comfort in

offering our bodies to the idol of our own praise, and to affect a

martyrdom to make way for our repute or esteem, that we may have

somewhat whereof to boast; that is not the apostle,s meaning. But this

glorying is to let the world know the honour we put upon any engagement

for Christ, and that they may know we are not ashamed of our

profession, when it is discountenanced and persecuted. The apostle Paul

is excellently explained by the apostle Peter: 1 Peter iv. 16, `If any

man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify

God in this behalf., They think it is a disgrace, and you think it is a

glory to surfer for Christ. Look, as divines say, in the case of eyeing

the reward; then it is done most purely when it is done to extenuate

the temptation by the esteem and presence of our hopes, as Christ

counted it a light shame, in comparison of `the joy set before him,,

Heb. xii. 2; and Moses the treasures of Egypt nothing in comparison of

the recompense of reward, Heb. xii. 26. So, here, in this cause you may

glory, that is, to counterbalance the shame of the world with the

dignity of your profession and hopes. Well, then, you see how you may

glory, to declare your valuation and esteem of God and his ways.

Obs. 8. From that he is exalted. That grace is a preferment and

exaltation; even those of low degree may be thus exalted. All the

comforts of Christianity are such as are riddles and contradictions to

the flesh: poverty is preferment; servants are freemen, the Lord,s

freemen, 1 Cor. vii. 22. The privileges of Christianity take off all

the ignominy of the world. Christian slaves and vassals are yet

delivered from the tyranny of Satan, the slavery of sin; therefore he

saith they are `the Lord,s freemen., So James ii. 5, `Hath not God

chosen the poor in this world to be rich in faith?, Spiritual treasure

and inward riches are the best. A Christian,s life is full of

mysteries; poor, and yet rich, base, and yet exalted; shut out of the

world, and yet admitted into the company of saints and angels;

slighted, yet dear to God; the world,s dirt, and God,s jewels. In one

place it is said, 1 Cor. iv. 13, `We are counted as the scurf and

off-scouring of the earth;; and in another, Mal. iii. 17, `I will make

up my jewels., Not a foot of land, yet an interest in the land of

promise, a share in the inheritance of the saints in light; you see

everything is amply made up in another way. Do but consider the nature

of your privileges, and you cannot but count them a preferment. You are

called to be `sons of God: `John i. 12, `He vouchsafed them exousian,

the privilege or prerogative to become the sons of God;, so also,

`members of Christ,, and what a door of hope doth that open to you; so

also `heirs of the promises,, `joint-heirs with Christ., Rom. viii. 17;

so also `partakers of the divine nature,, 2 Peter i. 4: and what a

privilege is that, that we should be severed from the vile world, and

gilded with glory, when we might have stood like rotten posts! that we

should be united to Christ, when, like dried leaven, [70] we might have

been driven to and fro throughout the earth. Well, then:--

1. Never quarrel with providence. Though you have not other things,

rejoice in this, that you have the best things. Sole adoption is worth

all the world. Do not complain that you have not the gold, if you have

the kiss. I allude to that known story in Xenophon. Never envy the

world,s enjoyments, no, though you see men wicked and undeserving. To

murmur under any such pretence is but disguised envy. Consider God hath

called you to another advancement. You sin against the bounty of God if

you do not value it above all the pomp and glory of the creatures. They

are full and shining, but your comforts are better and more satisfying:

1 Tim. vi. 6, `Godliness with contentment is great gain;, or it may be

read, `Godliness is great gain with contentment,, in opposition to

worldly gain. Men may gain much, but they are not satisfied; but

godliness is such a gain as bringeth contentment and quiet along with

it; for I suppose that place of the apostle is parallel to that of

Solomon: Prov. x. 22, `The blessing of God maketh rich, and he addeth

no sorrow with it.,

2. Refresh your hearts with the sense of your privileges. You that are

the people of God are exalted in your greatest abasures. Are you naked?

You may be `arrayed in tine linen,, Rev. xix. 8, which is `dikaiomata,

the righteousnesses of the saints:, that plural word implieth

justification and sanctification. Are you hungry? God,s mountain will

yield you `a feast of fat things, a feast of wines upon the lees well

refined,, Isa. xxv. 6: wines on the lees are most generous and

sprightly. Are you thirsty? You have `a well of water springing up to

everlasting life,, John iv. 14. Are you base? You have glory, you have

a crown. The word useth these expressions to show that all your wants

are made up by this inward supply.

Obs. 9. Observe more particularly, that the greatest abasures and

sufferings for Christ are an honour to us: Acts v. 41, `They rejoiced

they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name., It was an act

of God,s grace to put this honour upon them. Well, then, do not look

upon that as a judgment which is a favour. Reproaches for Christ are

matter of thanksgiving rather than discontent. In ordinary sufferings

God,s people have this comfort, that as nothing cometh without merit,

so nothing goeth away without profit. But here, what ever is done to

them is an honour, and an high vouchsafement. Oh! how happy are the

people of God, that can suffer nothing from God or men, but what they

may take comfort in!

Ver. 10. But the rich, in that he is made low; because as the flower of

the grass he shall pass away.

He taketh occasion from the former exhortation, which pressed to

rejoice in miseries, to speak of the opposite case, prosperity. Some

suppose the words to be an irony, [71] wherein the apostle discovereth

his low conceit of worldly glory: all their exaltation is humiliation;

and therefore, if he will glory, let him glory in his vileness, and the

unsettledness of his condition. That is all they can boast of--a low

enjoyment that may be soon lost. But I suppose it is rather a

direction; for he speaketh by way of advice to the rich Christian or

brother, which will appear more fully by a view of the words.

But the rich.--It noteth the noble, the honourable, those that are

dignified with any outward excellency, more especially those that did

as yet remain untouched or unbroken by persecution. Some observe he

doth not say `the rich brother,, as before, `the brother of low

degree,, but only generally `the rich., Few of that quality and rank

give their names to Christ. But this may be too curious.

In that, &c.--You see here wanteth a verb to make the sense entire and

full. What is to be understood? OEcumenius saith aischune'stho `Let him

be ashamed,, considering the uncertainty of his estate; others, much to

the same sense, tapeinou'stho, let hhn^be humbled in that he is made

low, as if the opposite word to kaucha'stho were to be introduced to

supply the sense. So it would be a like speech with that, 1 Tim. iv. 3,

where in the original it runneth thus, Koluo'nton gamein kai`

ape'chesthai ton broma'ton, `forbidding to marry, and to abstain from

meats;, where there is a defect of the contrary word `commanding,,

which we in our translation supply, and read, `forbidding to marry, and

commanding to abstain from meats,, as Epiphanius, citing that place,

readeth it with that addition, koluo'nton gamein kai` keleuo'nton

ape'chesthai broma'ton. So 1 Tim. ii. 12, `I suffer not a woman to

teach, but to be in silence., The opposite word to suffer not, or

forbid, is understood, that is, `I command her to be in silence., So

here, `Let the brother of low degree glory in that he is exalted;, and

then `the rich be humbled in that he is made low., Many go this way.

But this seemeth somewhat to disturb the series and order of the words.

I always count that the best sense which runneth with a smooth

plainness; therefore I rather like the opinion of others who repeat

kaucha'stho, used in the former verse, `Let him rejoice, the poor man,

in that^he is spiritually exalted; the rich in that he is spiritually

humbled., So that grace maketh them both even and alike to God, and in

regard of divine approbation they stand upon the same level--the poor

that is too low he is exalted, the rich that is too high he is humbled;

which to both is matter of glory or joy.

He is made low.--Some say outwardly and in providence, when his crown

is laid in the dust, and he is stripped of all, and brought into the

condition of the brother of low degree. But this is not so proper; for

the apostle speaketh of such a making low as will consist with his

being rich; made low whilst plou'sios, rich, and high in estate and

esteem. Some more particularly say, therefore made low, because, though

honourable for riches, yet, because a Christian, no more esteemed than

if poor, but accounted base and ignominious. But this doth not suit

with the reason at the end of the verse, `because as the flower of the

field he shall pass away., More properly, then, it is understood of the

disposition of the heart, of a low mind in a high condition; and so it

noteth either such humility as ariseth from the consideration of our

own sinfulness (they are happy indeed whom God hath humbled with a

sense of their sins), or from a consideration of the uncertainty of all

worldly enjoyments. When our hearts are drawn from a high esteem of

outward excellences, and we live in a constant expectation of and

preparation for the cross, we may be said to be made low, though never

so much exalted, which I suppose is chiefly intended, and so it suiteth

with the reason annexed, and is parallel with that of the apostle: 1

Tim. vi. 17, `Charge the rich men of this world that they be not

high-minded, and trust not in uncertain riches., The meaning is, that

the glory of their condition is, that when God hath made them most

high, they are most low in their own thoughts.

Because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.--He rendereth a

reason why they should have a lowly mind in the midst of their

flourishing and plenty, because the pomp of their condition is but as a

flower of the field, which fadeth as soon as it displayeth its glory.

The similitude is often used in scripture: Ps. xxxvii. 2, `They shall

soon be cut down as the grass, and wither as the green herb;, so Job

xiv. 2, `He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down;, so Isa. xl.

6, 7, `All flesh is grass, and the goodliness thereof as the flower of

the field. The grass withereth, and the flower fadeth, because the

Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it;, so also in many other places. I

shall improve the similitude in the notes. Only observe here, that the

apostle doth not say that his riches shall pass away as a flower, but

he shall pass away, he and his riches also. If we had a security of our

estate, we have none of our lives. We pass and they pass, and that with

as easy a turn of providence as the flower of the field fadeth.

The notes are these:--

Obs. 1. Riches are not altogether inconsistent with Christianity. `Let

the rich,, that is, the rich brother. Usually they are a great snare.

It is a hard matter to enjoy the world without being entangled with the

cares and pleasures of it. The moon never suffereth eclipse but when it

is at the full; and usually in our fulness we miscarry; and therefore

our Saviour saith, Mat. xix. 24, `It is easier for a camel to go

through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the

kingdom of God., It is a Jewish proverb to note an impossibility. Rich

men should often think of it. A camel may as soon go through a needle,s

eye, as you enter into the kingdom of God. That were a rare miracle of

nature, indeed, to see a camel or an elephant to pass through a

needle,s eye; and it is as rare a miracle of grace to see a rich man

gained to Christ and a love of heaven. Of all person sin the world,

they are least apprehensive of spiritual excellences. Christ himself

came in poverty, in a prejudice, as it were, to them that love riches.

Plato, an heathen, saith the same almost with Christ, that it is

impossible for a man to be eminently rich and eminently good. [72] The

way of grace is usually so strait, that there is scarce any room for

them that would enter with their great burthens of riches and honour.

[73] But you will say, What will you have Christians to do then? In a

lavish luxury to throw away their estates? or in an excess of charity

to make others full, when themselves are empty? I answer--No; there are

two passages to mollify the rigour of our Lord,s saying. One is in the

context, `With God all things are possible,, Mat. xix. 26. Difficulties

in the way to heaven serve to bring us to a despair of ourselves, not

of God. He can loosen the heart from the world, that riches shall be no

impediment; as Job by providence was made eminently rich, and by grace

eminently godly--`none like him in all the earth,, Job i. 8. The other

passage is in Mark x. 23, 24, `Jesus said, How hard is it for them that

have riches to enter into the kingdom of God! And the disciples were

astonished at his words; but Jesus answereth again, How hard is it for

them that trust riches to enter into the kingdom of God!, It is not the

having, but the trusting. Riches in the having, in the bare possession,

are not a hindrance to Christianity, but in our abuse of them. The sum

of all is, it is impossible to trust in riches and enter into the

kingdom of God, and it to us is impossible to have riches and not to

trust in them. Well, then, of all men, rich men should be most careful.

A man may be rich and godly, but it is because now and then God will

work some miracles of grace. Your possessions will not be your ruin

till your corruptions mingle with them. Under the law the poor and rich

were to pay the same ransom, Exod. xxx. 15, intimating they may have

interest in the same Christ. It is Austin,s observation [74] that poor

Lazarus was saved in the bosom of rich Abraham. Riches in themselves

are God,s blessings that come within a promise. It is said, Ps. cxii.

3, of him that feareth the Lord, that `wealth and riches shall be in

his house;, that is, when God seeth good, for all temporal promises

must be understood with an exception. They do not intimate what always

shall be, but that whatever is is by way of a blessing, the fruit of a

promise, not of chance, or a looser providence. Yea, riches with a

blessing are so far from being a hindrance to grace, that they are an

ornament to it; so Prov. xiv. 24, `The crown of the wise is their

riches, but the foolishness of fools is folly., A rich wise man is more

conspicuous; an estate may adorn virtue, but it cannot disguise folly.

A wise man that is rich hath an advantage to discover himself which

others have not; but a fool is a fool still, as an ape is an ape though

tied with a golden chain. And to this sense I suppose Solomon speaketh

when he saith, Eccles. vii. 11, `Wisdom with an inheritance is good;,

that is, more eminent and useful. And thus you see riches are as men

use them, blessings promiscuously dispensed--to the good, lest they

should be thought altogether evil; to the bad, lest they should be

thought only good. [75]

Obs. 2. That a rich man,s humility is his glory. Your excellency doth

not lie in the pomp and splendour of your condition, but in the

meekness of your hearts. Humility is not only a clothing, `Put on

humbleness of mind,, Col. iii. 12, but an ornament, 1 Peter v. 5, `Be

decked with humility,, enkombosasthe. It cometh from a word that

signifieth a knot, that maketh decency when things are fitly tied. Men

think that humility is a debasement, and meekness a derogation from

their honour and repute. Ah! but you see God counteth it an ornament.

It is not a disguise, but a decking. None so base as the proud in the

eyes of God and men. Before God, you must not value yourself by your

estate and outward pomp, but your graces. An high mind and a low

condition are all one to the Lord, only poverty hath the advantage,

because it is usually gracious. If any may glory, they may glory that

have most arguments of God,s love. Now a lowly mind is a far better

testimony of it than an high estate. And so before men, as Augustine

said, he is a great man that is not lifted up because of his greatness.

You are not better than others by your estate, but your meekness. The

apostles possessed all things though they had nothing. They have more

than you if they have a humble heart.

Obs. 3. That the way to be humble is to count the world,s advantages

our abasement. The poor man must glory in that he is exalted, but the

rich in that he is made low. Honours and riches do but set us beneath

other men, rather than above them, and do rather abate from you than

add anything to you; and it may be you have less of the Spirit because

you have more of the world. God doth not use to flow in both ways.

Well, then, get this mind in the midst of your abundance. It is nothing

what you do at other times. Men dispraise that which they want, as the

fox the grapes, and simple men learning. But when you are rich, can you

glory in that you are made low, and say, All this is but low in regard

of the saints, privileges? This would keep the heart in a right frame,

so that you could lose wealth or keep it. If you lose it, you do but

lose a part of your abasement; if you keep it, you do not keep that

which setteth you the higher or the nearer to God. This is to `possess

all things as if you possessed them not,, 1 Cor. vii. 30--not to have

them in your hearts when you have them in your houses. And the truth

is, this is the way to keep them still, to be humble in the possession

of them: Mat. xxiii. 12, 4 Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be

abased, and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted., Riches will

be your abasement, if you do not think them so.

Obs. 4. If we would be made low in the midst of worldly enjoyments, we

should consider the uncertainty of them. This is the reason rendered by

the apostle, `Because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.,

We are worldly, because we forget the world,s vanity and our own

transitoriness: Ps. xlix. 11, `Their inward thought is, that their

houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling-places to all

generations; they call their lands after their own names., Either we

think that we shall live for ever, or leave our riches to those that

will continue our memory for ever; that is, to our children, which are

but the parent multiplied and continued; which is, as one saith, nodosa

aeternitas, a knotty eternity. When our thread is spun out and done,

their thread is knit to it; and so we dream of a continued succession

in our name and family. But alas! this inward thought is but a vain

thought--a sorry refuge by which man would make amends for the loss of

the true eternity. But in vain; for we perish, and our estate too. Both

your persons and your condition are transitory. The apostle saith, `He

shall pass away like the flower of the grass., Man himself is like the

grass, soon withered; his condition is like the flower of the grass,

gone with a puff of wind. So 1 Peter i. 24, `All flesh is grass, and

the glory of man as the flower of the grass., Many times the flower is

gone when the stalk remaineth; so man seeth all that he hath been

gathering a long time soon dissipated by the breath of providence, and

he, like a withered rotten stalk, liveth scorned and neglected. The

scriptures make use of both these arguments sometimes our own

transitoriness, as Luke xii. 20, `Thou fool, this night shall thy soul

be required of thee., Here men toil, and beat their brains, and tire

their spirits, and rack their consciences; and when they have done all,

like silkworms, they die in their work, and God taketh them away ere

they can roast what they get in hunting. Sometimes the transitoriness

of these outward things; if we do not leave them, they may leave us. As

many a man hath survived his happiness, and lived so long as to see

himself, when his flower is gone, to be cast out upon the dunghill of

scorn and contempt. And, truly it is a madness to be proud of that

which may perish before we perish, as it is the worst of miseries to

outlive our own happiness. The apostle saith, 1 Tim. vi. 17, `Charge

rich men that they be not high-minded, and trust not in uncertain

riches., Trust should have a sure object, for it is the quiet repose of

the soul in the bosom of an immutable good. Therefore that which is

uncertain cannot yield a ground of trust. You may entertain it with

jealousy, but not with trust; so Prov. xxiii. 5, `Wilt thou set thine

eyes upon that which is not?, Outward riches are so far from being the

best things, that they rather are not anything at all. Solomon calleth

them `that which is not;, and who ever loved nothing, and would be

proud of that which is not?

Obs. 5. The uncertainty of worldly enjoyments may be well resembled by

a flower--beautiful, but fading. The similitude is elsewhere used: I

gave you places in the exposition, let me add a few more: see Ps. ciii.

15, 16, `As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field,

so he flourisheth: for the wind passeth over it. and it is gone, and

the place thereof shall know it no more., When the flower is gone, the

root, as afraid, shrinketh into the ground, and there remaineth neither

remnant nor sign; so many a man that keepeth a bustling, and ruffleth

it in the world, is soon snapped off by providence, and there doth not

remain the least sign and memorial of him. So 1 Peter i. 24, `For all

flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass;

the grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away., It is

repeated and returned to our consideration--`all flesh is grass,, and

then, `the grass withereth,, to show that we should often whet it and

inculcate it upon our thoughts. In short, from this resemblance you may

learn two things:--

1. That though the things of the world are specious, yet they should

not allure us, because they are fading. Flowers are sweet, and affect

the eye, but their beauty is soon scorched: the soul is for an eternal

good, that it may have a happiness suitable to its own duration. An

immortal soul cannot have full contentment in that which is fading; but

this is a point that calleth for meditation rather than demonstration.

It is easy to declaim upon the vanity of the creature: it is every

man,s object and every man,s subject. Oh! but think of it seriously,

and desire God to be in your thoughts. When the creatures tempt you, be

not enticed by the beauty of them, so as to forget their vanity. Say,

Here is a flower, glorious, but fading; glass that is bright, but

brittle.

2. The fairest things are most fading. Creatures, when they come to

their excellency, then they decay, as herbs, when they come to flower,

they begin to wither; or, as the sun when it cometh to the zenith, then

it declineth: Ps. xxxix. 5, `Man at his best estate is altogether

vanity;, not at his worst only, when the feebleness and inconveniences

of old age have surprised him. Many, you know, are blasted and cut off

in their flower, and wither as soon as they begin to flourish. Paul had

a messenger of Satan presently upon his ecstasy, 2 Cor. xii. 7. So the

prophet speaketh of `a grasshopper in the beginning of the shooting up

of the latter growth,, Amos vii. 1. As soon as the ground recovered any

verdure and greenness, presently there came a grasshopper to devour the

herbage: the meaning is, a new affliction as soon as they began to

flourish. Well, then, suspect these outward things when you most abound

in them. David thought of overthrows when God had given him a great

victory, as Ps. lx. Com pare the psalm with the title. So it is good to

think of famine and want in the midst of plenty: a man doth not know

what overturnings there may be in the world. The woman that stood not

in need of the prophet, 2 Kings iv. 13, `I dwell among my own people,,

that is, I have no need of friends at court, yet afterward stood in

need of the prophet,s man, 2 Kings viii. 5. The Lord knoweth how soon

your condition may be turned; when it seemeth to flourish most, it may

be near a withering.

Ver. 11. For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it

withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of

the fashion of it perisheth; so also shall the rich man fade away in

his ways.

He pursueth the similitude, and in the close of the verse applieth it.

There is nothing needeth illustration but the latter clause.

So shall; that is, so may; for the passage is not absolutely definitive

of what always shall be, but only declarative of what may be; and,

therefore, the future tense is used for the potential mood. We see,

many times, that `the wicked live, become old, and mighty in power;

their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them:

their bull gendereth, and faileth not; their cow calveth, and casteth

not her calf,, Job xxi. 7-10. Therefore, I say, the apostle showeth not

what always cometh to pass, but what may be, and usually falleth out,

and what at length certainly will be their portion.

The rich man.--That is either to be taken generally for the rich,

whether godly or ungodly, or more especially for the ungodly person

that trusteth in his riches.

Fade away maranthe'setai, a word proper to herbs when they lose their

verdure and beauty.

In his ways.--Some read, as Erasmus and Gagneus, en poriais, `with his

abundance,, which reading Calvin also approveth, as suiting better with

the context, `So shall the rich and all his abundance fade away;, but

the general and more received reading is that which we follow, en

poreiais in his ways or journeys; the word is emphatical, and importeth

that earnest industry by which men compass sea and land, run hither and

thither in the pursuit of wealth, and yet, when all is done, it fadeth

like the flower of the grass.

The notes are these:--

Obs. 1. From the continuance of the similitude, that the vanity of

flowers should hint thoughts to us about the vanity of our own

comforts. We delight in pictures and emblems, for then the soul, by the

help of fancy and imagination, hath a double view of the object in the

similitude, which is, as it were, a picture of it, and then the thing

itself. This was God,s ancient way to teach his people by types; still

he teacheth us by similitudes taken from common and ordinary objects,

that when we are cast upon them, spiritual thoughts may be awakened;

and so every ordinary object is, as it were, hallowed and consecrated

to a heavenly purpose. Well, then, let this be your field or garden

meditation; when you see them decked with a great deal of bravery,

remember all this is gone in an instant when the burning heat ariseth.

In the text it is (let me open that by the way) helios sun to kausoni,

the sun with a burning wind, so in the original; for kauson, the word

used here, is usually put here for a scorching wind, which, in the hot

and eastern countries, was wont to accompany the rising of the sun; as

Jonah iv. 8, `It came to pass, when the sun did begin to arise, God

prepared a vehement east wind;, and, therefore, do we read of `the

drying east wind,, Ezek. xvii. 10; and in many places of Hosea. It was

a hot, piercing wind that blasted all things, and was the usual figure

of God,s judgments; and so the psalmist saith, `The wind passeth over

it, and it is gone,, Ps. ciii. 16. But this by the way, because I

omitted it in the exposition. When, I say, you walk in a garden or

field, as Isaac did, to meditate, Gen. xxiv. 63, think thus with

yourselves: Here is a goodly show and paintry; but alas! these things

are but for a season; they would fade away of their own accord, but the

breath of the east wind will soon dry them up; so are all worldly

comforts like flowers in the spring, good in their season, but very

vanishing and perishing.

Obs. 2. That our comforts are perishing in themselves, but especially

when the hand of providence is stretched out against them. The flower

fadeth of itself, but chiefly when it is scorched by the glowing,

burning east wind. Our hearts should be loose at all times from outward

things, but especially in times of public desolation; it is a sin

against providence to affect great things: when God is over turning

all, then there is a burning heat upon the flowers, and God is gone

forth to blast worldly glory: Jer. xlv. 4, 5, `The Lord saith, I will

pluck up this whole land, and seekest thou great things for thyself?,

that is, a prosperous condition in a time of public desolation; it is

as if a man should be planting flowers when there is a wind gone forth

to blast them. Well, then, take heed you do not make providence your

enemy, then your comforts will become more perishing. You cannot then

expect a comfortable warmth from God, but a burning heat. There are

three sins especially by which you make providence your enemy, and so

the creatures more vain.

1. When you abuse them to serve your lusts. Where there is pride and

wantonness, you may look for a burning; certainly your flowers will be

scorched and dried up. Pleasant Sodom, when it was given to `pride, and

idleness, and fulness of bread,, met with a burning heat indeed, Ezek.

xvi. 49: in Salvian,s phrase, [76] God will rain hell out of heaven

rather than not visit for such sins.

2. When you make them objects of trust. God can brook no rivals; trust

being the fairest and best respect of the creatures, it must not be

intercepted, but ascend to God. If you make idols of the creatures, God

will make nothing of them; the fire of God,s jealousy is a burning

heat. God took away from Judah the staff and the stay, Isa. iii. 1;

that is, that which they made so, excluding him; for that is the case

in the context. So when you trust in your wealth, as if it must needs

be well with your families, and you were secured against all judgments,

and turns of providence; certainly God will take away the staff and the

stay, and show that riches are but dead helps, when they are preferred

before the living God, 1 Tim. vi. 17.

3. When you get them by wrong means. Wealth thus gotten is flesh (like

the eagles from the altar) with a coal in it, that devoureth the whole

nest: Hab. ii. 9, `Woe be to him that coveteth an evil covetousness,

that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the

power of evil., You think it is a ready way to advance you; no, this is

the ready way to ruin all: James v. 3, `Your gold and silver shall be a

witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire;, that

is, draw the fire and burning heat of God,s wrath upon yourselves and

families.

From that his ways.

Obs. 3. Worldly men pursue wealth with great care and industry. The

rich turneth hither and thither, he hath several ways whereby to

accomplish his ends. In self-denial, covetousness is the ape of grace;

it `suffereth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things,, 1

Cor. xiii. 6, 7. What pains do men take for things that perish! Do but

observe their incessant care, earnest labour, and unwearied industry,

and say, how well would this suit with the heavenly treasure! It is a

pity a plant that would thrive so well in Canaan should still grow in

the soil of Egypt; that the zealous earnestness of the soul should be

misplaced, and we should take more pains to be rich unto the world than

to be rich towards God. Luke xii. 21. Man fallen is but the anagram of

man in innocency, he hath the same affections and delights, only they

are transposed and misplaced; therefore do we offend in the measure,

because we mistake in the object. Or else, secondly, observe their

pains and care, and say thus: Shall a lust have more power upon them

than the love of God upon me? I have higher motives, and a reward more

sure, Prov. xi. 18; they are more earnest for an earthly purchase, and

to heap up treasure to themselves, than I am to enrich my soul with

spiritual and heavenly excellences. Surely grace is an active thing, of

as forcible an efficacy as corruption; why then do we act with such

difference and disproportion? The fault is not in grace, but in

ourselves. Grace is like a keen weapon in a child,s hand; it maketh

little impression because it is weakly wielded. Worldly men have the

advantage of us in matter of principle, but we have the advantage of

them in matter of motive; we have higher motives, but they more entire

principles, for what they do, they do with their whole heart; but our

principles are mixed, and therefore grace worketh with a greater

faintness than corruption doth. But, however, it is sad. Pambus, in

ecclesiastical history, wept when he saw a harlot dressed with much

care and cost, partly to see one take so much pains for her own

undoing, partly because he had not been so careful to please God as she

had been to please a wanton lover. And truly when we see men `cumber

themselves with much serving,, and toiling and bustling up and down in

the world, and all for riches that `take themselves wings and fly

away,, we may be ashamed that we do so little for Christ, and they do

so much for wealth, and that we do not lay out our strength and

earnestness for heaven with any proportion to what they do for the

world.

Obs. 4. Lastly, again, from that en tais poreiais, from his ways or

journeys. All our endeavours will be fruitless if God,s hand be against

us. As the flower to the burning heat, so is the rich man in his ways;

that is, notwithstanding all his industry and care, God may soon blast

him: they `earned wages, but put it in a bag with holes,, Hag. i. 6;

that is, their gains did not thrive with them. Peter `toiled all night

but caught nothing,, till he took Christ into the boat, Luke v. 5. So

you will catch nothing, nothing with comfort and profit, till you take

God along with you: Ps. cxxvii. 2, `It is vain for you to rise up

early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth

his beloved sleep., Some take this place in a more particular and

restrained sense; as if David would intimate that all their agitations

to oppose the reign of Solomon, though backed with much care and

industry, should be fruitless; though Absalom and Adonijah were

tortured with the care of their own ambitious designs, yet God would

give Jedidiah, or his beloved, rest; that is, the kingdom should

quietly and safely be devolved upon Solomon, who took no such pains to

court the people, and to raise himself up into their esteem as Absa lom

and Adonijah did; and they ground this exposition partly on the title

of the psalm, `a, psalm for Solomon,, partly on the name of Solo mon,

who was called Jedidijah, or the beloved of the Lord, 2 Sam. xii. 24,

25, the word used here, `he giveth his beloved rest., But I suppose

this sense is too curious; for though the psalm be entitled to Solomon,

yet I think not so much by way of prophecy as direction: for as the 72d

Psalm (which also beareth title for Solomon) representeth to him the

model of a kingdom and the affairs thereof, so this psalm, the model of

a family, with the incident cares and blessings of it; and therefore

the passages of it are of a more universal and un limited concernment

than to be appropriated to Solomon; and it is not to be neglected that

the Septuagint turn the Hebrew word plurally, tois agapetois autou

u'pnon, `his beloved ones sleep,, showing that the sentence is general.

The meaning is, then, that though worldly men fare never so hardly,

beat their brains, tire their spirits, rack their consciences, yet many

times all is for nothing; either God doth not give them an estate, or

not the comfort of it. But his beloved, without any of these racking

cares, enjoy contentment: if they have not the world, they have sleep

and rest; with silence submitting to the will of God, and with

quietness waiting for the blessing of God. Well, then, acknowledge the

providence that you may come under the blessing of it; labour without

God cannot prosper; against God and against his will in his word, will

surely miscarry.

Ver. 12. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is

tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised

to them that love him.

Here the apostle concludeth all the former discourse with a general

sentence. I shall despatch it very briefly, because the matter of it

often occurreth in this epistle.

Blessed; that is, already blessed. They are not miserable, as the world

judgeth them: it is a Christian paradox, wherein there is an allusion

to what is said, Job v. 17, `Behold, happy is the man whom God

correcteth;, it is a wonder, and therefore he calleth the world to see

it--Behold! So the apostle, in an opposition to the judgment of the

world, saith, Blessed.

Is the man, aner.--The word used is only proper to the masculine sex,

and therefore some [77] have forced and obtruded some misshapen

conceits upon this scripture; whereas throughout the epistle we shall

observe our apostle delighteth in the use of this word for both sexes;

as ver. 23, a'ndri paraku'psanti, `A man beholding his face,, &c., in

tending a man or woman, for it answereth to the Hebrew word isch, under

which the woman also was comprehended.

That endureth, hos hupomenei--that is, that patiently and constantly

beareth. A wicked man suffereth, but he doth not endure: they suffer,

but unwillingly, with murmuring and blasphemy; but the godly man

endureth; that is, beareth the affliction with patience and constancy;

without murmuring, fainting, or blaspheming. Enduring is taken in a

good sense; as Heb. xii. 7, `If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with

you as sons., God is not perceived to deal as a father, but when the

affliction is patiently borne, which the apostle calleth enduring

there.

Temptation.--Affliction is so called, as before; in itself it is a

punishment of sin, but to the godly but a trial; as death, the king of

terrors, or highest of afflictions, is in itself the wages of sin, but

to them, the gate of eternal life.

For when he is tried, dokimos genomenos.--The word is often translated

approved: Rom. xiv. 18, `Approved of man;, it is dokimos. So 1 Cor. xi.

19, `That dokimoi, they which are approved may be made manifest;, so

here, when he is made or found approved, that is, right and sound in

the faith; it is a metaphor taken from metals, whose excellence is

discerned in the fire.

He shall receive; that is, freely; for though none be crowned without

striving, 2 Tim. ii. 5, yet they are not crowned for striving; as in

the scripture it is said in many places, God will give every man

according to his work, yet not for his work, for such passages do only

imply (as Ferus, [78] a Papist, also granteth) that as evil works shall

not remain unpunished, so neither shall good works be unrewarded.

A crown of life.--It is usual in scripture to set forth the gifts of

God by a crown, sometimes to note the honour that God putteth upon the

creatures: `Thou hast crowned him with glory and honour,, Ps. viii. 5;

sometimes to note the all-sufficiency of God,s love. It is as a crown;

on every side there are experiences of it: so it is said, Ps. ciii. 4,

`He crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies: `but most

usually it is applied to the heavenly estate:--(1.) Partly to note the

honour of it, as a crown is the emblem of majesty; and so it noteth

that imperial and kingly dignity to which we are advanced in Christ:

Luke xxii. 29, `I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath

appointed unto me., Christ, that left us the cross, hath left us his

crown also: one of Christ,s legacies to the church is his own cross;

therefore Luther saith, Ecclesia est haeres crucis--the church is heir

of the cross. So you see in this place he saith diati'themi, I do by

will and testament--so the word signifieth--dispose a kingdom to you;

and that is one reason why heavenly glory is expressed by a crown. (2.)

To note the endless and perpetual fulness that is in it: roundness is

an emblem of plenty and perpetuity; there is somewhat on every side,

and there is no end in it: so Ps. xvi. 11, `In thy presence is fulness

of joy, and pleasures for evermore,, (3.) To note that it is given

after striving; it was a reward of conquest; there was a crown set be

fore those that ran a race: to which use the apostle alludeth, 1 Cor.

ix. 24, 25: `They which run a race run all, but one receiveth the

prize: so run that ye may obtain. Now, they do it to obtain a

corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible;, that is, in the races and

Isthmic games near Corinth, the reward was only some garland of flowers

and herbs, which soon faded; but we run for an incorruptible crown of

glory; or, as another apostle calleth it, `A crown of glory that fadeth

not away,, 1 Peter v. 4. Thus you see why heaven is expressed by a

crown; now sometimes it is called `a crown of glory,, to note the

splendour of it; sometimes `a crown of righteousness,, 2 Tim. iv. 8, to

note the ground and rise of it, which is God,s truth engaged by a

promise, called God,s righteousness in scripture: some times it is

called `a crown of life,, as Rev. ii. 10, `Be faithful unto death, and

I will give thee a crown of life;, because it is not to be had but in

eternal or everlasting life: or else, to note the duration of it; it is

not a dying, withering crown, as the garland of flowers, but a living

crown, such as will flourish to all eternity.

Which the Lord hath promised.--This is added, partly to show the

certainty of it--we have the assurance of a promise; partly to note the

ground of expectation--not by virtue of our own merits, but God,s

promise. Now there is no particular promise alleged, because it is the

general drift of the whole word of God. In the law there is a promise

of mercy: `To a thousand generations, to them that love him,, Exod. xx.

6. When all things were `after the manner of a carnal commandment,, the

expressions of the promises were also carnal and that is the reason

why, in the Old Testament, the blessings of the promises are expressed

by `a fat portion,, `long life,, and a `blessing upon posterity;, for

all these expressions were not to be taken in the rigour of the letter,

but as figures of heavenly joys and eternal life: and therefore, what

was in the commandment, `mercy to a thousand generations, to them that

love him,, is in the apostle, `a crown of life to them that love him,,

the mystery of the expression being opened and unveiled.

To them that love him.--A usual description of the people of God. But

why them that love him, rather than them that serve or obey him, or

some other description? I answer--(1.) Because love is the sum of the

whole law, and the hinge upon which all the commandments turn: this is

the one word into which the Decalogue is abridged; therefore Paul

saith, Rom. xiii. 10, that `love is pleroma nomou, the fulfilling of

the law., (2.) Because it is the great note of our interest in Christ:

faith giveth a right in the promises, and love evidenceth it; therefore

is it so often specified as the condition of the promises, the

condition that evidenceth our interest in them; as James ii. 5, `The

kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him., He doth not say

`fear him,, or `trust in him,, though these graces also are implied,

but chiefly `to them that love him., So Rom. viii. 28, `All things work

together for good to them that love God, to them that are called

according to his purpose:, where love of God, you see, is made the

discovery both of effectual calling and election. (3.) Because patience

is the fruit of love: Nihil est quod non tolerat qui perfecte

diligit--he that loveth much will suffer much: and therefore when the

apostle speaketh of enduring temptations, he encourageth them by the

crown of life promised to them that love God: a man would not suffer

for him, unless he did love him.

I shall give you the notes briefly.

Obs. 1. Afflictions do not make the people of God miserable. There is a

great deal of difference between a Christian and a man of the world:

his best estate is vanity, Ps. xxxix. 5; and a Christian,s worst is

happiness. He that loveth God is like a die; cast him high or low, he

is still upon a square: [79] he may be sometimes afflicted, but he is

always happy. There is a double reason for it:--

1. Because outward misery cannot diminish his happiness.

2. Because sometimes it doth increase it.

1. Afflictions cannot diminish his happiness: a man is never miserable

till he hath lost his happiness. Our comfort lieth much in the choice

of our chiefest good. They that say, `Happy is the people that is in

such a case,, Ps. cxliv. 12-15; that is, where there is no complaining

in their streets, sheep bringing forth thousands, garners full, oxen

strong to labour, &c., they may be soon miserable: all these things may

be gone, with an easy turn of providence, as Job lost all in an

instant. But they that say, `Happy is the people whose God is the

Lord,, that is, that count it their happiness to enjoy God, when they

lose all, they may be happy, because they have not lost God. Our

afflictions discover our choice and affections; when outward crosses

are the greatest evil, it is a sign God was not the chiefest good; for

our grief, in the absence of any comfort, is according to the happiness

that we fancied in the enjoyment of it. One that hath setup his rest in

God can rejoice in his interest, `though the fields should yield no

meat, and the flock should be cut off from the fold, and there should

be no herd in the stalls., These are great evils, and soon felt by a

carnal heart; yet the prophet, in the person of all believers, saith,

Hab. iii. 18, `I will joy in the Lord, and rejoice in the God of my

salvation., In the greatest defect and want of earthly things there is

happiness, and comfort enough in a covenant-interest.

2. Sometimes afflictions increase their happiness, as they occasion

more comfort and further experience of grace: God seldom afflicteth in

vain. Such solemn providences and dispensations leave us better or

worse, the children of God gain profit by them, for it is God,s course

to recompense outward losses with inward enjoyments: 2 Cor. i. 5, `For

as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so also consolation aboundeth

by Christ;, that is, inward comforts and experiences, according to the

rate of outward sufferings. Now he hath not the heart of a Christian

that can think himself more happy in temporal commodities than

spiritual experiences: a wilderness that giveth us more of God is to be

preferred above all the pleasures and treasures of Egypt. Learn, then,

that they may be blessed whom men count miserable. They are not always

happy to whom all things happen according to their desires, but they

that endure evil with victory and patience; the world judgeth according

to outward appearance, and therefore is often mistaken. Nemo aliorum

sensu miser est, sed suo, saith Salvian [80] --a godly man,s happiness,

or misery, is not to be judged by the world,s sense or feeling, but his

own; his happiness and yours differ. The apostle saith, 1 Cor. xv. 19,

`If our hopes were only in this world, we were of all men most

miserable;, if worldly enjoyments were our blessedness, a Christian

might not only be miserable, but `most miserable., The main difference

between a worldly man and a gracious man is in their chiefest good and

their utmost end; and therefore a worldly man cannot judge of a

spiritual man,s happiness. But, saith the apostle, 1 Cor. ii. 15, `The

spiritual man judgeth all things, and he himself is judged of no man:

`you think that their estate is misery, but they know that yours is

vanity. You cannot judge them, but by the light of the Spirit they

judge all things. They that count God their chiefest good know no other

evil but the darkening of his countenance; in all other cases, `Blessed

is he that endureth:, they lose nothing by affliction, but their sins.

Obs. 2. Of all afflictions those are sweetest which we endure for

Christ,s sake. The apostle saith, `Blessed are they that endure

temptation;, that is, persecution for religion,s sake. The immediate

strokes of providence are more properly corrections; the violences of

men against us are more properly trials; there is comfort and

blessedness in corrections, namely, when we receive profit by them: Ps.

xciv. 12, `Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and

instructest out of thy law., Mark, when the chastening is from the

Lord, there is comfort in it, if there be instruction in it: but it is

far more sweet when we are merely called to suffer for a good

conscience: Mat. v. 10, `Blessed are they which are persecuted for

righteousness, sake., There is the blessedness more clear. Corrections

aim at the mortifying of sin, and so are more humbling: but trials aim

at the discovery of grace, and so are more comfortable. Corrections

imply guilt; either we have sinned, or are likely to sin, and then God

taketh the rod in hand. But trials befall us, that the world may know

our willingness to choose the greatest affliction before the least sin,

and therefore must needs be matter of more joy and blessedness to us.

In short, corrections are a discovery and silent reproof of our

corruptions; but trials a discovery and public manifestation of our

innocency, not a reproof, so much as an honour and grace to us. Well,

then, when you are called to suffer for Christ, apply this comfort: it

is a blessed thing to endure evil for that cause; only be sure your

hearts be upright, that it be for Christ indeed, and your hearts be

right with Christ.

1. That it be for Christ. It is not the blood and suffering that maketh

the martyr, but the cause. We are all apt to entitle our quarrel to

Christ, therefore we should go upon the more sure grounds. The glory of

our sufferings is marred when there is somewhat of an evil deed in

them, 1 Peter iv. 15. And we cannot be so cheerful as in a cause purely

religious; evils are not welcomed that come mixed in our thoughts,

partly trial, and partly punishment.

2. That your heart be right for Christ. The form of religion may many

times draw a persecution upon itself, as well as the power , the world

hateth both, though the form less. Oh! how sad is it that a man cometh

to suffer, and he hath nothing to bear him out but an empty form.

Either such kind of persons `make shipwreck of a good conscience,, or

else, out of an obstinacy to their faction, do but sacrifice a stout

body to a stubborn mind; or, which is worse, have nothing to support

them but the low principles of vainglory and worldly applause. Oh!

consider, there is no blessedness in such sufferings; then may you

suffer cheerfully when you appeal to God,s omnisciency for your

uprightness, as they do in the psalm, `The Lord knoweth the secrets of

the heart; yea, for thy sake are we slain all the day long,, Ps. xliv.

21 , 22. Can you appeal to the God that knoweth secrets, and say, For

thy sake are we exposed to such hazards in the world?

Obs. 3. From that when he is tried, note that before crowning there

must be a trial. We have no profit at all by the affliction, neither

grace nor glory, till there be some wrestling and exercise; for grace,

the apostle showeth plainly, Heb. xii. 11, `It yieldeth the quiet

fruits of righteousness, tois gegumnasmenois, to them that are

exercised thereby., The pleasantness and blessedness is not found by

and by, but after much struggling and wrestling with God in prayer,

long acquaintance with the affliction. So for glory, the apostle

showeth here, `when he is proved, he shall receive a crown., In the

building of the temple the stones were first carved and hewed, that the

sound of hammer might not be heard in God,s house; so the living stones

are first hewn before they are set in the New Jerusalem. The apostle

saith, 2 Tim. ii. 5, `If a man strive for masteries, he is not crowned

unless he strive lawfully;, that is, unless he perform the conditions

and laws of the exercise in which he is engaged, he cannot expect the

reward; so neither can we from God till we have passed through all the

stages of Christianity. The trial doth not merit heaven, but always

goeth before it. Before we are brought to glory, God will first wean us

from sin and the world, which the apostle calleth a being `made meet

for the inheritance of the saints in light,, Col. i. 12. And this work

is helped on by many afflictions. Those serve to make us meet for the

communion of saints, not to merit it. When God crowneth us, he doth but

crown his own gifts in us. [81] Well, then, bear your trials with the

more patience. It is said, Acts xiv. 22, that Paul `confirmed the souls

of the disciples, showing that through much tribulation we must enter

into the kingdom of God., It is the common lot. There is none goeth to

heaven without their trial. As the way to Canaan lay through a howling

wilderness and desert, so the path to heaven lieth through much

affliction. He that passeth his life without trial knoweth not himself,

nor hath no opportunity to discover his uprightness. [82]

Obs. 4. That it is good to oppose the glory of our hopes against the

abasure of our sufferings. Here are trials, but we look for a crown of

glory. This is the way to counterpoise the temptation, and in the

conflict between the flesh and spirit, to come in to the relief of the

better part. Thus Paul saith, the inward man is strengthened, `When we

look not to the things that are seen, but the things that are not seen;

for the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not

seen are eternal,, 2 Cor. iv. 18. A direct opposition of our hopes to

our sufferings maketh them seem light and easy. Thus our Saviour

biddeth us consider, `When you are persecuted for righteousness, sake,

yours is the kingdom of God,, Mat. v. 10. Though ye be deprived of all

you have, yet ye cannot be deprived of heaven. Remember, heaven is

still yours. You may lose an estate, but you have an assurance of a

crown of glory. Thus Basil speaketh of some martyrs that were cast out

all night naked in a cold frosty time, and were to be burned the next

day, how they comforted themselves in this manner: `The winter is

sharp, but paradise is sweet; here we shiver for cold, but the bosom of

Abraham will make amends for all,, &c. [83] Well, then, make use of

this heavenly wisdom; consider your hopes, the glory of them, the truth

of them.

1. The glory of them. There are two things trouble men in their

sufferings--disgrace and death. See what provision God hath made

against these fears: he hath promised a crown against the ignominy of

your sufferings, and against temporal death a crown of life. A man can

lose nothing for God, but it is abundantly recompensed and made up

again; the crown of thorns is turned into a crown of glory, and losing

of life is the ready way to save it, Mat. x. 39. Thus, it is good, you

see, to oppose our hopes to our sorrows, and not altogether to look to

the present dangers and sufferings, but to the crown, the crown of life

that is laid up for us. [84] Extreme misery, without hope of redress,

overwhelmeth the soul; and, therefore, the promises do everywhere

oppose a proper comfort to that case where the feeling is like to be

sorest, that faith may have a present and ready answer to such

extremities as sense urgeth; as Stephen, in the midst of his

sufferings, `looked steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God,

and Jesus standing at the right hand of God,, Acts vii. 55. There was

somewhat of miracle and extraordinary ecstasy in that vision, the glory

of heaven being not only represented to his soul, but to his senses;

but it was a pledge of that which falleth out ordinarily in the

sufferings of God,s children, for their hearts are then usually raised

to a more fixed and distinct consideration of their hopes, whereby the

danger and temptation is defeated and overcome. It is very observable

that when Moses and Elijah came to speak with Christ about his

sufferings, they appeared in such forms of glory as did allay the

sharpness of the message; for it is said, Luke ix. 31, `They appeared

in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at

Jerusalem;, intimating that the crown of thorns should put us in mind

of the crown of glory; and when we are clothed with shame and sorrow,

we should think of the shining garments; for the messengers of the

cross were apparelled with a shining glory.

2. The truth of them. It is not only a `crown of glory, that you

expect, but a `crown of righteousness,, 2 Tim. iv. 8, that is, which

the righteous God will surely bestow upon you; for though God maketh

the promise in grace, yet it being once made, his truth, which is often

called his righteousness in scripture, obligeth him to perform it. [85]

Well, then, consider thus: I have the promise of the righteous God to

assure me, and shall I doubt or draw back? He is too holy to

deceive--`God that cannot lie,, Titus i. 2; so immutable and faithful

that he cannot repent and change his mind, Num. xxiii. 19; so

omnipotent and able that he cannot be disappointed and hindered, Job

ix. 12; so gracious that he will not forget: `Hath he said, and shall

he not do it? Hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?, Oh! that

our trust were as sure as his promises, and there were no more doubt to

be made of our interest than of his truth! Every promise is built upon

four pillars: God,s justice or holiness, which will not suffer him to

deceive; his grace or goodness, which will not suffer him to forget;

his truth, which will not suffer him to change; his power, which maketh

him able to accomplish.

Obs. 5. Lastly, That no enduring is acceptable to God but such as doth

arise from love. The crown which God hath promised, he doth not say,

`to them that suffer,, but `to them that love him., A man may suffer

for Christ, that is, in his cause, without any love to him, but it is

nothing worth: 1 Cor. xiii. 3, `If I give my body to be burned, and

have not charity, it profiteth me nothing., Through natural stoutness

and stubbornness men may be constant in their way, and, as I said

before, yield a stout body to a stubborn mind; and yet, when they are

burning in the fires, their souls burn with no zeal or love to God,s

glory. There are many who would die for Christ if they were put to it,

yet will not quit a lust for him. Vicious persons that die in a good

cause are but like a dog,s head cut off for sacrifice. Well, then, do

not think that mere suffering will excuse a wicked life. It is

observable that Christ saith last of all, `Blessed are they that suffer

for righteousness, sake,, Mat. v. 10, as intimating that a martyr must

have all the preceding graces; first, `Blessed are the poor in spirit;

blessed are the pure in heart;, then, `Blessed are they that suffer.,

First, grace is required, and then martyrdom. The victory is less over

outward inconveniences than inward lusts; for these, being more rooted

in our nature, are more hardly overcome. Under the law the priests were

to search the beasts brought for burnt-offerings, whether scabbed or

mangy, &c. A burnt-offering, if scabby, is not acceptable to God. In

short, that love that keepeth the commandments is best able to make us

suffer for them. Philosophy may teach us to endure hardships, as

Calanus in Curtius willingly offered his body to the fires; but grace

only can teach us to overcome lusts. We read of many that, out of

greatness or sullenness of spirit, could offer violence to nature, but

were at a loss when they came to deal with a corruption; so easy is it

to cut off a member rather than `a lust, and to withstand an enemy

rather than a temptation! Therefore the scriptures, when they set out

an outward enemy, though never so fierce, call him flesh, `with them is

an arm of flesh;, but when they speak of the spiritual combat, they

make it a higher work, and of another nature: `We fight not against

flesh and blood,, &c., Eph. vi. 12. Learn then to do for God, that you

may the better die for him; for a wicked man, as he profaneth his

actions, so his sufferings--his blood is but as swine,s blood, a

defilement to the altar.

Other notes might be observed out of this verse, but they may be

collected either out of the exposition, or supplied out of observations

on chap. ii. ver. 5, where suitable matter is discussed.

Ver. 13. Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for

God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.

He cometh now to another kind of temptations; for having spoken of

outward trials, he taketh occasion to speak of these inward

temptations, that thereby he might remove a blasphemous error

concerning the cause of them. It is clear that those outward trials are

from God, but these inward trials, or temptations to sin, are

altogether inconsistent with the purity and holiness of his nature, as

the apostle proveth in this and the following verses.

Let no man, when he is tempted, medeis peirazomenos--that is, tempted

to sin, for in this sense is the word used in scripture; as

dokima'zein, or trial, is the proper word for the other temptation, so

peira'zein is the proper word for temptations to sin; thus the devil is

called ho peirazon, the tempter, Mat. iv. 3; and in the Lord,s Prayer

we pray that we may not be led eis peirasmo`n, `into temptation,,

chiefly intending that we may not be cast upon solicitations to evil;

so here, when he is tempted, that is, so solicited to sin that he is

overcome by it.

Say; that is, either in word or thought, for a thought is verbum

mentis, the saying of the heart; and some that dare not lisp out such a

blasphemy certainly dare imagine it; for the apostle implies that the

creature is apt to say, to have some excuse or other.

I am tempted of God; that is, it was he solicited, or enforced me to

evil; or, if he would not have me sin, why would not he hinder me?

For God cannot be tempted with evil.--Here is the reason, drawn from

the unchangeable holiness of God: he cannot any way be seduced and

tempted into evil. Some read it actively, he is not the tempter of

evil; but this would confound it with the last clause; some, as

Salmeron, out of Clemens Romanus, [86] render the sense thus: God is

not the tempter of evil persons, but only of the good, by afflictions;

but that is a nicety which will not hold true in all cases, and doth

not agree with the original phrase; for it is not ton kakon, as

referring it to evil persons, but simply without an article, kakon, as

referring it to evil things. The sum is, God cannot, by any external

applications, or ill motions from within, be drawn aside to that which

is unjust.

Neither tempteth he any man; that is, doth not love to seduce others,

willing that men should be conformed to the holiness of his own nature.

He tempteth not, either by inward solicitation or by such an inward or

outward dispensation as may enforce us to sin.

The notes are these:--

Obs. 1. From that let no man say, that man is apt to say, or to

transfer the guilt of his own miscarriages. When they are seduced by

their own folly, they would fain transact the guilt and blame upon

others. Thus Aaron shifts his crime upon the people, upon their

solicitations, Exod. xxxii. 23, 24, `They said, Make us gods, and I

cast it into the fire, and thereof came the calf., Mark, thereof came,

as if it were a work of chance rather than art. So Pilate, upon the

Jews, instigation, Mat. xxvii. 24, `Look ye to it., So ignorant men,

their errors upon their teachers; if they are wrong, they have been

taught so; and therefore Jeremiah says, Jer. iv. 10, `Ah! Lord God,

surely thou hast greatly deceived this people;, that is, O Lord, they

will say thou hast deceived them; it was thy prophets told them so. So

Saul, 1 Sam. xv. 15, `The people spared the best of the sheep and of

the oxen;, and ver. 24, `I feared the people., It was out of fear of

others that entreated; the people would have it so. So many, if they

are angry, say they are provoked; if they swear, others urged them to

it; as the Shelomith,s son blasphemed in strife, Lev. xxiv. 10. So if

drawn to excess of drink, or abuse of the creatures, it was long of

others that enticed them. Well, then:--

1. Beware of these vain pretences. Silence and owning of guilt is far

more becoming: God is most glorified when the creatures lay aside their

shifts. You shall see, Lev. xiii. 45, `The leper in whom the plague is

shall have his clothes rent and his head bare, and he shall put a

covering upon his upper lip, and he shall cry, Unclean, unclean;, all

was to be naked and open but only his upper lip; he was not to open his

mouth in excuses. It is best to have nothing to say, nothing but

confession of sin; leprosy must be acknowledged. The covering of the

upper lip among the Hebrews was the sign of shameful conviction.

2. Learn that all these excuses are vain and frivolous, they will not

hold with God. Aaron is reproved, notwithstanding his evasion. Pilate

could not wash off the guilt when he washed his hands. He that

crucified our Saviour crucified himself afterward. [87] Ignorance is

not excused by ill teaching: `The blind lead the blind,, and not one,

but `both fall into the ditch,, Mat. xv. 14--the blind guide and the

blind follower. So Ezek. iii. 18, `The man shall die in his iniquity,

but his soul will I require at thy hand., It will be ill for the

teacher, and ill for the misled soul too. So Saul is rejected from

being king, for obeying the voice of the people rather than the Lord, 1

Sam. xv. 23. Shelomith,s son was stoned, though he blasphemed in spite,

Lev. xxiv. 14. And it went ill with Moses, though they provoked his

spirit, so that `he spake unadvisedly with his lips,, Ps. cvi. 33, 34.

Certainly it is best when we have nothing to say but only, Unclean,

unclean!

Obs. 2. Creatures, rather than not transfer their guilt, will cast it

upon God himself. They blame the Lord in their thoughts; it is foolish

to cast it altogether upon Satan--to say, I was tempted of Satan. Alas!

if there were no Satan to tempt we should tempt ourselves. His

suggestions and temptations would not work were there not some

intervening thought, and that maketh us guilty. Besides, some sins have

their sole rise from our own corruption, as the imperfect animals are

sometimes bred ex putri materia, only out of slimy matter, and at other

times they are engendered by copulation. It is useless to cast it upon

others--I was tempted of others. Actions cannot he accomplished without

our own concurrence, and we must bear the guilt. But it is blasphemous

to cast it upon God, and say, `I am tempted of God;, and yet we are apt

to do so,--partly to be clear in our own thoughts. Men would do

anything rather than think basely of themselves, for it is man,s

disposition to be `right in his own eyes,, Prov. xvi. 2. We love those

glasses that would make us show fairest. It is against nature for a man

willingly to profess and own his own shame: Job. xxxi. 33, `If I hid my

sin as did Adam,, i.e., more hominum, as Adam and all Adam,s children

do. Men would be clear and better than they are. Partly because by

casting it upon God the soul is most secure. When he that is to punish

sin beareth the guilt of it, the soul is relieved from much horror and

bondage; therefore, in the way of faith, God,s transacting our sin upon

Christ is most satisfying to the spirit: Isa. liii. 6, `The Lord hath

laid on him the iniquity of us all., Now, we would lay it upon God by

odious aspersions of his power and providence; for if we could once

make God a sinner, we would be secure. You see we do not fear men that

are as faulty as ourselves; they need pardon as well as we, and

therefore is it that the soul doth so wickedly design to bring God into

a partnership and fellowship of our guilt. Partly through a wicked

desire that is in men to blemish the being of God. Man naturally hateth

God; and our spite is shown this way, by polluting and profaning his

glory, and making it become vile in our thoughts; for since we cannot

raze out the sense of the deity, we would destroy the dread and

reverence of it. It is a saying of Plutarch, Malo de me dici nullum

esse Plutarchum quam malum esse Plutarchum, de Deo male sentire quam

Deum esse negare pejus duco. We cannot deny God, and therefore we

debase him, which is worst, as it is better not to be than to be

wicked; we think him `as one of us,, Ps. 1. 21; and the apostle saith,

`We turn his glory into a lie., Rom. i. 25. Well, then, beware of this

wickedness of turning sin upon God. The more natural it is to us the

more should we take heed of it. We charge God with our evils and sins

divers ways,--

1. When we blame his providence, the state of things, the times, the

persons about us, the circumstances of providence, as the laying of

tempting objects in our way, our condition, &c., as if God,s disposing

of our interests were a calling us to sin: thus Adam, Gen. iii. 12,

`The woman which thou gavest me, she gave me, and I did eat., Mark, it

is obliquely reflected upon God, `The woman which thou gavest me., So

many will plead the greatness of their distractions and incumbrances.

God hath laid so many miseries and discouragements upon them, and cast

them upon such hard times, that they are forced to such shifts;

whereas, alas! God sendeth us miseries, not to make us worse, but to

make us better, as Paul seemeth to argue in 1 Cor. x. 13, 14: if they

did turn to idolatry, the fault was not in their sufferings and trials,

but in themselves. Thus you make God to tempt you to sin when you

transfer it upon providence, and blame your condition rather than

yourselves. Providence may dispose of the object, but it doth not impel

or excite the lust; it appointeth the condition, but Satan setteth up

the snare. It was by God,s providence that the wedge of gold lay in

Achan,s way, that Bathsheba was offered naked to David,s eye, that the

sensual man hath abundance, that the timorous is surprised with

persecution, &c. All these things are from God, for the fault lieth not

here. The outward estate, or the creatures that have been the occasions

of our sinning, cannot be blamed: as beauty in women, pleasantness in

wine. These are good creatures of God, meant for a remedy; we turn them

into a snare. The more of God,s goodness or glory is seen in any

creature, the greater check it is to a temptation, for so far it is a

memorial of God; and therefore some have observed that desires simply

unclean are most usually stirred up towards deformed objects. Beauty in

itself is some stricture and resemblance of the divine majesty and

glory, and therefore cannot but check motions altogether brutish. It is

very observable that of the apostle Peter: 2 Pet. i. 4, `The corruption

that is in the world through lust., The world is only the object; the

cause is lust. The reason why men are covetous, or sensual, or

effeminate, is not in gold, or wine, or women, but in men,s naughty

affections and dispositions. So also it is very observable, that when

the apostle John would sum up the contents of that world which is

opposite to the love of God, he doth not name the objects, but the

lusts; the fault is there. He doth not say, Whatsoever is in the world

is pleasures, or honours, or profits, but `the lust of the eyes, the

lust of the flesh, and the pride of life,, and addeth, `These are not

of the Father, but of the world,, 1 John ii. 16; that is, not of God,

as riches, and honour, and other outward things are, but these are

parts of that world that man hath made, the world in our own bowels, as

the poison is not in the flower, but in the spider,s nature.

2. By ascribing sin to the defect and faint operation of the divine

grace. Men will say they could do no otherwise; they had no more grace

given them by God: Prov. xix. 3, `The foolishness of man perverteth his

ways, and his heart fretteth against the Lord., They say it was long of

God; he did not give more grace. They `corrupt themselves in what they

know,, Jude 10, and then complain, God gave no power. Men naturally

look upon God as a Pharaoh, requiring brick where he gave no straw. The

servant in the Gospel would make his master in the fault why he did not

improve his talent: Mat. xxv. 24, `I knew thou wert an hard man,

reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not

strewed, and therefore I went and hid the talent;, as if that were all

the cause.

3. When men lay all their miscarriages upon their fate, and the unhappy

stars that shone at their birth, these are but blind flings at God

himself, veiled under reflections upon the creature. Alas! `who is it

that bringeth out Mazzaroth in his season, that ordereth the stars in

their course? is it not the Lord?, To this sort you may refer them that

storm at any creatures, because they dare not openly and clearly oppose

themselves against heaven; .as Job curseth the clay of his birth, Job

iii. 3, as if it had been unlucky to him; and others curse some lower

instruments.

4. When men are angry they know not why. They are loath to spend any

holy indignation upon themselves; therefore, feeling the stings and

gripes of conscience, they fret and fume, and know not why. They would

fain break out against God, but dare not; as David himself, 2 Sam. vi.

8, `David was displeased because the Lord had made a breach upon

Uzzah., He was angry, but could not tell with whom to be angry; he

should have been angry with his own folly and ignorance. Wicked men

break out apparently: Isa. viii. 21, 22, `They shall fret themselves,

and curse their God, and their king, and look upward; and they shall

look to the earth,, &c. Sin proving unhappy, vexeth the soul; and then

men curse and rave, and break out into indecencies of passion and

madness, accusing God, and providence, and instruments, and any but

themselves. So. Rev. xvi. 21, `They blasphemed the God of heaven,

because of their plagues;, the madness of their rage breaketh out into

open blasphemy. But in the children of God it is more secretly carried;

there is a storming in their hearts, but they dare not give it vent; as

in Jonah, chap. iv., he was vexed, and surcharged with passion, but

knew not upon whom to disgorge it.

5. Most grossly, when you think he useth any suggestion to the soul, to

persuade it and incline it to evil. Satan may come, and, by the help of

fancy and the senses, transmit evil counsel to the soul. But God doth

not, as more fully hereafter: Mat. v. 37, `Whatsoever is beyond these

cometh of evil;, in the original it is ek ponerou, not only of the evil

heart, but the evil serpent; from the devil, and our corruption, if it

be beside the rule. There is Satan,s counsel in all this, not the

Lord,s.

6. When you have an ill understanding and conceit of his decrees, as if

they did necessitate you to sin. Men will say, Who can help it? God

would have it so,--as if that were an excuse for all. Though God hath

decreed that sin shall be, yet he doth neither infuse evil nor enforce

you to evil. God doth not infuse evil; that which draweth you to it is

your own concupiscence, as in the next verse. He doth not give you an

evil nature or evil habits; these are from yourselves. He doth enforce

you, neither physically, by urging and inclining the will to act, nor

morally, by counselling and persuading, or commanding you to it. God

leaveth you to yourselves, casteth you in his providence, and in

pursuance of his decrees, upon such things as are a snare to you; that

is all that God doth, as anon will more fully appear. I only now take

notice of that wickedness which is in our natures, whereby we are apt

to blemish God, and excuse ourselves.

Obs. 3. From that he cannot be tempted with evil, that God is so

immutably good and holy that he is above the power of a temptation. Men

soon warp and vary, but he cannot be tempted. There is a wicked folly

in man which maketh us measure God by the creature; and, because we can

be tempted, think God can be tempted also; as suppose, enticed to give

way to our sins. Why else do they desire him to prosper them in their

evil projects, to further unjust gain, or un clean intents?--as the

whore, Prov. vii. 14, had her vows and peace-offerings to prosper in

her wantonness. And generally, we deal with God as if he could be

tempted and wrought to a compliance with our corrupt ends, as Solomon

speaketh of sacrifice offered with an evil mind, Prov. xxi. 27; that

is, to gain the favour of heaven in some evil undertaking and design.

Thus the king of Moab hoped to entice God by the multitude of his

sacrifices, seven altars, seven oxen, seven rams, Num. xxii., and the

prophet, of some that thought to draw God into a liking of their

oppression: Zech. xi. 5, `Blessed be God, I am rich., So in these times

wicked men have a pretence of religion, as if they would allure the

Lord to enter into their secret, and come under the banner of their

faction and conspiracy. Oh! what base thoughts have carnal men of God!

No wonder the word of God is made a nose of wax, when God himself is

made an idol or puppet, that moveth by the wire of every carnal

worshipper! Oh! check this blasphemy. God cannot be tempted; he is

immutably just and holy: Hab. i. 13, `Thou art of purer eyes than to

behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity., Iniquity shall never have

a good look from him. Oh! then, how should we tremble that are easily

carried aside with temptation! How can you stand before the God that

cannot be tempted?

Uses of this note are two:--

1. It is an inducement to get an interest in God, and more communion

with him: a believer is `made partaker of the divine nature,, 2 Peter

i. 4. Now the more of the divine nature in you, the more you are able

to stand against temptations. We are easily carried aside, because we

have more of man than God in us. We are so mutable, that if all memory

of sin and Satan were abolished, man himself would become his own

devil; but God is at the same stay. Oh! let us covet more of the divine

nature, that when the tempter cometh he may find the less in us. We do

in nothing so much resemble God as in immutable holiness.

2. You may make use of it to the purpose in hand. When natural thoughts

rise in us, thoughts against the purity of God, say thus: Surely God

cannot be the author of sin, who is the ultor or the avenger of it; he

is at the same pass and stay of holiness, and cannot warp aside to

evil. Especially make use of it when anything is said of God in

scripture which doth not agree with that standing copy of his holiness,

the righteous law which he hath given us. Do not think it any variation

from that immutable tenor of purity and justice which is in his nature,

for `he cannot be tempted;, as when he bade Abraham offer his son, it

was not evil, partly because God may require the life of any of his

creatures when he will; partly because, being the lawgiver, he may

dispense with his own law: and a peculiar precept is not in force when

it derogateth from a general command, to wit, that we must do

whatsoever God requireth: so in bidding them spoil the Egyptians. God

is not bound to our rule; the moral law is a rule to us, not to

himself, &c. In all such cases salve the glory of God, for he is

apei'rastos kakon, altogether incapable of the least sin or evil.

Obs. 4. From that neither tempteth he any man, that the Lord is no

tempter; the author of all good cannot be the author of sin. God useth

many a moving persuasion to draw us to holiness, not a hint to

encourage us to sin; certainly they are far from the nature of God that

entice others to wickedness, for he tempteth no man--man tempteth

others many ways:

1. By commands, when you contribute your authority to the countenancing

of it. It is the character of Jeroboam that he `made Israel to sin:,

`Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, that made Israel to sin., It is again and

again repeated; the guilt of a whole nation lieth upon his shoulders;

Israel ruined him, and he ruined Israel. So 2 Chron. xxxiii. 9,

`Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, and do

worse than the heathens., Mark, he made them; their sins are charged

upon your score. In the 7th of the Revelations, where the tribes are

numbered, Dan is altogether left out, and Ephraim is not mentioned. Dan

was the first leading tribe that by example went over to idols: Judges

xviii., and Ephraim by authority: so some give the reason.

2. By their solicitations and entreaties, when men become panders to

others, lusts: Prov. vii. 21, `With much fair speech she caused him to

yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him., Mark, she

caused him to yield, and then forced him; first he began to incline,

and then he could no longer resist. When such Eves lay forth their

apples, what evil cometh by it? Solicitations are as the bellows to

blow up those latent sparkles of sin which are hidden in our natures

into a flame.

3. Those that soothe up or encourage men in their evil ways, calling

evil good and good evil, like Ahab,s prophets. Their word is, `Go up

and prosper;, they cry, Peace, peace! to a soul utterly sunk and lost

in a pit of perdition. Oh! how far are these from the nature of God. He

tempteth no man; but these are devils in man,s shape; their work is to

seduce and tempt--murderers of souls, yea (as Epiphanius calleth the

Novatians), murderers of repentance. [88] Dives in hell had more

charity; he would have some to testify to his brethren `lest they came

into that place of torment,, Luke xvi. 28. But these are factors for

hell, negotiate for Satan, strengthen the hands of the wicked, and

(which God taketh worse) discourage and set back those that were

looking towards heaven. So the apostle, 2 Peter ii. 18, they `allure

through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that

were clean escaped from them that live in error, tous o'ntos

apophugo'ntas, really or verily escaped, that is, had begun to profess

the gospel; or, as some copies have, oligos apophugo'ntas, having a

little escaped from error; thence the vulgar eos qui paululum

effugiunt, with which the Syriac and Arabic translations agree; [89]

and so it showeth how ill God taketh it, that the early growth and

budding of grace should be blasted, and as soon as they began to

profess any change, that a seducer should set them back again, and

entangle those that had made some escape, and were in a fair way to a

holy life. This is Satan,s disposition outright: the dragon watched for

the man-child as soon as he was born, Rev. xii. 4, and these make

advantage of those early tendencies and dispositions to faith which are

in poor souls; for while they are deeply affected with their sins, and

admiring the riches and grace of Christ, they strike in with some

erroneous representations, and, under a colour of liberty and gospel,

reduce and bring them back to their old looseness.

Use 2. If God tempteth no man, then it informeth us that God cannot be

the author of sin. I shall here take occasion a little to enlarge upon

that point. I shall first clear those places which seem to imply it;

then, secondly, show you what is the efficiency and concurrence of God

about sin.

I. For the clearing of the places of scripture. They are of divers

ranks; there are some places that seem to say that God doth tempt, as

Gen. xxii. 1, `God tempted Abraham;, so in many other places; but that

was but a trial of his faith, not a solicitation to sin. There is a

tempting by way of trial, and a tempting by way of seducement. [90] God

trieth their obedience, but doth not stir them up to sin. But you will

say, there are other places which seem to hint that God doth solicit,

incite, and stir up to sin; as 1 Chron. v. 26, `God stirred up the

spirit of Pul, the king of Assyria, to carry away the Jews captive;,

but that was not evil, to punish an hypocritical nation, but just and

holy, a part of his corrective discipline; and God,s stirring implieth

nothing but the designation of his providence, and the ordering of that

rage and fury that in them was stirred up by ambition and other evil

causes, as a correction to his people. So also 2 Sam. xxiv. 1, `The

anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David to

number the people., But compare it with 1 Chron. xxi. 1, and you shall

see it is said, `Satan stood up and provoked David to number the

people;, and so some explain one place by the other, and refer that he

to Satan, `The anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he,,

(that is, the devil); or it may be referred to the last antecedent, the

Lord, whose anger is said to be stirred up; he moved, that is permitted

Satan to move, by withdrawing himself from David. God moved permissiv�,

Satan efficaciter: God suffered, Satan tempted; for God is often in

scripture said to do that which he doth but permit to be done; as to

`Awaken the sword against the man his fellow,, Zech. xiii. 7, that is,

to stir up all that rage which was exercised upon Christ; and the

reason of such expressions is because of the activeness of his

providence in and about sin, for he doth not barely permit it, but

dispose circumstances and occasions, and limit and overrule it, so as

it may be for good. Thus also Ps. cv. 25, `He turned their heart to

hate his people, and to deal subtilely with his servants., The meaning

is, God only offereth the occasion by doing good to his people. The

Egyptians pursued them out of envy and jealousy. God, I say, only gave

the occasion, did not restrain their malice; therefore he is said to do

it. There are other places which imply that God hardeneth, blindeth

sinners, delivereth them over to a reprobate sense, sendeth them a

strong delusion; as Rom. i. 2; Thes. ii. 11, and in many other places.

I answer in general to them all:--God, by doing these things, doth not

tempt the good that they may become evil, but only most justly

punisheth the evil with evil: this hardening, blinding, is not a

withdrawing a good quality from them, but a punishment according to

their wickedness. Particularly God is said to harden, as he doth not

soften; he doth not infuse evil, but only withhold grace; hardness of

heart is man,s sin, but hardening, God,s judgment. So again, God is

said to make blind as he doth not enlighten, as freezing and darkness

follow upon the absence of the sun: he doth not infuse evil, nor take

away any good thing from them, but only refuseth to give them more

grace, or to confirm them in the good they have. So also God is said to

give up to lusts when he doth not restrain us, but leaveth us to our

own sway and the temptations of Satan. So God is said to send a strong

lie when he suffereth us to be carried away with it. God in deed

foreseeth and knoweth how we will behave ourselves upon these

temptations, but the foresight of a thing doth not cause it.

Some urge that 1 Kings xxii. 22, `Thou shalt be a lying spirit; go

forth and do so, and thou shalt prevail with him., But that is only a

parabolical scheme of providence, and implieth not a charge and

commission so much as a permission.

Others urge those places which do directly seem to refer sin to God; as

Gen. xlv. 5, 8, `Be not grieved nor offended, it was not you that sent

me hither; it was not you, but God., The very sending, which was a

sinful act, is taken off from man and appropriated to God. So 1 Kings

xii. 15, `The king hearkened not unto the people, for the cause was

from the Lord;, that rebellion there is said to be from the Lord. I

answer--These things are said to be of the Lord because he would

dispose of them to his own glory, and work out his own designs and

decrees. There are some other places urged, as where God is said to

deliver Christ, to bruise and afflict him, which was an evil act, &c.;

but these only imply a providential assistance and co-operation, by

which God concurreth to every action of the creatures, as shall be

cleared elsewhere.

II. I am to state the efficiency and concurrence of God about sin. All

that God doth in it may be given you in these propositions:--

1. It is certain that without God sin would never be; without his

prohibition an action would not be sinful. The apostle saith, `Where is

no law, there is no transgression;, but I mean chiefly without his

permission and fore-knowledge, yea, and I may add, without his will and

concurrence, without which nothing can happen and fall out; it can not

be beside the will of God, for then he were not omniscient; or against

his will, for then he were not omnipotent. There is no action of ours

but needeth the continued concurrence and supportation of his

providence; and if he did not uphold us in being and working, we could

do nothing.

2. Yet God can by no means be looked upon as the direct author of it,

or the proper cause of that obliquity that is in the actions of the

creatures; for his providence is conversant about sin without sin, as a

sunbeam lighteth upon a dunghill without being stained by it. This is

best cleared by a collection and summary of all those actions where by,

from first to last, providence is concerned in man,s sin; which are

briefly these:--

[1.] Fore-knowledge and pre-ordination. God intended and ap pointed

that it should be. Many that grant prescience deny preordination, lest

they should make God the author of sin; but these fear where no fear

is. The scripture speaketh roundly, ascribing both to God: `Him being

delivered by the fore-knowledge and determinate counsel of God,, Acts

ii. 23. Mark, Peter saith, not only te prognosei, `by the

fore-knowledge,, but te progno'sei, `determinate counsel,, which

implieth a positive decree. Now that cannot infer any guilt or evil in

God, for God appointed it, as he meant to bring good out of it. Wicked

men have quite contrary ends. Thus Joseph speaketh to his brethren,

when they were afraid of his revenge, Gen l. 19, `Am I in the place of

God?, that is, was it my design to bring these things to pass, or God,s

decree? and who am I, that I should resist the will of God? And then

again, ver. 20, `But as for you, ye thought evil; but God meant it for

good, to bring it to pass, as it is this day, to save much people

alive;, that is, God decreed it otherwise than you designed it: your

aim was wholly evil, his good.

[2.] There is a permission of it. God,s decrees imply that sin shall

be, but they do not impel or enforce; for he leaveth us to the liberty

of our own hearts, and our own free choice and work; he is resolved not

to hinder us: Acts xiv. 16, `He suffered them to walk in their own

ways., God was not bound to hinder it, therefore permission in God can

not be faulty;, Who hath given him first?, Were grace a debt, it were

injustice to withhold it; and did God act out of a servile necessity,

the creatures might reject the blame of their miscarriages upon the

faintness of his operation: but God being free, neither obliged by

necessity of nature, nor any external rule and law, nor by any

foregoing merit of the creatures, may do with his own as it pleaseth

him; and it is a shameless impudence in man to blame God because he is

free, when himself cannot endure to be bound. [91]

[3.] There is a concurrence to the action, though not to the sinfulness

of it. It is said, Acts xvii. 28, `In him we live, move, and have our

being., When God made the creatures, he did not make them independent

and absolute: we had not only being from him, but still we have it in

him; we are in him, we live in him, and we move in him, kinou'metha--we

are moved or acted in him. All created images and appearances are but

like the impress of a seal upon the waters: take away the seal, and the

form vanisheth; subtract the influence of providence, and presently all

creatures return to their first nothing; therefore to every action

there needeth the support and concurrence of God: so that the bare

action or motion is good, and from God; but the de-ordination, and

obliquity of it, is from man; it cometh from an evil will, and therein

is discerned the free work of the creatures.

[4.] There is a desertion of a sinner, and leaving of him to himself.

God may suspend, yea, and withdraw, grace out of mere sovereignty; that

is, because he will: but he never doth it but either out of justice or

wisdom; out of wisdom, for the trial of his children, as, in the

business of the ambassadors, `God left Hezekiah, that he might know

what was in his heart,, 2 Chron. xxxii. 31. So sometimes in justice, to

punish the wicked; as Ps. lxxxi. 12, `I gave them up to their own

hearts, lusts, and they walked in their own counsels., When grace is

withdrawn, which should moderate and govern the affections, man is left

to the sway and impetuous violence of his own lusts. Now God cannot be

blamed in all this, partly because he is not bound to give or continue

grace: partly because, when common light and restraints are violated,

he seemeth to be bound rather to withdraw what is already given; and

when men put finger in the eye of nature, God may put it out, that they

that will not, may not see; and if the hedge be continually broken, it

is but justice to pluck it up; and then if the vineyard be eaten down,

who can be blamed? Isa. v. 5: partly be cause the subsequent disorders

do arise from man,s own counsel and free choice; therefore upon this

tradition of God,s it is said, `They walked in their own counsels;,

that is, according to the free motion and inclination of their own

spirits.

[5.] There is a concession and giving leave to wicked instruments, to

stir them up to evil; as carnal company, evil acquaintance, false

prophets: 1 Kings xxii. 22, `I will go forth, and be a lying spirit in

the mouth of Ahab,s prophets; and God said, Go forth., In that scheme

and draught of providence, the evil spirit is brought in, asking leave

for wicked instruments. So Job xii. 16, it is said, `The deceiver and

deceived are his;, he is sovereign Lord over all the instruments of

deceit, so that they are restrained within bounds and limits, that they

can do nothing further than he will give leave.

[6.] There is a presenting of occasions, and disposing of them to such

providences as become a snare; but this can reflect no dishonour upon

God, because the providences and objects are good in themselves, and in

their own nature motives to duty, rather than temptations to sin.

Wicked men abuse the best things--the word irritateth their corruption;

sin getteth strength by the commandment: Isa. vi. 9, `Go, make the

heart of this people fat,, that is, dull and heavy; as the ass, which

of all creatures hath the fattest heart, is the dullest. [92] The

prophet is bidden to make their hearts fat; the preaching of the word,

which should instruct and quicken, maketh them the more gross and

heavy. So also they abuse mercies and miseries: Ps. lxix. 22, `Let

their table become a snare, and their welfare a trap., A sinner, like a

spider, sucketh poison out of everything; or, like the sea, turneth the

sweet influences of the heavens, the fresh supply of the rivers, into

salt water; so their table, their welfare, all becomes a curse and a

snare to them. In this sense it is said, Jer. vi. 21, `I will lay

stumbling-blocks before this people;, that is, such occasions and

providences as are a means to ruin them: in all which God most

righteously promoteth the glory of his justice.

[7.] A judicial tradition and delivering them up to the power of Satan

and their own vile affections; as Rom. i. 26. `God gave them up to vile

affections;, this is, when God suffereth those koi'nas ennoi'as, those

common notices to be quenched, and all manner of restraints to be

removed: the truth is, we rather give up ourselves; only, because God

serveth his ends of it, it is said, he giveth.

[8.] A limitation of sin. As God appointeth the measures of grace

according to his own good pleasure, so also the stint of sin; it

runneth out so far as may be for his glory: Ps. lxxvi. 10, `The wrath

of man shall praise thee, the remainder thereof shalt thou restrain.,

So far as it may make for God,s glory, God letteth the fierceness of

man to have its scope; but when it is come to the stint and bounds that

providence hath set to it, it is quenched in an instant.

[9.] There is a disposal and turning of it to the uses of his glory:

Rom. iii. 7, `Our unrighteousness commendeth his righteousness, and the

truth of God aboundeth to his glory through our lie., God is so good,

that he would not suffer evil if he could not bring good out of it. In

regard of the issue and event of it, sin may be termed (as Gregory said

of Adam,s fall) felix culpa, a happy fall, because it maketh way for

the glory of God. It is good to note how many attributes are advanced

by sin--mercy in pardoning, justice in punishing, wisdom in ordering,

power in overruling it; every way doth our good God serve himself of

the evils of men. The picture of providence would not be half so fair

were it not for these black lines and darker shadows. Well, then, let

me never blame that God for permitting sin, who is willing to discover

so much mercy in the remitting of it.

Ver. 14. But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own

lust, and enticed.

Here he cometh to show the true and proper cause of sin. having removed

the false pretended cause, namely, God,s providence and decree. The

true procreating cause of sin is in every man,s soul; it is his lust;

he carrieth. that which is fons et fomes, the food and fuel of it in

his own bosom. Now this lust worketh two ways, by force and fraud,

drawing away and enticing, as in the explication will more fully

appear.

But every man is tempted.--He speaketh so universally, because none is

free but Christ.

When by his own lust.--He saith his own, because though we have all a

corrupt nature in common, yet every one hath a particular several

inclination to this or that sin rooted in his nature. Or rather own, to

exclude foreign force, and all violence from without: there is not a

greater enemy than our own nature.

His own lust.--That I may show you what is meant by lust, I must

premise something:--(1.) The soul of man is chiefly and mainly made up

of desires; like a sponge, it is always thirsting, and sucking of

something to fill itself. All its actings, even the first actings of

the understanding, come out of some will and some desire; as the

apostle speaketh of `the wills of the mind,, Eph. ii. 3, a place I

shall touch upon again by and by. (2.) At least this will be granted,

that the bent of the soul, the most vigorous, commanding, swaying

faculty of the soul, is desire; that du'namis epithumetike` is, I say,

the most vigorous bent of the soul. (3.) Since the fall, man rather

consulteth with his desires than with anything else, and there all

action and pursuit beginneth. So that this faculty is eminently

corrupted, and corrupteth and swayeth all the rest; and therefore gross

lusts, the lower and baser desires, are called, `the law of the

members., Rom. vii. 23; desires or lusts giving law to the whole soul.

Upon these reasons I suppose it is that all sin is expressed by lust,

which, if taken in a proper and restrained sense, would not reach the

obliquities of the whole nature of man, but only of one faculty; but

because there seemeth to be in the creature a secret will and desire,

by which every act is drawn out, and desire is the most vigorous

faculty, bending and engaging the soul to action, the Spirit of God

chooseth to express sin by lust, and such words as are most proper to

the desires of the creatures. It is true, that in the Old Testament I

find it expressed by a word proper to the understanding, by

`inventions,, or `imaginations,, or `counsels,, whence those phrases,

`walking according to their own imaginations,, and `walking in their

own counsels., But the New Testament delighteth rather in the other

expressions of `concupiscence `and `lust,, words proper to the desires;

the reason of which difference I conceive to be, partly the manner of

the Hebrews, who frequently use words of the understanding to note

suitable affections; partly the state of the world, who at first were

brutish in their conceits, and prone to idols, and therefore the Old

Testament runneth in that strain, `imaginations,, `counsels,, &c.; and

at length were brutish in their desires, and more prone to gross sins;

and therefore in the New, it is `lusts,, `concupiscence,, &c. However,

this I observe, that in the Old Testament there is some word belonging

to the will and desires adjoined to those words of the understanding,

as the `imaginations of their own hearts,, `the counsels of their own

hearts;, that is, such imaginations as were stirred up and provoked by

their own hearts and desires. All this is premised to show you why the

scripture chooseth to express sin by lust and concupiscence.

Now, lust may be considered two ways:--(1.) As a power; (2.) As an act.

1. As a power, and so it noteth that habitual, primitive, and radical

indisposition to good, and a disposition to evil, that is in all the

faculties--the whole dunghill of corruption, which reeketh sometimes in

the understanding by evil thoughts, sometimes in the will by lusts and

corrupt desires, and is the mother out of whose womb all sin cometh;

and as it is called lust or concupiscence, so it is called flesh, the

opposite contrary principle to spirit: Gal. v. 17, `The flesh lusteth

against the spirit,, there it is called flesh, and its radical act

lusting.

2. Look upon it as an act, and actual lust or concupiscence, and it is

nothing else but the risings and first motions of this fleshly nature

that is in us. These lustings are of two sorts--those of the lower and

those of the upper soul. The apostle calleth them, Eph. ii. 3, `the

wills of the flesh, and of the mind.,

[1.] The wills of the flesh are those lower and more brutish appetites

which are the rise of lust, wantonness, drunkenness, gluttony, called

by way of emphasis, `the lusts of the flesh:, 1 John ii. 16, `Whatever

is in the world is the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and

the pride of life., By the lusts of the flesh are meant the neighings

of the soul after outward pleasures, and all manner of sensual and

carnal delights. Now these, when they are improved into gross and

irregular actions, stink in the nostrils of nature. In Aristotle [93]

they are called epithumi'ai therio'deis, brutish and belluine, not only

because we have them in common with the beasts, but because they

degenerate into a brutish excess. Thus you see what lusts of the flesh

are. I confess they are sometimes taken more largely for any risings of

corrupt nature, it being most natural to us to be enslaved by sensual

and fleshly objects; the part is put for the whole.

[2.] The wills of the mind are the first risings of the corruption that

is in the upper soul, as fleshly reasonings, thoughts, and desires,

covetousness, ambition, pride, envy, malice, &c. These are rooted in

the corrupt risings or stirrings of the mind, will, &c. These things I

thought good to hint, to show you what the scripture intendeth by lust,

the vicious inclinations of our own spirits, chiefly those impetus

primo primi, the first risings of original sin.

He is drawn away and enticed.--There is some variety among interpreters

in opening these two words. Some conceive that in these two words the

apostle giveth out two causes of sin, one internal, which is lust, as

if that were hinted in the former word: `drawn away by his lust;, and

the other external, to wit, the pleasure that adhereth to the object,

which is as the bait to entice the soul, for the word signifieth

enticed as with a bait; and (as Plato saith) edone` de'lear kakon,

pleasure is the bait of sin. Thus Piscator and our translators seem to

favour it, in putting the words thus: `When he is drawn by his own

lust, and enticed;, as if they would intimate to us this sense, drawn

away by his own lust, and enticed by the object; whereas, the posture

of th3 words in the original referreth both to lust; thus, `When he is

drawn away and enticed by his lust., Others make these words to hint

several degrees in the admission of sin. Thus, first drawn away from

God, then enticed by sin; then, in the next verse, `sin conceiveth,,

then `bringeth forth,, &c. Others, as Pareus, Grotius, &c., make these

to be the two parts of sin, and by drawing away, say they, is meant the

departure from the true good, and by enticed, the cleaving to evil. For

look, as in grace there is something privative and something positive,

a departure from evil and a cleaving to good so, on the contrary, there

is in sin a withdrawing from that which is good, and an ensnaring by

that which is evil. I cannot altogether disallow this sense, though I

rather incline to think that neither the object nor the parts of evil

are here hinted, but only the several ways which lust taketh to undo

us; partly by force, and so that word cometh in, exelko'menos, he is

`drawn aside,, or haled with the rage and impetuous violence of his

desires; partly by blandishment and allurements; and so the other word

is used, deleazo'menos, `he is enticed,, and beguiled with the promise

and appearance of pleasure and satisfaction to the soul.

From this verse observe:--

Obs. 1. That the cause of evil is in a man,s self, in his own lusts, e

idia epithumias, the Eve in our own bosoms. Corrupt nature is not

capable of an excuse. Sin knoweth no mother but your own hearts. Every

man,s heart may say to him, as the heart of Apollodorus in the kettle,

[94] e'go soi` tou'ton aiti'a--it is I have been the cause of this.

Other things may concur, but the root of all is in yourselves. A man is

never truly humbled till he `smite upon his own thigh,, and doth

express most indignation against himself. Do not say it was God. He

gave a pure soul, only it met with viciously disposed matter. It is not

the light, but the putrid matter that made the torch stink, though, it

is true, it did not stink till it was lighted. You cannot altogether

blame the devil: `Suggestion can do nothing without lust,, [95] I

remember Nazianzen saith, to` pur par' emon, ede phlo`x tou

pneu'matos--fire is in our wood, though it be the devil,s flame. You

cannot blame the world; there are allurements abroad, but it is your

fault to swallow the bait. If you would have resisted embraces, as

Tamar did Amnon,s, the world could not force you. Do not cry out of

examples; there is somewhat in thee that made thee close with the evil

before thee. Examples provoke abhorrency from the sin, if there be

nothing in the man to suit with it. Lot was the more righteous for

living in Sodom, and Anacharsis the more temperate for living in

Scythia; ungodly examples are permitted to increase detestation, not to

encourage imitation. Do not cry out of occasions. David saw Bathsheba

naked; but he saith, `I have sinned and done this evil,, Ps. li. 4. Do

not cast all the blame upon the iniquity of the times; good men are

best in worst times, most glorious when the generation is most crooked,

Phil. ii. 15; most careful of duty when the age is most dissolute,

`redeeming the time, for the days are evil,, Eph. v. 16; like fire that

scorcheth most in the sharpest frost, or stars that shine brightest in

the darkest nights. Do not blame the pleasantness of the creatures. You

may as well say you will rebel against the prince because he hath

bestowed power upon you, and by his bounty you are able to make war

against him. It is true, there is much in these things; but there is

more in your hearts. It is your venomous nature that turneth all to

poison.

Obs. 2. That, above all things, a man should look to his desires. All

sin is called epithumi'a, lust or desire. God calleth for the heart:

`My son, give me thy heart;, which is the seat of desires. The children

of God, when they plead their innocency, urge their desires, they fail

in duty; but their `desires are to the remembrance of his name,, Neh.

i. 11; Isa. xxvi. 8. The first thing by which sin discovereth itself is

by lust or desire. All actions have their rise from some inclination

and tendency of the desire towards the object. Before there is any

thought or consultation in the soul, there is o'rexis, a general

tendency or bent in the soul. Well, then, look to your lusts or

desires; the whole man is swayed by them: men are worldly or heavenly

as their desires are; appetite followeth life; the spirit hath its

lustings as well as the flesh. See how it is with you.

Obs. 3. The way that lust taketh to ensnare the soul is by force and

flattery, either `drawn away, or `enticed.,

First, By violence, exelkomenos, drawn away, haled with it. One way of

knowing desires to be irregular is, if they are violent and

over-pleasing to the flesh. When affections are impetuous, you have

just cause to suspect them, not to satisfy them. David would not touch

the waters of Bethlehem when he longed for them, 2 Sam. xxiii. 17. Rage

of desire can never be lawful. Greediness is a note of uncleanness,

Eph. iv. 19. When the heart boileth or panteth, it is not love, but

lust. When you find any such force upon your spirits towards carnal

objects, if you would be innocent, complain and cry out as the ravished

virgin under the law; if she cried out she was guiltless. It is a sign

that sin hath not gained your consent, but committeth a rape upon your

souls. When you cry out to God, Rom. vii. 24, `O wretched man that I

am, who shall deliver me?, you may discern this force upon your souls.

1. When your desires will not endure consultation, or the consideration

of reason, but you are carried on by a brutish rage; as Jer. v. 8,

`They were as fed horses; every one neighed after his neighbour,s

wife., They had no more command of themselves than a fed horse. So Jer.

viii. 6, `Every one turneth into his course, as the horse into the

battle., The rage of the horse is stirred up by a warlike noise, and

then they confront danger, and press on upon the pikes and the heat of

the battle. So they go on with an unbridled license against all reason

and restraints, without any counsel and recollection. Your lusts will

not allow you the pause of reason and discourse.

2. When they grow more outrageous by opposition, and that little check

that you give to them is like the sprinkling of water upon the coals,

the fire burneth the more fiercely. This is that which the apostle

calleth pa'thos epithumias, `the passionateness of lust., We translate

it a little too flatly, `the lust of concupiscence,, 1 Thes. iv. 5. It

noteth a raging earnestness. This violence is most discerned in the

irregular motions of the sensual appetite, which are most sensible

because they disturb reason, vex the soul, oppress the body. But it is

also in other sins. The apostle speaketh of it elsewhere: Rom. i. 27,

`They burned in their lust one towards another., It is when reason is

so disturbed and oppressed, that there can be no resistance; yea, grace

itself is overborne.

3. When they urge and vex the soul till fulfilled, which is often

expressed in scripture by a languor and sickness. Now this is such an

height and excess of affection as is only due to objects that are most

excellent and spiritual; otherwise it is a note of the power of lust.

To be sick for Christ is but a duty, Cant. ii. 5; so worthy an object

will warrant the highest affection. But to be sick for any outward and

carnal object noteth the impetuousness and violence of sin in the soul.

Thus Amnon was sick for Tamar, 2 Sam. xiii. 2; that was a sickness to

death, the sickness of lust and uncleanness. Ahab was sick of

covetousness, 1 Kings xxi. 4; and Hainan for honour, Esth. v. All

violent affections urge the soul, and make it impatient; and because

affections are the nails and pins that tie body and soul together,

leave a faintness and weakness in the body.

This violence of lust may inform us,--

1. Why wicked men are so mad upon sin, and give themselves over to it

to their own disadvantage: `They draw iniquity with cart ropes,, Isa.

v. 18. As beasts that are under the yoke put out all their strength to

draw the load that is behind them, so these draw on wickedness to their

disadvantage, commit it though it be difficult and inconvenient. So it

is said, Jer. ix. 5, that they `weary themselves to commit iniquity.,

What is the reason of all this? There is a violence in sin which they

cannot withstand.

2. Why the children of God cannot do as they would--withstand a

temptation so resolutely, perform duties so acceptably. Lusts may be

strong upon them also. It is observable that James saith, `Every man is

tempted,, taking in the godly too. A wicked man doth nothing but

sin--his works are merely evil; but a godly man,s are not purely good:

Rom. vii. 19, `The good that I would I do not do; but the evil that I

would not, that I do., Though they do not resolve and harden their

faces in a way of sin, yet they may be discouraged in a way of grace.

So Gal. v. 17, `Ye cannot do the things that ye would., Their

resolutions are broken by this violence and potent opposition.

Secondly, Observe, the next way of lust is by flattery, deleazomenos,

enticed. It cometh lapped up in the bait of pleasure, and that mightily

prevaileth with men: Titus iii. 3, `Serving divers lusts and

pleasures., That is one of the impediments of conversion--lust

promiseth delight and pleasure; so Job xx. 12, `Wickedness is sweet in

his mouth, and he hideth it under his tongue., It is an allusion to

children, that hide a sweet morsel under their tongue, lest they should

let it go too soon. Neither is this only meant of sensual wickedness,

such as is conversant about meats, drinks, and carnal comforts; but

spiritual, as envy, malice, griping plots to undo and oppress others:

Prov. ii. 14, `They rejoice to do evil, and delight in the frowardness

of the wicked,, Revenge is sweet, oppression is sweet, to a carnal

heart; so Prov. x. 23, `It is a sport to a fool to do mischief., They

are enticed with a kind of pleasure of that which is mischievous to

another. Well, then:--

1. Learn to suspect things that are too delightful. Carnal objects

tickle much, and beget an evil delight, and so fasten upon the soul. It

is time to `put a knife to the throat `when you begin to be tickled

with the sweets of the world. Your foot is in the snare when the world

cometh in upon you with too much delight. That which you should look

after in the creatures is their usefulness, not their

pleasantness--that is the bait of lust. The philosopher could say, that

natural desires are properly pro`s ta` anankaia, to what is necessary.

[96] Solomon saith, Prov. xxiii. 31, `Look not upon the wine when it is

red, when it giveth its colour in the cup, when it moveth itself

right., You need not create allurements to your fancy, and by the eye

invite the taste. There are stories of heathens that would not look

upon excellent beauties lest they should be ensnared. Pleasures are but

enticements, baits that have hooks under them. The harlot,s lips drop

honey in the greeting, and wormwood in the parting, Prov. vii.; like

John,s book, honey in the mouth, and wormwood in the bowels. God hath

made man of such a nature that all carnal delights leave impressions of

sorrow at their departure.

2. Learn what need there is of great care. Pleasure is one of the baits

of lust. The truth is, all sins are rooted in love of pleasure.

Therefore be watchful. Noonday devils are most dangerous, and such

things do us most mischief as betray us with smiles and kisses.

Heathens were out that advised to pleasures, that by experience we

might be weaned from them; as Tully [97] saith of youth, voluptates

experiendo contemnat--by use of pleasures let us learn to disdain them,

as the desires are deadened and flattened to an accustomed object. But,

alas! this is the bait of lust rather than the cure. Poor souls! they

did not know a more excellent way. It is true, some curiosity is

satisfied by experience: but, however, the spirit groweth more sottish

and sensual. Wicked men, when once they are taken in that snare, are in

a most sad condition, and think that they can never have enough of

sensual pleasures; all delight seemeth to them too short; as one wished

for a crane,s neck, that he might have the longer relish of meats and

drinks. And Tacitus speaketh of another glutton that, though he could

satisfy his stomach, yet not his fancy or lust; quod edere non potuit,

oculo devoravit--his womb was sooner filled than his eye.

Ver. 15. Then, when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and

sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

Then, when lust, ei'ta de.--After this he goeth on in describing the

progress of sin: after that lust had by violence withdrawn, and by

delight ensnared, the soul, then sin is conceived; and after

conception, there is a bringing forth; and after the birth, death.

Hath conceived; that is, as soon as sin beginneth to form motions and

impulses into desires, and to ripen things into a consent; for sin, or

corrupt nature, having inclined the soul unto a carnal object by carnal

apprehensions, laboureth to fix the soul in an evil desire. Now the

titillation or delight which ariseth from such carnal thoughts and

apprehensions is called the conception of sin.

It bringeth forth; that is, perfecteth sin, and bringeth it to effect

within us, by a full consent and decree in the will; and without us, by

an actual execution. The one is the forming and cherishing in the womb

after conception; the other, as the birth and production.

Sin; that is, actual sin; for the Papists go beside the scope when they

infer hence that lust without consent is not truly sin. Our Saviour

saith plainly, that the first titillations are sinful: Mat. v. 28,

`Whoever looketh upon a woman to lust after her, hath committed

adultery with her already in his heart., Though there be but such an

imperfect consent as is occasioned by a glancing thought, it is

adultery. But you will say, How is this place to be reconciled with

that of Paul, Rom. vii. 8, where he saith, `Sin wrought in him all

manner of lust;, and here it is said, `Lust bringeth forth sin., I

answer--By sin Paul understandeth that which James calleth here lust,

that is, evil nature, or the wicked bent of the spirit; and by lust,

the actual excitation of evil nature: but by sin James understandeth

the actual formation and accomplishment of those imperfect desires that

are in the soul.

And sin, when it is finished; that is, actually accomplished, and by

frequent acts strengthened, and settled into a habit. But why doth the

apostle say, `When it is finished,? Are all the rest venial--all

corrupt motions till sin be drawn either to a full consent, or an

actual accomplishment, or a perfect habit. I answer--;(1.) The apostle

doth not distinguish between sin and sin, but speaketh of the entire

course and method of the same sin, of the whole flux and order, and so

rather showeth what death and hell followeth, than how it is deserved.

Every sin is mortal in its own nature, and bindeth over the sinner

to^death and punishment; but usually men consummate and perfect sin ere

it lighteth upon them. (2.) Death may be applied as the common fruit to

every degree in this series, to the conception as well as the

production, and to the production as well as the consummation of it.

The grandfather and great-grandfather have an interest in the child, as

well as the immediate parent; and death is a brat that may be laid, not

only at sin,s door, but lust,s. (3.) It is good to note that James

speaketh here according to the appearance of things to men. When lust

bringeth forth, and the birth and conceptions of the soul are perfected

into a scandalous gross sin, men are sensible of the danger and merit

of it.

Bringeth forth; that is, bindeth the soul over to it; for in this

succession there is a difference: lust is the mother of sin, but sin is

the merit of death; and so Cajetan glosseth well, generat meritori�, it

bringeth forth, as the work yieldeth the wages.

Death. It is but a modest word for damnation; the first and second

death are both implied: for as the apostle showeth the supreme cause of

sin, which is lust; so the last and utmost result of it, which is

death; not only that which is temporal, for then the series would not

be perfect, but that other death, which we are always dying, and is

called death, because life is neither desired, nor can it properly be

said to be enjoyed. Vivere nolunt, mori nesciunt--they would not live,

and cannot die.

The notes are these:

Obs. 1. That sin encroacheth upon the spirit by degrees; the apostle

goeth on with the pedigree of it. Lust begetteth strong and vigorous

motions, or pleasing and delightful thoughts, which draw the mind to a

full and clear consent; and then sin is hatched, and then disclosed,

and then strengthened, and then the person is destroyed. To open the

process or successive inclination of the soul to sin, it will not be

amiss to give the whole traverse of any practical matter in the soul.

There is first o'rexis, which is nothing but the irritation of the

object, provoking the soul to look after it; then there is o'rme, a

motion of the sensitive appetite, or lower soul, which, receiving

things by the fancy, representeth them as a sensual good; and so a man

inclineth to them, according as they are more or less pleasant to the

senses; and then the understanding cometh to apprehend them, and the

will inclineth, at least so far as to move the understanding to look

more after them, and to advise about some likely means to accomplish

and effect them, which is called bou'lesis, consultation; and when the

understanding hath consulted upon the motion of the will, there

followeth bou'le, a decree of the will about it, and then ai'resi, the

actual choice of the thing, and then ^ov\^^a, a perfect desire, and

then action. And so sin is represented by the fancy to the appetite;

and then fancy, being a friend, blindeth the understanding, and then

the soul beginneth to be engaged in the pursuit of it. If this course

and method be a little too large for your thoughts, see it contracted

in this passage of our apostle. There is concupiscence, or corrupt

nature, then lust, or some inclinations of the soul to close with sin,

then delight, then full consent, and then action, and then death. David

observeth somewhat a like progress: Ps. i. 1, `Blessed is the man that

walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of

sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful., Sin is never at a

stay: first, ungodly, then sinners, then scorners; first, counsels,

then way, then seat; and again, first, walk, then stand, then sit. You

see distinctly there three different terms for the persons, the

objects, the actions: first, men like wickedness, then they walk in it,

then are habituated: first, men are withdrawn into a way of sin, then

confirmed, then profess it. To do anything that the Lord hateth, is to

`walk in the counsels of the ungodly;, to go on with delight, is to

`stand in the way of sinners;, to harden our hearts against checks of

conscience and reproofs, is to commence into the highest degree, and to

`sit,, as it is there expressed, `in the seat of scorners;, or, as it

is in the Septuagint, ton loimon, to affect the honour of the chair of

pestilence. Thus you see men go on from assent to delight, from delight

to obduracy.

Use 1. Oh that we were wise, then, to rise against sin betimes! That we

would `take the little foxes,, Cant. ii. 15; even the first appearances

of corruption! That we would `dash Babylon,s brats against the stone!,

Ps. cxxxvii. Hugo,s gloss is pious, though not so suitable to the scope

of that place: sit nihil in te Bdbylonicum--the least of Babylon must

be checked; not only the grown men, but dash the little ones against

the stone. A Christian,s life should be spent in watching lust. The

debates of the soul are quick, and soon ended, and, without the mercy

of God, that may be done in little more than an instant that may undo

us for ever. It is dangerous to `give place to Satan,, Eph. iv. 27. The

devil will draw us from motions to action, and from thence to

reiteration, till our hearts be habituated and hardened within us:

Eccles. x. 13, `The beginning of a foolish man,s speech is foolishness,

but the latter end is foolish madness., From folly they go on to

downright passion. Small breaches in a sea-bank occasion the ruin of

the whole, if not timely repaired. Sin gaineth upon us by insensible

degrees, and those that are once in Satan,s snare are soon taken by him

at his will and pleasure.

Use 2. It reproveth them that boldly adventure upon a sin because of

the smallness of it; besides, the offence done to God, in standing with

him for a trifle, as the `selling of the righteous, is aggravated in

the prophet by the little advantage, `for a pair of shoes., Consider

the danger to yourselves. Great faults do not only ruin the soul, but

lesser; dallying with temptations is of a sad consequence. Caesar was

killed with bodkins. Look, as it is murder to stifle an infant in the

womb, so it is spiritual murder to suppress and choke the conceptions

of the Spirit; [98] but, on the other side, it is but a necessary

rigour to dash Babylon,s brats, and to suppress sin in the conception

and growth, ere it be ripened and perfected. We are so far to abhor sin

as to beware of the remote tendencies; yea, to avoid `the occasions of

it,, 1 Thes. v. 22. If it be but mal� coloratum, as Bernard glosseth,

of an ill look and complexion, it is good to stand at a distance.

Obs. 2. Lust is fully conceived and formed in the soul, when the will

is drawn to consent; the decree in the will is the ground of all

practice. Look, as duties come off kindly when once there is a decree

in the will: Ps. xxxii. 5, `I said I will confess my transgressions

unto the Lord., David had gotten his will to consent to acts of

repentance, and then he could no longer keep silence: so, on the other

side, all acts of sin are founded in the fixed choice and resolution of

the will. `I will pursue, I will overtake,, said mad Pharaoh, Exod. xv.

9; and that engaged him in acts of violence. Now this decree of the

will is most dangerous in the general choice of our way and course; for

as religion lieth in the settled resolution of the soul, when we make

it our work and business, as Barnabas exhorted the new converts, `that

with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord,, Acts xi. 23, te

prothesi tes kardias, that they would resolvedly decree for God in the

will; so, when the apostle speaketh of his holy manner of life, he

calleth it prothesin, his purpose, 2 Tim. iii. 10. So also the state of

sin lieth in a worldly or carnal choice; as the apostle saith, 1 Tim.

vi. 9, `He that will be rich;, that is, that hath decreed and fixed a

resolution in his soul to make it his only study and care to grow rich

and get an estate, he is altogether carnal. A child of God may be

overborne, but usually he doth not fix his will: Rom. vii. 16, `I do

that which I would not;, or, if his will be set, yet there is not a

full consent, for there will be continual dislikes from the new nature.

I confess sometimes, as there is too much of deliberation and counsel

in the sins of God,s children (as you know David,s sin was a continued

series and plot), so too much of resolution and the will; but this is

in acts of sin, not in the course and state; their manner of life and

purpose is godly. Well, then, if lust hath insinuated into your

thoughts, labour to keep it from a decree, and gaining the consent of

the will. Sins are the more heinous as they are the more resolved and

voluntary.

Obs. 3. What is conceived in the heart is usually brought forth in the

life and conversation. `Lust, when it hath conceived, bringeth forth

sin., That is the reason why the apostle Peter directeth a Christian to

spend the first care about the heart: 1 Peter ii. 11, 12, `Abstain from

fleshly lusts,, and then `have your conversations honest., As long as

there is lust in the heart, there will be no cleanness in the

conversation; as worms in wood will at length cause the rottenness to

appear. How soon do lusts bewray themselves! Pride runneth into the

eyes, therefore we read of `haughty eyes,, Prov. vi. 17, or into the

feet, causing a strutting gait or gesture. A wanton mind peepeth out

through wanton eyes and a gazing look. A garish, frothy spirit

bewrayeth itself in the vanity of apparel, and a filthy heart in the

rottenness of communication; the eyes, the feet, the tongue, the life

do easily bewray what is seated in the heart. Momus, in the fable,

quarrelled with God for not making a window at every man,s breast, that

others might see what was in it. There needeth no such discovery. Time

showeth what births there are in the womb; so will the life what lusts

are conceived and fostered in the heart, for lust delighteth to bring

forth. Well, then:--

1. Learn that hypocrites cannot always be hidden, disguises will fall

off. Men flatter themselves in their hidden sins, but they will be

`found hateful,, Ps. xxxvi. 2; that is, scandalous and inconvenient.

God hath peremptorily determined that `their wickedness shall be showed

before the congregation,, Prov. xxvi. 26. Some misbehaviour will bring

it to light; art and fiction is not durable. The apostle saith, 1 Tim.

v. 25, `They that are otherwise cannot be hidden;, that is, otherwise

than good.

2. Learn the danger of neglecting lusts and thoughts. If these be not

suppressed, they will ripen into sins and acts of filthiness. While we

are negligent and our care is intermitted, the business of sin thriveth

and goeth on. Allowed thoughts bring the mind and the temptation

together. David mused on Bathsheba,s beauty, and so was all on fire. It

is ill dallying with thoughts.

3. Learn what a mercy it is to be hindered of our evil intentions, that

sinful conceptions are still-born, and when we wanted no lust we should

want an occasion. Mere restraints are a blessing. We are not so evil as

otherwise we would be. Lust would bring forth. God would have Abimelech

to acknowledge mercy in a restraint: Gen. xx. 6, `I withheld thee from

sinning against her., David blessed God that the rash executions of his

rage were prevented: `Blessed be the God of Israel, which sent thee to

meet me this day,, 1 Sam. xxv. 32. God smote Paul from his horse, and

so took him off from persecution, when his heart boiled with rancour

and malice against the saints, Acts ix. Oh! take notice of such

instances when your way of sin hath been hedged up by providence, Hosea

ii. 6; and though lusts be not checked, yet the execution is

disappointed: you were mad, and should have gone on furiously, but that

God `fenced up your way with thorns.,

Obs. 4. That the result and last effect of sin is death; so the apostle

Paul, Rom. vi. 21, `The end of these things is death., It cometh with a

pleasing and delightful sweetness, promising nothing but satisfaction

and contentment, but the end is death. So Ezek. xviii. 4, `The soul

that sinneth it shall die., It is an express law that brooketh only the

exception of free grace; it shall die temporally, die eternally. This

is a principle impressed upon nature; the very heathens were sensible

of it: Rom. i. 32, `Knowing that they which commit such things are

worthy of death., Mark, the apostle saith the heathens knew it.

Conscience, being sensible of the wrong done to the godhead, could fear

nothing less from angry justice. Draco, the rigid law giver, being

asked why, when sins were equal, [99] he appointed death to all?

answered, He knew that sins were not all equal, but he knew the least

deserved death. This was that that made the heathens at such a loss for

a satisfaction to divine justice, because they could find none

sufficient to redeem their guilty souls from the dread of death; and

therefore the first effect of the blood of Christ upon the conscience

is `purging from dead works,, Heb. ix. 14; that is, from that sentence

of death which the conscience receiveth by reason of our works. The

Papists on this point, worse than the heathen, hold some sins venial in

their own nature. It is true, it is said, 1 John v. 17, `There is a sin

not unto death;, but that place speaketh of the event, not the merit;

words, evil thoughts, the least sins, deserve death. Do not think God

will be [100] so extreme. If you have no better plea, that will be a

sorry refuge in the day of wrath. David a Mauden, [101] a learned

Papist, saith, Those sins are only to be counted mortal--;(1.) Which

are said to be an abomination to God, and hated by him, in scripture;

(2.) To which a Voe, or woe, is expressly denounced; or (3.), Are

distinctly said to be worthy of eternal death; or (4.) To exclude and

shut out from the kingdom of heaven; or (5.) Such as by the law of

nature are directly repugnant to the love of God or our neighbour. But,

alas! all this is to be wise without the word. It is true God hath

expressly declared more of his displeasure against these sins than

others, and therefore we are more ^ound and engaged to avoid them, but

they are all mortal in their merit.

Use 1. It teacheth us how to stop the violence of lust; this will be

death and damnation. Oh! consider it, an^l se t it as a flaming sword

in the way of your carnal delights. Observe how wisely God hath ordered

it, much of sin is pleasant; ay! but there is death in the pot, and so

fear may counterbalance delight. Another part of sin is serious, as

worldliness, in which there is no gross act, and so there being nothing

foul to work upon shame, there is something dreadful to work upon fear.

Well, then, awaken the soul; consider what Wisdom saith, Prov. viii.

36, `He that forsaketh me loveth death., It is against nature for a

creature to love its own death; all natural motions are for

self-preservation. Oh! why then should I satisfy my flesh to endanger

my soul? God himself puts on a passion, and reasoneth thus with us,

Ezek. xxxiii. 11, `Why will ye die, O house of Israel?, Why will you

wilfully throw away your own souls? Why will ye for a superfluous cup

adventure to drink a cup of wrath unmixed? For a little estate in the

world make hell your portion? It is sweet for the present, but it will

be death. Sin,s best are soon spent, the worst is always behind.

Use 2. It showeth what reason we have to mortify sin lest it mortify

us; no sins are mortal but such as are not mortified; either sin must

die, or the sinner. The life of sin and the life of a sinner are like

two buckets in a well--if the one goeth up the other must come down.

When sin liveth the sinner must die. There is an evil in sin and an

evil after sin. The evil in sin is the violation of God,s law, and the

evil after sin is the just punishment of it. Now, those that are not

sensible of the evil in sin shall be sensible of the evil after sin. To

the regenerate person, all God,s dispensations are to save the person

and destroy the sin, Ps. xcix. 8: `Thou wast a God that forgavest them,

and tookest vengeance of their inventions., God spared the sinner and

took vengeance on the sin; but the unmortified person spareth his sins,

and his life goeth for it; as the apostle Paul speaketh of himself when

the power of the word came first upon him, Rom. vii. 9, `Sin revived

and I died., Sin was exasperated, and he felt nothing but terror and

condemnation. Oh! then, consider it is better sin should be condemned

than you should be condemned; as the apostle speaketh of the

condemnation of sin, Rom. viii. 3, `For sin, he condemned sin in the

flesh;, that is, Christ being made a sacrifice for sin, sin was

condemned to save the sinner. Reason thus within yourselves: It is

better sin should die than I should die: `Thy life goes for its life,,

as it is in the prophet,s parable, 1 Kings xx. 39; therefore let me

destroy my sin, that my soul may escape.

Use 3. Bless God that hath delivered you out of a sinful state; your

soul hath escaped a snare of death. Oh! never look back upon Sodom but

with detestation; bless God that you are escaped: `Blessed be the Lord

that gave me counsel in my reins,, Ps. xvi. 7. I might have been

Satan,s bond-slave, lust,s vassal, and have earned no other wages but

my own death, but he hath called me to life and peace. Conversion is

onewhere expressed by a `calling out of darkness into a marvellous

light,, that is much; but in another, by a `translating from death to

life,, that is more. It is no less a change than from death to life. I

might have wasted away my days in pleasure and vanity, and afterwards

gone to hell. `Oh! blessed be the name of God for evermore, that hath

delivered me from so great a death!,

Ver. 16. Do not err, my beloved brethren.

The apostle having disputed the matter with them about God being the

author of sin, he dissuadeth them from this blasphemy. There is no

difficulty in this verse.

Do not err, me planasthe, do not wander; a metaphor taken from sheep,

and sometimes it noteth errors in practice, or going off from the word

as a rule of righteousness, as it is said, Isa. lxiii. 17, `We have

erred from thy ways;, sometimes errors in judgment, or going off from

the word as the standard and measure of truth, which we most commonly

express by this term `error.,

My beloved brethren.--Dealing with them about an error, he dealeth with

them very meekly, and therefore is the compilation so loving and sweet.

This verse will afford some points.

Obs. 1. It is not good to brand things with the name of error till we

have proved them to be so. After he had disputed the matter with them,

he saith, `Err not., (1.) Loose slings will do no good. To play about

us with terms of heresy and error doth but prejudice men,s minds, and

exulcerate them against our testimony. None but fools will be afraid of

hot words. Discoveries do far better than invectives. Usually that is a

peevish zeal that stayeth in generals. It is observable, Mat. xxiii.,

from ver. 13 to 33, our Saviour denounceth never a woe but he presently

rendereth a reason for it. `Woe unto you, for ye shut the kingdom of

heaven;, and again, `Woe unto you, for ye devour widows, houses,, &c.

You never knew a man gained by loose slings. The business is to make

good the charge, to discover what is heresy and what is

antichristianism, &c. (2.) This is an easy way to blemish the holy

truths of God. How often do the Papists spread that livery upon us,

heretics and schismatics. They `speak evil of things they do not know,,

Jude 10. When men are loath to descend to the trial of a way, they

blemish it: Acts xxiv. 14, `After the way which they call heresy we

worship the God of our fathers., Men condemn things suddenly and

rashly, and so often truth is miscalled. If matters were dispatched by

arguments rather than censures, we should have less differences. The

most innocent truths may suffer under an odious imputation. The spouse

had her veil taken from her, and represented to the world as a

prostitute, Cant. iii. The Christians were called Genus hominum

superstitionis malificae, [102] a wicked sort of men, and Christianity

a witchery and superstition.

Use. Oh! then, that in this age we would practise this: Be less in

passion and more in argument. That we would condemn things by reasoning

rather than miscalling. That we were less in generals, and would deal

more particularly. This is the way to `stablish men in the present

truth., In morals, the word seldom doth good but when it is brought

home to the very case. Thunder at a distance doth not move us so much

as a clap in our own zenith; that maketh us startle. General invectives

make but superficial impressions; show what is an error, and then call

it so. Truly that was the way in ancient times. At first, indeed, for

peace, sake, some [103] have observed that the fathers declaimed

generally against errors about the power of nature, not meddling with

the persons or particular tenets of Pelagius and his disciples; but

afterward they saw cause for being more particular. Loose discourses

lose their profit. Blunt iron, that toucheth many points at once, doth

not enter, but make a bruise; but a needle, that toucheth but one

point, entereth to the quick. When we come to deal particularly with

every man,s work, then the fire trieth it, 1 Cor. iii. 13. I do the

rather urge this because usually ungrounded zeal stayeth in generals,

and those that know least are most loose and invective in their

discourses.

Obs. 2. We should as carefully avoid errors as vices; a blind eye is

worse than a lame foot, yea, a blind eye will cause it; he that hath

not light is apt to stumble: Rom. i. 26 , first they were given up, eis

noun ado'kimon, `to a vain mind,, and then `to vile affections., Some

opinions seem to be remote, and to lie far enough from practice, and

yet they have an influence upon it; they make the heart foolish, and

then the life will not be right. There is a link and cognation between

truth and truth, as there is between grace and grace; and therefore

speculative errors do but make way for practical. Again, there are some

errors that seem to encourage strictness, as free-will, universal

grace, &c.; but, truly weighed, they are the greatest discouragement;

and therefore it hath been the just judgment of God that the broachers

of such opinions have been most loose in life, and (as the apostle

Peter maketh it the character of all erroneous persons, 2 Peter ii.)

vain and sensual. The apostle Paul presseth strictness, and our work

the more earnestly, because God must work all, Phil. ii. 12, 13. Well,

then, beware of erroneous conceits; your spirit is embased by them. Men

think nothing is to be shunned but what is foul in act, and so publicly

odious. Consider, there is `filthiness in the spirit, as well as `in

the flesh,, 2 Cor. vii. 1; and a vain mind is as bad and as odious to

God as a vicious life. Error and idolatry will be as dangerous as

drunkenness and whoredom; and therefore you should as carefully avoid

them that would entice you to errors, as those that will draw you to

sin and profaneness; for error, being the more plausible of the two,

the delusion is the more strong: natural conscience will smite for

profaneness. Many, I am persuaded, dally with opinions, because they do

not know the dangerous result of them: all false principles have a

secret but pestilent influence on the life and conversation.

Obs. 3. Do not err; that is, do not mistake in this matter, because it

is a hard thing to conceive how God concurreth to the act, and not to

the evil of the act; how he should be the author of all things, and not

the author of sin: therefore he saith, however it be difficult to

conceive, yet `Do not err., The note is, that where truths cannot be

plainly and easily made out to the apprehension, men are apt to swerve

from them. Many truths suffer much because of their intricacy , errors

may be so near alike that it is hard to distinguish them: the nature of

man is prone to error, and therefore when the truth is hard to find

out, we content ourselves with our own prejudices. All truths are

encumbered with such a difficulty that they which have a mind to doubt

and wrangle do easily stumble at it: John vi. 60, `This is a hard

saying; who can hear it?, that is, understand it; and then, ver. 66,

`From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more

with him., When there is something to justify our prejudices, we think

we are safe enough. God leaveth justly such difficulties for a

stumbling-block to them that have a mind to be offended. The Pharisees

and people that had followed Christ thought themselves well enough,

because of the darkness of those expressions, as if it did justify

their apostasy; so when there are some involucra veritatis, some covers

of difficulty, in which truth is lapped up from a common eye, we think

our assent may be excused: as Jews say, that surely Christ was not the

Messiah, because he did not come in such a way as to satisfy all his

own countrymen; so many refuse truth because it will require some

industry and exercise to find it out. God never meant to satisfy

hominibus praefracti ingenii, [104] men of a captious and perverse wit;

and therefore truth is represented in such a manner, that though there

be plainness enough to those that have a mind to know, yet difficulty

enough to harden others to their own ruin. Men would fain spare the

pains of prayer, study, and discourse; they are loath to `cry for

knowledge, to dig for it as for silver,, Prov. ii. 4; they love an

easy, short way to truth, and therefore run away with those mistakes

which come next to hand, vainly imagining that God doth not require

belief to such things as are difficult and hard to be understood; they

do not look to what is sound and solid, but what is plausible, and at

first blush reconcilable with their thoughts and apprehensions.

Use 1. You see, then, what need you have to pray for gifts of

interpretation, and a `door of utterance, for your ministers, and a

knowing heart for yourselves, that you may not be discouraged by the

difficulties that fence up the way of truth. Pray that God would give

us a clear spirit, a plain expression, and yourselves a right

understanding; this will be better than to cavil at the dispensation of

God, that he should leave the world in such doubt and suspense.

Chrysostom observeth, that the saints do not pray, Lord, make a plainer

law, but, Lord, open my eyes, that I may see the wonders of thy law; as

David doth. It were an unjust demand for blind men, or they that

willingly shut their eyes, to desire God to make such a sun that they

might see; it is better to desire gifts of the Spirit for the minister,

that the scriptures might be opened; and the grace of the Spirit for

ourselves, that our understandings might be opened, that so we may come

to discern the mind of God.

Use 2. It showeth how much they are to blame that darken truth, and

make the things of God the more obscure. `They darken counsel by

words,, that by method or manner of speaking perplex the understanding,

that people can hardly reach the letter of things delivered. Many men

have a faculty to raise a cloud of dust with their own feet, and so

darken the brightness and glory of the scriptures; certainly such men

either envy the commonness of knowledge, or serve their own esteem,

when they draw all things to a difficulty, and would seem to swim

there, where they may easily wade, yea, pass over dry-shod.

Obs. 4. Again, from that do not err. Take in the weightiness of the

matter. Ah! would you err in this point, in a business that doth so

deeply intrench upon the honour of God? The mistake being so dangerous,

he is the more earnest. Oh! do not err. The note is, that errors about

the nature of God are very dangerous. There is nothing more natural to

us than to have ill thoughts of God, and nothing more dangerous; all

practice dependeth upon it, to keep the glory of God unstained in your

apprehensions. You shall see, Rom. i. 23, 24, `They changed the glory

of God,, &c., and then `God gave them up to uncleanness., Idolatry is

often expressed by whoredom; bodily and spiritual uncleanness usually

go together: ill thoughts of God debauch the spirit, and make men lose

their sense and care of piety. Well, then, take heed of erring this

error: let not the nature or glory of God be blemished in your

thoughts; abhor whatever cometh into your mind, or may be suggested by

others, if it tend any way to abate your esteem of God, or to eclipse

the divine glory in your apprehensions.

06s. 5. From that my beloved brethren. Gentle dealing will best become

dissuasives from error. One saith, we must speak to kings, phe'masi

bussi'oois, with silken words. Certainly we had need to use much

tenderness to persons that differ from us, speak to them in silken

words. Where the matter is like to displease, the manner should not be

bitter: pills must be sugared, that they may down the better: many a

man hath been lost through violence: you engage them to the other

party. As Tertullian, when he had spoken favourably of the Montanists,

by the violence of the priests of Rome he was forced into their

fellowship. [105] Meekness may gain those that are not engaged. Men of

another party will think all is spoken out of rage and anger against

them; it is good to give them as little cause as may be, especially if

but inclining through weakness to an error. Oh! `do not err, my beloved

brethren., I would to God we could learn this wisdom in this age: 2

Tim. ii. 25, `In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if

peradventure God will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the

truth., Others will brook sharpness better than they: every man that is

of a contrary opinion thinketh feat he hath the advantage ground of

another, as being in the right; and pride is always touchy. Outward

gross sins fill the soul with more shame, and upon conviction there is

not that boldness of reply; for a man is so far under another as he may

be reproved by him: but now here, where every man thinketh himself upon

equal or higher terms, we had need deal the more meekly, lest pride

take prejudice, and, out of a distaste of the manner, snuff at the

matter itself: but of this elsewhere.

Ver. 17. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and

cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness,

neither shadow of turning.

He taketh occasion from the former matter, which was to show you that

God was not the author of sin, to show you that God is the author of

all good, especially the spiritual gifts and graces bestowed on us; in

which there is an argument secretly couched: the author of all good

cannot be the author of evil. Now `every good and perfect gift, is of

God; and because the argument should be the more strong by an allusion

to the sun, he representeth God, in the latter part of the verse, as

essentially and immutably good.

Every good gift.--The vulgar readeth `the best gift,, properly enough

to the sense, but not to the original words. The gift is called good,

either--;(1.) To exclude those gifts of Satan which are indeed injuries

rather than gifts: a blind mind, 2 Cor. iv. 4; unruly affections, Eph.

ii. 2. These gifts, that are from beneath, are not good. (2.) To note

the kind of gifts which he speaketh of; not common mercies, but good

gifts, such as the apostle calleth elsewhere pneumatika`s eulogias,

`spiritual blessings,, Eph. i. 3. It is true all common gifts come from

the divine bounty; but the apostle intendeth here special blessings, as

appeareth partly by the attributes `good, and `perfect., It is true

some distinguish between the two clauses, dosis agathe, or `good gift,,

to imply earthly blessings, and dorema teleion `perfect gift,, to imply

heavenly or spiritual blessings; but I suppose that is too curious.

These two words imply the same mercies with a different respect, as by

and by; partly because such mercies suit with the context, look upon it

forward or backward. In the foregoing verses he speaketh about God

being the author of sin, and no argument is so fit to batter down that

conceit as that God is the author of special and saving grace; and in

the following verse he instanceth in regeneration, partly because those

mercies are most clearly from God, and need little of the concurrence

of second causes.

And every perfect gift; that is, such as do anyway conduce to our

perfection, not only initial and first grace, but all the progresses in

the spiritual life, and at last perfection and eternal life itself, are

the gift of God. Though eternal death be a wages, yet eternal life is a

gift; and therefore the apostle diversifieth the phrase when he

compareth them both together, Rom. vi. 23. The sum is, that not only

the beginning, but all the gradual accesses from grace to glory, are by

gift, and from the free mercy of God.

Is from above; that is, from heaven. The same phrase is else where

used: John iii. 21, `He that cometh from above is above all;, that is,

from heaven. And heaven is put for God, as Luke xv. 21, `I have sinned

against heaven, and against thee;, that is, against God and his earthly

father. And I suppose there is some special reason why our blessings

are said to be from above, because they were designed there, and

thither is their aim and tendency, and there are they perfectly

enjoyed; and therefore, Eph. i. 3, are we said to be `blessed with

spiritual blessings in heavenly places;, therefore `in heavenly

places,, because thence was their original, and there is their

accomplishment.

And descendeth or cometh down; not `falleth down,, to show (saith

Aquinas) that we have not blessings by chance, but in the way of

regular means.

From the Father of lights; that is, from God. The word father is often

used for the author or first cause, as Gen. iv. 20, 21, `The father of

such as dwell in tents;, `the father of those that handle the harp;,

that is, the author and founder. So God is elsewhere called `Father of

spirits,, Heb. xii. 9, because they do not run in the material channel

of a fleshly descent, but are immediately created by God. Well, but

what is meant by Father of lights? Some conceive that it intendeth no

more but `glorious Father,, as it is usual with the Hebrews to put the

genitive case for an epithet, and the genitive plural for the

superlative degree. But I conceive rather God is here spoken of in

allusion to the sun, who deriveth and streameth out his light to all

the stars; and so God, being the author of all perfections, which are

also signified and expressed by light, is called here `The Father of

lights., Therefore it is usual in the scriptures to attribute light to

God and darkness to the devil; as Luke xxii. 53, `This is your hour,

the power of darkness;, that is, of Satan. More of this term in the

points.

With whom is no variableness, parallage.--It is an astronomical word or

term, taken from the heavenly bodies, which suffer many declinations

and revolutions which they call parallaxes, a word that hath great

affinity with this used by the apostle. The heavenly lights have their

vicissitudes, eclipses, and decreases; but our sun shineth always with

a like brightness and glory.

Neither shadow of turning, tropes aposkiasma.--The allusion is

continued. Stars, according to their different light and posture, have

divers adumbrations; as, the nearer the sun is to us, the less shadow

it casteth; the farther off, the greater: so that we know the various

motions and turning of the sun by the difference of the shadows. But

the Father of spiritual lights is not like the father or fountain of

bodily: with him is no shadow of turning; that is, he is without any

motion or change, any local accesses and recesses, remaineth always the

same. This is a sun that doth not set or rise, cannot be overcast or

eclipsed.

The notes are these:--

Obs. 1. That all good things are from above; they come to us from God.

Mere evil is not from above; `the same fountain doth not yield sweet

and bitter waters., God is good, and immutably good, and therefore it

cannot be from him, which was Plato,s argument. Evils do not come from

God, because he is good; which reasoning is true, if it be understood

of evils of sin; for otherwise, `Shall there be evil in a city and the

Lord hath not done it?, Amos iii. 6. But for good that floweth clearly

from the upper spring, there are indeed some pipes and conveyances, as

the word, and prayer, and the seals; and for ordinary blessings, your

industry and care. But your fresh springs are in God; and in all these

things we must, as chickens, sip and look upwards. It is, I confess,

the waywardness of flesh and blood to look to the next hand, as

children thank the tailor for the new coat, and suffer the immediate

helps to intercept their trust and respects; and therefore God often

curseth the means, and blasteth our endeavours. The divine jealousy

will not brook a rival. God delighteth in this honour of being the sole

author of all our good, and therefore cannot endure that we should give

it to another. When God was about to work miracles by Moses, hand, he

first made it leprous, Exod. iv. 6. There he was aforehand with this

sin; first or last, the hand of the creature is made leprous. This

note, that God is the author of all the good that is in us, is useful

to prevent many corruptions; as, (1.) Glorying in ourselves. Who would

magnify himself in that which is from above? We count it odious for a

man to set out himself in another man,s work and glory; as the apostle

saith, 2 Cor. x. 16, that he would not `boast in another man,s line of

things made ready to his hands., Now, all good is made ready to your

hand; it is the bounty of heaven to you. It is not your line and work,

but God,s. (2.) Insultation, or vaunting it over others. Had we all

from ourselves, the highest might have the highest mind; but `who made

you to differ?, 1 Cor. iv. 7. Carnal and weak spirits feed their lusts

with their enjoyments. A straight pillar, the more you lay upon it, the

straighter it is, and the more stable; but that which is crooked boweth

under its weight: so the more God casteth in upon carnal men, the more

is their spirit perverted. (3.) Envy to those that have received most.

Our eye is evil when God,s hand is good. Envy is a rebellion against

God himself, and the liberty and pleasure of his dispensations. God

distributeth gifts and blessings as he will, not as we will; our duty

is to be contented, and to beg grace to make use of what we have

received.

Obs. 2. Whatever we have from above, we have it in the way of a gift.

We have nothing but `what we have received,, and what we have received

we have received `freely., There is nothing in us that could oblige God

to bestow it; the favours of heaven are not set to sale. When God

inviteth us to mercy, he doth not invite us as a host, but as a king;

not to buy, but to take: they are most welcome that have no money, Isa.

lv. 1; that is, no confidence in their own merits. Some divines say,

that in innocency we could not merit. When the covenant did seem to

hang upon works, we could, in their sense, impetrare, but not

mereri--obtain by virtue of doing, but not deserve. Merit and desert

are improper notions to express the relation between the work of a

creature and the reward of a Creator; and much more incongruous are

they since the fall. Sin, bringing in a contrariness of desert, maketh

mercy much more a gift; so that now in every giving there is somewhat

of. forgiving, and grace is the more obliging because in every blessing

there is not only bounty, but a pardon. It was long since determined by

the schools, that penitents had more reason to be thankful than

innocents, sin giving an advantage to mercy to be doubly free in giving

and pardoning, and so the greater obligation is left upon us. Oh! then,

that we were sensible of this; that in all our actions our principle

might be a sense of God,s love, and our end or motive a sight of God,s

glory.

Obs. 3. That among all the gifts of God, spiritual blessings are the

best: these are called here good and perfect, because these make us

good and perfect. It is very observable that it is said, Mat. vii. 11,

`If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, much

more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that

ask him., Now in the parallel place in Luke xi. 13, it is, give `the

Holy Spirit to them that ask him;, that is the giving of good gifts, to

give the Holy Spirit. Nihil bomim sine summo bono [106] --there can be

nothing good where there is not the Spirit of God: other blessings are

promiscuously dispensed; these are blessings for favourites. The `men

of God,s hand,, Ps. xvii. 14, may have abundance of treasure, that is,

violent, bloody men; but the `men alter God,s heart, have abundance of

the Spirit. A man may be weary of other gifts; an estate may be a

snare, life itself a burden; but you never knew any weary of spiritual

blessings, to whom grace or the love of God was a burden; therefore, it

is `better than life,, Ps. lxiii. 3. Well, then, they are profane

spirits that prefer pottage before a birthright, vain delights before

the good and perfect gifts. David makes a wiser choice in his prayer,

Ps. cvi. 4, `Eemeniber me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest

unto thy people; O visit me with thy salvation., Not every mercy will

content David, but the mercy of God,s own people; not every gift, but

the good and perfect gift. The like prayer is in Ps. cxix. 132, `Look

upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do to those that

love thy name., Mark, not the mercies that he used to bestow upon the

world, but the mercies he used to bestow upon his people and

favourites. No thing but the best mercy will content the best hearts.

Obs. 4. That God is the Father of lights. Light being a simple and

defecate quality, and, of all those which are bodily, most pure and

spiritual, is often put to decipher the essence and glory of God, and

also the essences and perfections of creatures as they are from God.

The essence of God: 1 John i. 5, `God is light, and there is no

darkness in him., There light, being a creature simple and unmixed, is

put to note the simplicity of the divine essence. So also the glory of

God: `He dwelleth in light inaccessible,, 1 Tim. vi. 16; that is, in

inconceivable glory. So Jesus Christ, in regard he received his

personality and subsistence from the Father, is called, in the Nicene

Creed, phos ek photos, eo`s ale'thinos ek theou alethi'nou, `Light of

light, and very God of very God., So also the creatures, as they derive

their perfections from God, are also called lights; as the angels,

`Angels of light,, 2 Cor. xi. 14; the saints, `Children of light,, Luke

xvi. 8. Yea, reasonable creatures, as they have wisdom and

understanding, are said to be lights; so John i. 9, `This is the light

that enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world;, that is, with

the light of reason: all the candles in the world are lighted at this

torch. In short, reason, wisdom, holiness, happiness are often

expressed by light, and they are all from God. As the stars shine with

a borrowed lustre, so do all the creatures; where you meet with any

brightness and excellency in them, remember it is but a streak and ray

of the divine glory. As the star brought the wise men to Christ, so

should all the stars in the world bring up your thoughts to God, who is

`the Fountain and Father of lights., Thus Mat. v. 16, `Let your light

so shine before men, that they, seeing your good works, may glorify,,

not you, but `your Father which is in heaven., If you see a candle bum

brightly and purely, remember it was lighted and en kindled by God. If

there be any light in them, a sight and sense of the mysteries of the

gospel, if they be `burning and shining lights,, if they give out the

flame of a holy conversation, still remember they do but discover that

lustre and glory they received from above. Well, then, if God be the

Father of lights,--

1. It presseth you to apply yourselves to God. If you want the light of

grace, or knowledge, or comfort, you must shine in his beam and be

kindled at his flame. We are dark bodies till the Lord fill us with his

own glory. Oh! how uncomfortable should we be without God. In the night

there is nothing but terror and error; and so it is in the soul without

the light of the divine presence. When the sun is gone the herbs

wither; and when God, who is the sun of spirits, is withdrawn, there is

nothing but discomfort and a sad languishing in. the soul. Oh! pray,

then, that God would shine in upon your soul, not by flashes, but with

a constant light. It is too often thus with us in point of comfort find

grace; holy thoughts arise, and, like a flash of lightning, make the

room bright, but the lightning is gone, and we are as dark as ever. But

when God shineth in by a constant light, then shall we give out the

lustre of a holy conversation: Isa. lx. 1, `Arise and shine; for thy

light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee., We, like

the moon, are dark bodies, and have no light rooted within ourselves;

the Lord must arise upon us ere we can shine. So also in point of

comfort: Ps. xxxiv. 5, `They looked to him and were lightened; their

face was not confounded.,

2. It showeth the reason why wicked men hate God: John iii. 19-21,

`Light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than

light;, and again, `They come not to the light, for their deeds are

evil., Men that delight in darkness cannot endure God, nor any thing

that representeth God. Rachel could not endure Laban,s search, nor

wicked men God,s eye. He is the Father of lights; he hath a discerning

eye, and a discovering beam.

3. It presseth the children of God to walk in all purity and innocency:

`Ye are children of light, walk in the light,, Eph. v. 8. Walk so as

you may resemble the glory of your Father: faults in you, like spots in

the moon, are soon discerned. You that are the lights of the world

should not shine dimly; nay, in the worst times, like stars in the

blackest night, you should shine brightest; therefore the apostle

saith, Phil. ii. 15, `Shine as stars in the midst of a perverse age.,

Obs. 5. That the Lord is unchangeable in holiness and glory; he is a

sun that shineth always with a like brightness. God, and all that is in

God, is unchangeable; for this is an attribute that, like a silken

string through a chain of pearl, runneth through all the rest: his

mercy is unchangeable, `his mercy endureth for ever,, Ps. c. 5. So his

strength, and therefore he is called `The Rock of ages,, Isa. xxvi. 4.

So his counsel, Mutat sententiam, sed non decretum (as Bradwardine); he

may change his sentence, the outward threatening or promise, but not

his inward decree; he may will a change, but not change his will. So

his love is immutable; his heart is the same to us in the diversity of

outward conditions: we are changed in estate and opinion, but God he is

not changed; therefore when Job saith, Job xxx. 21, `Thou art turned to

be cruel,, he speaketh only according to his own feeling and

apprehension. Well, then,--

1. The more mutable you are, the less you are like God. Oh! how should

you loathe yourselves when you are so fickle in your purposes, so

changeable in your resolutions! God is immutably holy, but you have a

heart that loveth to wander. He is always the same, but you are soon

removed, Gal. i. 6;, soon shaken in mind,, 2 Thes. ii. 2; whirried with

every blast, Eph. iv. 14, borne down with every new emergency and

temptation. The more you do `continue in the good that you have learned

and been assured of,, 2 Tim. iii. 14, the more do you resemble the

divine perfection.

2. Go to him to establish and settle your spirits. God, that is

unchangeable in himself, can bring you into an immutable estate of

grace, against which all the gates of hell cannot prevail; therefore be

not quiet, till you have gotten such gifts from him as are without

repentance, the fruits of eternal grace, and the pledges of eternal

glory.

3. Carry yourselves to him as unto an immutable good; in the greatest

change of things see him always the same: when there is little in the

creature, there is as much in God as ever: Ps. cii. 26, 27, `They shall

perish, but thou shalt endure; they shall all wax old as a garment:

thou art the same for ever, and thy years have no end., All creatures

vanish, not only like a piece of cloth, but like a garment. Cloth would

rot of itself, or be eaten out by moths; but a garment is worn and

wasted every day. But God doth not change; there is no wrinkle upon the

brow of eternity; the arm of mercy is not dried up, nor do his bowels

of love waste and spend themselves. And truly this is the church,s

comfort in the saddest condition, that however the face of the

creatures be changed to them, God will be still the same. It is said

somewhere, that `the name of God is as an ointment poured out.,

Certainly this name of God,s immutability is as an ointment poured out,

the best cordial to refresh a fainting soul. When the Israelites were

in distress, all the letters of credence that God would give Moses were

those, Exod. iii. 14, `I am that I am hath sent me unto you., That was

comfort enough to the Israelites, that their God remained in the same

tenor and glory of the divine essence; he could still say I AM. With

God is no change, no past or present; he remaineth in the same

indivisible point of eternity; and therefore saith, I AM. So the

prophet Malachi iii. 6, ego kurios, ouk elloiomai, `I am the Lord, that

change not, (or am not changed);, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not

consumed., Our safety lieth in God,s immutability; we cannot perish

utterly, because he cannot change.

Ver. 18. Of his own good-will begat he us, by the word of truth, tJiat

we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures.

The apostle showeth that his main aim was to set forth God as the

author of spiritual gifts, and therefore instanceth in regeneration.

Of his own good-will, bouletheis.--Because he would, or being willing.

The word is put:--(1.) To deny compulsion or necessity; God needed not

to save any; and (2.) To exclude merit; we could not oblige him to it,

it was merely the good pleasure of God; for this bouletheis is

equivalent to that which Paul calleth eudoki'a, the natural bent,

purpose, and inclination of God,s heart to do the creatures good: Eph.

i. 11, it is called `the counsel of his will,, and elsewhere `abundant

mercy;, 1 Pet. i. 3, `Out of his abundant mercy he hath begotten us to

a lively hope;; in other places `the pleasure of the Father.,

Begat he us.--A word that properly importeth natural generation, and

sometimes it is put for creation; and so as we are men we are said to

be his ge'nos, `his offspring,, Acts xvii. 28; and indeed so some take

it here, applying these words to God,s creating and forming us, and

making men to be his first-fruits, or the choicest piece in the whole

creation; or, as Zoroaster called him, tolmerota'tes tes phu'seos

a'galma, the masterpiece of over-daring nature. But this is beside the

scope; for he speaketh of such a begetting as is `by the word of

truth,, which, in the next verse, he maketh to be an argument of more

conscience and sense of the duty of hearing; therefore begetting is put

to imply the work of grace upon our souls. The same metaphor is

elsewhere used: 1 Peter i. 23 `Being born again, not of corruptible

seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth for ever;,

so 1 Peter i. 3, `Begotten to a lively hope., I have brought these two

places to show you the two parts in the work of grace; the one is qu�

regeneramur, by which we are begotten, the other qu� renascimur, by

which we are born again; the one is God,s act purely, the other

implieth the manifestation of life in ourselves; a distinction that

serveth to clear some controversies in religion: but I go on with my

work.

By the word of truth.--Here is the instrument noted. Those that refer

this verse to the creation, understand it of Jesus Christ, who is the

eternal uncreated Word of the Father, and by him were all things made;

see John i. 1, 2; Heb. i. 3, &c.; but clearly it is meant of the

gospel, which is often called `the word of truth,, and is the ordinary

means whereby God begetteth us to himself.

That we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures.--Those that

apply the verse to the creation say the apostle meaneth here that man

was the choicest, chiefest part of it; for all things were subjected to

him, and put under his feet, Ps. viii. But I conceive it noteth rather

the dignity and prerogative of the regenerate; for as it was the

privilege of the first-fruits of all the sheaves to be consecrated, so

believers and converts among all men were set aside for the uses and

purposes of God. The first-fruits of all things were the Lord,s:--(1.)

Partly to testify his right in that people; (2.) Partly for a witness

of their thankfulness; they having received all from him, were to give

him this acknowledgment: Prov. iii. 9, `Honour the Lord with thy

substance, and with the first-fruits of thy increase;, this was the

honour and homage they were to do to God. Now this is everywhere

attributed to the people of God; as to Israel, because they were God,s

peculiar people, called out from all the nations: Jer. ii. 3, `The

first-fruits of his increase is holiness to the Lord;, that is, of all

people they were dedicated to God. So the holy worshippers, figured by

those virgins in Rev. xiv. 4, are said to be `redeemed from among men,

to be a first-fruits unto God and the Lamb:, these were the chiefest,

Christ,s own portion. So the church is called, Heb. xii. 23, `the

church of the first-born., All the world are as common men; the church

are the Lord,s.

The points are these:--

Obs. 1. That which engaged God to the work of regeneration was merely

his own will and good pleasure: `Of his own will begat he us;, Rom. ix.

18, `He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he

hardeneth., God,s will is the reason of all his actions; you will find

the highest cause to be will, love, and mercy. God can have no higher

motive, nothing without himself, no foresight of faith and works; he

was merely inclined by his own pleasure: John xv. 16, `Ye have not

chosen me, but I have chosen you;, he begins with us first. When Moses

treateth of the cause of God,s love to Israel, he assigneth nothing but

love: Deut. vii. 7, 8, `He loved you, because he loved you;, he had no

motive, and can expect no satisfaction. So Ps. xviii. 19, `He delivered

me, because he delighted in me;, that was all the reason he did it,

because he would do it. So Hosea xiv. 4,; I will love them freely;,

there is the spring and rise of all. This is applicable divers

ways:--(1.) To stir us up to admire the mercy of God, that nothing

should incline and dispose his heart but his own will; the same will

that begat us, passed by others: whom he will he saveth, and whom he

will he hardeneth. Man,s thoughts are very unsober in the inquiry why

God should choose some and leave others: when you have done all, you

must rest in this supreme cause, God,s will and pleasure: Mat. xi. 26,

`Even so, Father, because it pleased thee., Christ himself could give

no other reason, and there is the final result of all disputes. Oh!

admire God, all ye his saints, in his mercy to you; this circumstance

giveth us the purest apprehensions of the freeness of God,s love, when

you see that it was God,s own will that determined mercy to you, and

made the difference between you and others; nay, in some respects, it

puts a difference between you and Christ: eume'neia pa'tros s'

apoktei'nei, allois gi'gnetai soteri'a, [107] the good-will of the

Father slayeth thee, and saveth others; he willed Christ,s death, and

your salvation. In the same verse, Christ,s bruises and our salvation

are called chephers, God,s pleasure: Isa. liii. 10, `It pleased the

Father to bruise him;, and then, `My pleasure,, that is, in the

salvation of the elect, `shall prosper in his hands., (2.) It informeth

us the reason why, in the work of regeneration, God acteth with such

liberty: God acteth according to his pleasure; the Holy One of Israel

must not be limited and confined to our thoughts: John iii. 8, `The

wind bloweth where it listeth., All is not done after one tenor, but

according to the will of the free Spirit; as, in giving means, you must

leave God to his will: there are mighty works in Chorazin and

Bethsaida, when there are none in Tyre and Sidon. Israel had statutes

and ordinances, when all the world had nothing but the glimmering

candle of their own reason. So for the work of the Spirit with the

means, some have only the means, others the work of the Spirit with the

means: John xiv. 22, `How is it that thou wilt reveal thyself unto us,

and not unto the world?, They have choice revelations. The spouse is

brought into the closet, Cant. i. 3, when the virgins, common

Christians, stay only in the palace of the great King. Do but observe

two places: Acts ix. 7, it is said of Paul,s companions, that `they

heard a voice,, and yet, Acts xxii. 9, it is said, `They that were with

him heard not the voice., Solomon Glassius reconcileth these two places

thus: They heard a sound, but they did not hear it distinctly as

Christ,s voice. Some only hear the outward sound, the voice of man, but

not of the Spirit in the word; there is a great deal of difference in

the same auditories. So also for the measure of grace; to some more is

given, to some less; though all have a vital influence, yet all have

not the same measure of arbitrary influences: Phil. ii. 13, `He giveth

both to will and to do, kata` te`n eudokian, according to his good

pleasure., So for the manner; it is very diverse and various. God

beginneth with some in love, with others by terrors, `plucking them out

of the fire., Some are gained by a cross and affliction, others by a

mercy. Some are caught by a holy guile (as the apostle saith of the

Corinthians); others are brought in more sensibly, and with greater

consternation. Upon some the Spirit cometh like a gentle blast, grace

insinuateth itself; upon others like a mighty rushing wind, with

greater terror and enforcement. So for the time; some are longer in the

birth, and wait at the pool for many years; others are surprised and

gained of a sudden: Cant. vi. 12, `Ere I was aware, my soul made me

like the chariots of Amminadib., Therefore we should not limit God to

any one instance, but still wait upon him in the use of means, for his

good pleasure to our souls.

Obs. 2. That the calling of a soul to God is, as it were, a new beget

ting and regeneration. He `begat us;, there must be a new framing and

making, for all is out of order, and there is no active influence and

concurrence of our will; therefore grace is called, 2 Cor. v. 17,

kai'ne kti'sis, `a new creation;, all was a chaos and vast emptiness

before. So elsewhere it is expressed by being `born again,, John iii.

5; and so believers are called Christ,s seed,, Isa. liii. 10. The point

being obvious, I shall the less stay on it. It is useful--;(1.) To show

us the horrible defilement and depravation of our nature; mending and

repairing would not serve the turn, but God must new make and new

create us, and beget us again: like the house infected with leprosy,

scraping will not serve the turn; it must be pulled down, and built up

again. They mince the matter that say of nature as those of the damsel,

`She is not dead, but sleepeth;, as if it were a languor or a swoon

into which Adam and his posterity fell. No; it was a death, and

therefore are those two notions of creation and resurrection solemnly

consecrated by the Spirit of God to express our regeneration or new

birth. (2.) To show us that we are merely passive in our conversion: it

is a begetting, and we (as the infant in the womb) contribute nothing

to our own forming: Ps. c. 4, `It is he that hath made us, and not we

ourselves;, we had no hand in it. (3.) It showeth us two properties of

conversion: (1st.) There will be life; the effect of generation is life

Natural men are said, Eph. iv. 18, to be `alienated from the life of

God;, they are altogether strangers to the motions and operations of

the Spirit. But now, when the soul is begotten, there will be acting,

and moving, and spiritual feeling; the soul will not be so dead towards

God. Paul saith, Gal. ii. 20, `Not I live, but Christ liveth in me., A

man cannot have interest in Christ, but he will receive life from him.

(2d.) There will be a change. At the first God bringeth in the holy

frame, all the seeds of grace; and therefore there will be a change: of

profane, carnal, careless hearts, they are made spiritual, heavenly,

holy: Eph. v. 8, `Ye were darkness, but now are light in the Lord., You

see there is a vast difference. If men remain the same, how can they be

said to be begotten? They are filthy still, carnal still, worldly

still; there will be at least a desolation of the old forms and frames

of spirit.

Obs. 3. It is the proper work of God to beget us: `he begat., It is

sometimes ascribed to God the Father, as here, and so, in other places,

to God the Son: believers are `his seed,, Isa. liii. 10. Some times to

the Spirit, John iii. 6. God the Father,s will: `Of his own will begat

he us. God the Son,s merit: through his obedience we have `the adoption

of sons,, Gal. iv. 5. God the Spirit,s efficacy: by his overshadowing

the soul is the new creature hatched and brought forth. It is ascribed

to all the three persons together in one place: Titus iii. 5, 6, `By

his mercy he hath saved us, through the renewing of the Holy Ghost,

which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ., In another place

you have two persons mentioned: Eph. ii. 10, `For we are his

workmanship, created in Jesus Christ unto good works., It is true, the

ministers of the gospel are said to beget, but it is as they are

instruments in God,s hands. So Paul saith, `I begat you,, 1 Cor. iv.

15; and of Onesimus he saith, `Whom I begat in my bonds,, Philem. 10.

God loveth to put his own honour many times upon the instruments.

Well, then--1. Remove false causes. You cannot beget yourselves, that

were monstrous; you must look up above self, and above means, to God,

who must form you after his own image. It is said, John i. 13, that we

are `begotten, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor the will

of man, but of God., Not in the outward impure way that is meant by

that `not of blood; nor by the will of the flesh,, that is, in the

carnal manner, as man begetteth man to satisfy a fleshly will or

desire; `nor of the will of man,, that is, any workings or desires of

our will; but only by the power of the Spirit; for the intent of that

place is to remove gross thoughts and wrong causes, that we might

apprehend it right for the nature of it, and look up to the right cause

of it.

2. It showeth what an honourable relation we are invested with by the

new birth. He begat us. God is our Father; that engageth his love, and

bowels, and care, and everything that can be dear and refreshing to the

creature: Mat. vi. 32, `Your heavenly Father knoweth that you have need

of these things., This relation is often urged by the children of God:

Isa. lxiii. 16, `Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be

ignorant of us., There is comfort in a father, much more in a heavenly

Father. Evil men may be good fathers, Mat. vii. 11; they cannot but

obey those natural and fatherly impressions that are upon their bowels;

how much more will a good God be a good Father? Tam pater nemo, tam

pius nemo [108] --none can be so good and so much a father as he.

Obs. 4. The ordinary means whereby God begetteth us is the gospel. He

begat us `by the word of truth:, 1 Cor. iv. 15, `I have begotten you in

Jesus Christ, through the gospel., There is the instrument, the author,

the means: the instrument, Paul, `I have begotten you;, the means, `by

the gospel;, the author, `in Jesus Christ., So 1 Peter i. 23, `Begotten

by the incorruptible seed of the word., The word is, as it were, the

seed, which, being ingrafted in the heart, springeth up in obedience:

it is by the word, and that part of the word which is properly called

the gospel. Moses may bring us to the borders, but Joshua leadeth us

into the land of Canaan; the law may prepare and make way, but that

which conveyeth the grace of conversion is properly the gospel. Well,

then, let us wait upon God in the use of the word: it is not good to

balk the known and ordinary ways of grace. Wisdom,s dole is given at

wisdom,s gates: Prov. viii. 34, `Blessed is he that watcheth always at

my gates., It was a great advantage to the decrepit man to lie still at

the pool, John v. God,s means will prove successful in God,s time. Urge

your souls with the necessity of the means. `Faith cometh by hearing,

and hearing by the word of God., Rom. x. 17. Without grace I cannot be

saved, without the word I cannot have grace; reason thus within

yourselves, that you may awaken the soul to a greater conscience and

sense of waiting upon God in the word. It is true, the divine grace

doth all, he begetteth us; but remember, it is by the word of truth.

The influences of the heavens make fruitful seasons, but yet ploughing

is necessary. It is one of the sophisms of this age to urge the

Spirit,s efficacy as a plea for the neglect of the means.

Obs. 5. The gospel is a word of truth; so it is called, not only in

this, but in divers other places. See 2 Cor. vi. 7; Eph. i. 12; Col. i.

5; 2 Tim. ii. 15; the same expression is used in all these places. You

may constantly observe, that in matters evangelical the scriptures

speak with the greatest averment and certainty; the comfort of them is

so rich, and the way of them is so wonderful, that there we are apt to

doubt most, and therefore there do the scriptures give us the more

solemn assurance; as 1 Tim. i. 15, `This is a faithful saying, and

worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came to save sinners., We

are apt to look upon it as a doubtful thing, or at best but as a

probable truth; therefore Paul prefaceth, `This is a faithful saying.,

So Isa. liii. 4, `Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our

sorrows., Thou sayest, surely I am a sinner; but it is as sure that

Christ is a Saviour; naturally we are more sensible and sure of sin

than of the comforts of Christ. The apostle speaketh of heathens, Rom.

i. 32, that they `knew the judgment of God,, and that `they that commit

such things are worthy of death., Natural conscience will give us a

sight and sense of sin, but usually we look upon gospel comforts with a

loose heart and doubtful mind; and therefore is it that the scripture

useth such forms of certainty. Is it sure that thou art a sinner? so

sure is it that he hath `borne our sins and carried our sorrows., So

Rev. xix. 9, `Blessed are they which are called to the supper of the

Lamb: these are the true sayings of God., So Rev. xxii. 6, when he had

spoken of the glory of heaven, he saith, `These sayings are faithful

and true., The Spirit of God foresaw where we are most apt to doubt,

and therefore hath laid in such solemn security (as the asseverations

of God) aforehand. Thus Christ,s priesthood is ushered in with an oath,

Ps. cx. 4, `The Lord hath sworn, Thou art a priest for ever, after the

order of Melchisedec., Points so far above the reach and apprehension

of nature are hard to be believed, therefore are they prefaced with

deep asseverations and oaths.

Use. The use is to press us to put our seal to these truths, to

adventure our souls upon the warrant of them. How strange is it that

our hearts should be most loose towards those points that have a

special note of truth and faithfulness annexed to them! Well may it be

said, 1 John v. 10, `He that believeth not maketh God a liar;, for

these things are propounded to you, not only in assertions, but

asseverations. He hath told you they are faithful and true sayings;

therefore you implicitly give God the lie when you think these things

are too good to be true, or carry yourselves with a carelessness and

loose uncertainty towards them, or, in despair, think there cannot be

comfort for such sinners as you are. This is to lift up your own sense

and experience against the oaths and protestations of God, which are

everywhere interlaced with the proposals of the gospel. Oh! do not hang

off. Bring up assent to the greatest certainty that may be; check those

vile thoughts which secretly lurk in all our hearts, that the gospel is

some fine device and rare artifice to cheat the world, some golden

fancy to make fools fond with; as that profane pope said, Fabula

Cliristi, the fable of the gospel. Oh! consider, all the wit of the

creatures could not contrive or design such a plot and frame of truths,

so satisfying to the conscience, as the gospel is, and therefore all

assents that do not amount and come up to assurance are beneath the

dignity of it.

Assents are of divers kinds; some are very imperfect. There is

conjecture, which is but a lighter inclination and propension of the

mind to that which is only probable; it may or may not be true. This is

discerned by carelessness and disrespect towards things that are

excellent; men do but guess, and have but loose thoughts of them.

Higher than this there is opinion, when the mind is strongly swayed to

think a thing true, however there is formido oppositi, a fear of the

contrary, which is opposed to believing with all the heart, Acts viii.

This is enough to engage to profession--a man followeth his opinion.

The next degree above this is oligopisti'a, `weak faith,, which

engageth the soul not only to profession, but to some affection and

adherence to the truths acknowledged; they look upon them as true and

good, but cleave to them with much brokenness and imperfection. Higher

than this there is assurance; I mean, of the truths of the gospel, not

of our interest in the comforts of it. This is intended by the apostle

when he said the Thessalonians `received the word with much assurance,,

1 Thes. i. 5; they were undoubtedly, and beyond contradiction,

persuaded of the truths of the gospel. The same apostle, Col. ii. 2,

calleth it, `The riches of the full assurance of understanding the

mysteries of Christ;, that is, such an apprehension of the truths of

the gospel as is joined with some experience, and a resolution to live

and die in the profession of it.

Quest. You will say, How shall we do to ripen our assents to such a

perfection? What are those proper mediums or arguments by which (next

to the infallible persuasion of the Spirit) the soul is assured that

the gospel is a word of truth?

Ans. This question is worth answering at all times, because atheism is

so natural to us,--if there were none in the world, yet there is too

much of the atheist in our own bosoms,--but in these times especially,

the reigning sin being atheism and scepticism in matters of religion,

occasioned partly by corrupt and blasphemous doctrines, which have a

marvellous compliance with our thoughts; partly by the sad divisions

among the people of God. Every one pretending to be in the right, we

suspect all; therefore Christ prayed for unity in the church upon this

argument, `That the world may know that thou hast sent me,, John xvii.

23. When there are divisions in the church, usually there is atheism in

the world: partly by the scandals and villanies committed under a

pretence of religion, by which Christ is, as it were, denied, Titus i.

16, and again, `crucified and put to an open shame,, Heb. vi. 6; that

is, exposed to the derision and scorn of his enemies, and represented

as a malefactor. Now if ever then, is it needful to ballast the mind

with solid and rational grounds, and to establish you in the holy

faith. Many arguments are urged by the fathers and the schoolmen in

behalf of the gospel; but I have always preferred the arguments of the

fathers, as of Lactantius, Tertullian, Justin Martyr, Cyril, &c.,

before those of the schoolmen, as being more practical and natural, and

so having a greater and a more constant awe upon the conscience;

whereas those of the schoolmen (who questionless were the worser men)

are more subtle and speculative, and so less apt to be understood, and

are not so always present with the soul as the other are, that are

founded in practical truths. Briefly, then, you may know the gospel to

be a word of truth, because what ever is excellent in a religion is in

an unparalleled manner found in our religion, or in the doctrine of the

gospel. The glory of a religion lieth in three things--the excellency

of rewards, the purity of precepts, and the sureness of principles of

trust. Now examine the gospel by these things, and see if it can be

matched elsewhere.

1. The excellency of rewards. This is one of the chief est perfections

of a religion. Therefore the apostle proposeth it a principle and

foundation of religion and worship to `believe that God is, and that he

is a plentiful rewarder of those that seek him,, Heb. xi. 6. He that

cometh to God, that is, to engage in his worship, next to his being

must believe his bounty; and the reason is, because a man, in all his

endeavours, is poised to some happiness and reward. Now since the fall

there are `many inventions,, Eccles. vii. 29. As the Sodomites, when

they were smitten with blindness, groped about Lot,s door, so do we

grope and feel here and there for a reward that may be adequate and of

full proportion with our desires. The heathen were at a sad loss and

puzzle. Austin, [109] out of Varro, reckoneth up two hundred and

eighty-eight opinions about the chiefest good. Some placed it in

pleasures, and such things as gratified sense. But this were to make

brutes of men, for it is the beast,s happiness to enjoy pleasures

without remorse; and Tully saith, he is not worthy the name of a man,

qui unum diem velit esse in voluptate, that would entirely spend one

whole day in pleasures. Alas! this is a way so gross, so oppressive,

and burthensome to nature, so full of disturbance and distraction to

reason, that it can never satisfy. Some went higher for a reward for

virtue, and talked of victory over enemies, long life, and a happy old

age; but many that were good wanted these blessings. Others dreamed of

a kind of eternity, and placed it in fame and the perpetuity of their

name and renown, which is a kind of shadow of the true eternity; but

this was a sorry happiness to those that lived and died obscurely.

Those that went highest could go no higher than the exercise of virtue,

and said that virtue was a reward to itself; and said that a man was

happy, if virtuous, in the greatest torments, in Phalaris, brazen bull,

&c. But, alas! `If our happiness were in this life only, we were of all

men most miserable,, 1 Cor. xv. 19. Christianity would scarce make

amends for the trouble of it. But now the gospel goeth higher, and

propoundeth a pure and sweet hope, most pure, and fittest for such a

sublime creature, a reasonable creature, as man is, and most sweet and

contenting, and that is the eternal and happy enjoyment of God in

Christ in the life to come; not a Turkish paradise, but chaste and

rational `pleasures at his right hand for ever more,, Ps. xvi. 11;

complete knowledge, perfect love, the filling up of the soul with God;

so that the gospel, you see, hath outbidden all religions, propounding

a fit and most excellent reward to the holy life.

2. Purity of precepts. In the Christian religion all moral duties are

advanced and heightened to their greatest perfection: Ps. cxix. 96,

`The commandment is exceeding broad,, of a vast extent and latitude,

comprising every motion, thought, and circumstance. The heathens

contented themselves with a shadow of duty. The apostle saith, Rom. ii.

15, that ergon nomou, `the work of the law, was written upon their

hearts;, that is, they had a sense of the outward work, and a sight of

the surface of the commandment. They made conscience to abstain from

gross acts of sin, and to perform outward acts of piety and devotion,

as sacrifice and babbling of hymns and prayers to their gods. All their

wisdom was to make the life plausible, to refrain themselves; as it is

said of Haman, when his heart boiled with rancour and malice against

Mordecai, Esther v. 10, `Haman refrained himself., So Lactantius

proveth against them that they had not a true way of mortification, and

were not spiritual enough in their apprehensions of the law: Sapientia

eorum plerwnque abscondit vitia, non abscindit--all their wisdom was to

hide a lust, not to quench a lust; or rather to prevent the sin, not to

check the lust. But now our holy religion doth not only forbid sins,

but lusts: 1 Peter ii. 11, `Dearly beloved, I beseech you, as strangers

and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts., Babylon,s brats (as we

showed before) by a holy murder must be dashed against the stones. The

precepts are exact, commanding love, not only to friends, but enemies.

The law is spiritual, and therefore in all points perfect: Ps. xix. 7,

`The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul;, that is, not

only guiding the offices of the exterior man, but piercing to the

thoughts, the first motions of the heart; we have a perfect law.

3. The sureness of the principles of trust. One of the choicest

respects of the creature to the Godhead is trust and dependence. And

trust, being the rest and quiet of the soul, must have a sure bottom

and foundation. Now stand upon the ways, and survey all the religions

in the world, and you will find no foundation for trust but in the

gospel, refer it to any object, trusting in God for a common mercy,

trusting in God for a saving mercy.

[1.] For a common mercy. There are no such representations of God to

the soul as in the gospel. The Gentiles had but loose and dark thoughts

of God, and therefore are generally described by this character, `Men

without hope,, 1 Thes. iv, 13. I remember when our Saviour speaketh

against carking and anxiousness about outward supports, he dissuadeth

thus: `Take no thought what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, or

what ye shall put on, for after these things seek the Gentiles,, Mat.

vi. 31, 32, implying such solicitude to be only excusable in heathen

who had no sure principles; but you that know providence and the care

of a heavenly Father, should not be thus anxious. It is true, the

heathens had some sense of a deity; they had to` gnoston tou theou,

some knowledge of the nature of God, Rom. i. 20; but the apostle saith

in the next verse, that `they were vain, en dialogi'smois, in their

imaginations,, that is, in their practical inferences and discourses;

when they came to represent God as an object of trust, and to form

practical thoughts and apprehensions of his majesty, there they were

vain and foolish. But now in the gospel God is represented as a fit

object of trust, and therefore the solemn and purest part of Christian

worship is faith; and it is judiciously observed by Luther, Id agit

tota scriptura, ut credamus Deum esse misericordem--it is the design of

the whole scripture to bring the soul to a steady belief and trust;

therefore the psalmist, when he speaketh of God,s different

administrations in the world and in the church, when he cometh to his

administrations in the church, he saith, Ps. xciii. 5, `The testimonies

of the Lord are sure., God deals with us upon sure principles, though

he hath discovered himself to the world only in loose attributes.

[2.] For saving mercies; and indeed that is the trial of all religions;

that is best which giveth the soul a sure hope of salvation: Jer. vi.

16, God biddeth them `stand upon the ways, and see, and ask for the

good old way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls;,

intimating, they should choose that for the best religion which

yieldeth most peace of conscience. Now, there are three things that

trouble the soul--our distance from God, our dread of angry justice,

and a despair of retaining comfort with a sense of duty; and therefore,

ere the conscience can have any solid rest and quiet, there must be

three matches made, three couples brought together--God and man,

justice and mercy, comfort and duty, all these must mutually embrace

and kiss each other.

(1.) God and man must be brought together. Some of the wise heathens

placed happiness in the nearest access and approach to God that may be,

as Plato for one; and Coelius Rhodiginus, saith Aristotle, delighted

much in that verse of Homer where it is said that it would never be

well till the gods and mortal men did come to live together. Certain we

are that common instinct maketh us to grope and feel after an eternal

good: Acts xvii. 27, `They groped after God., Now, how shall we come to

have any commerce with God, there being, besides the distance of our

beings, guilt contracted in the soul? How can stubble dwell with

devouring burnings? guilty creatures think of God without trembling?

approach him without being devoured and swallowed up of his glory? The

heathens were sensible of this in some part, and therefore held that

the supreme gods were defiled by the unhallowed approaches of sinful

and mortal men, and therefore invented heroes and half-gods, a kind of

middle powers, that were to be mediators, to convey their prayers to

the gods, and the blessings of the gods back again to them: so

Plutarch, dia` daimoni'on tasa omili'a kai` dia'lektos metaxu` theon

kai` anthro'pon--that by these intermediate powers there was all

commerce and communion between the gods and men. To this doctrine of

the heathen the apostle alludeth, 1 Cor. viii. 5; the heathens had

`lords many, and gods many;, as they had many gods, many ultimate

objects of worship, so many lords, that is, mediators. `But to us

(saith he) there is but one Lord, and one God;, that is, one supreme

essence and one Mediator, which is that excellent and sure way which

the scriptures lay down for our commerce with God. The device of the

heathens, being fabulous and absurd, could not yield comfort; but in

the gospel there is excellent provision made for our comfort and hope,

for there the Godhead and manhood is represented as met in one nature.

The Son of God was made the Son of man, that the sons of men might be

the sons of God; therefore the apostle Peter showeth that the great

work of Christ was `to bring us to God,, 1 Peter iii. 18, to bring God

and man together. So the apostle Paul saith, Heb x. 20, we may `draw

near through the veil of his flesh., It is an allusion to the temple,

where the veil hid the glory of the sanctum sanctorum, and gave

entrance to it. So Christ,s incarnation did, as it were, rebate the

edge of the divine glory and brightness, that creatures may come and

converse with it without terror. Christ is the true Jacob,s ladder,

John i. 51, the bottom of which toucheth earth--there is his humanity;

and the top reacheth heaven--there is his divinity; so that we may

climb this ladder, and have communion with God: ascende per hominem et

pervenies ad Deum, as that father said--climbing up in hope by the

manhood of Christ, we have social access to the Godhead.

(2.) Justice and mercy must be brought together. We want mercy, and

fear justice; guilt impresseth a trembling upon the spirit, be cause we

know not how to redeem our souls out of the hands of angry justice; the

very heathens were under this bondage and torment, because of the

severity of the divine justice: `Knowing the judgment of God, they

thought themselves worthy of death., Rom. i. 32. Therefore^ the great

inquiry of nature is, how we shall appease angry justice., and redeem

our souls from this fear. You know the question, Micah vi. 6, 7,

`Wherewith shall I come before him? and wherewith will he be pleased?,

The heathens, in their blindness, thought to oblige the Godhead by acts

meritorious (as merit is natural), either by costly sacrifices, `rivers

of oil, thousands of rams, burnt-offerings, and whole burnt-offerings,,

hecatombs of sacrifices; or by putting themselves to pains or tortures,

as Baal,s priests gashed themselves; or by doing some act that is

unwelcome and displeasant to nature, as by offering their children in

sacrifices, those dear pledges of affection, which certainly was an act

of great self-denial, natural love being descensive, and like a river

running downward; yea, this was not all, the best of their children,

their first-born, in whom all their hopes were laid up, they being

observed to be most fortunate and successful. And this custom also the

carnal Jews took up, for bare outward sacrifice was but a dull way

either to satisfy God (his being `the cattle of a thousand hills,, Ps.

l. 10), or to pacify conscience; for though it were a worship of God,s

own appointing, yet it `did not make the comer thereunto perfect, as

appertaining to the conscience,, Heb. ix. 9; that is, the worshipper

that looked no further could never have a quiet and perfect conscience,

and therefore they `caused their children to pass through the fire to

Moloch., Such a barbarous custom could not be taken up barely by

imitation; nothing but horror of conscience could tempt men to an act

so cruel and unnatural; and the prophet plainly saith, they `gave their

first-born for the sin of their soul., Thus you see all ways are at a

loss, because they could not yield a recompense to offended justice.

But, in the gospel, `justice and mercy have kissed each other,

righteousness and truth have met together,, as it is Ps. lxxxv. 10. And

we may sing, `Gracious is the Lord, and righteous,, Ps. cxvi. 5; `Our

beloved is white and ruddy,, Cant. v. 10. For there is a God satisfying

as well as a God offended, so that mercy and justice shine with an

equal lustre and glory; yea, justice, which is the terror of the world,

in Christ is made our friend, and the chief ground of our hope and

support; as 1 John i. 9, `The Lord is faithful and righteous to forgive

us our sins., A man would have thought faithful and gracious had been a

more proper term than faithful and righteous, pardon being most

properly an act of free grace; but justice being satisfied in Christ,

it is no derogation to his righteousness to dispense a pardon. So the

crown of glory is called `a crown of righteousness,, 2 Tim. iv. 8.

There is a whole vein of scriptures runneth that way, that make all the

comfort and hope of a Christian to hang upon God,s righteousness; yea,

if you will believe the apostle Paul, you shall see that God,s great

intent in appointing Christ, rather than any other Redeemer, was to

show himself just in pardoning, and that he might be kind to sinners

without any wrong to his righteousness; in short, that justice being

satisfied, mercy might have the freer course. Hear the apostle, and you

shall see he speaketh full to this purpose: Rom. iii. 25, 26, `Whom God

hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to

declare his righteousness in the remission of sins., And lest we should

lose the emphatical word, he redoubleth it: `To declare, I say, his

righteousness, and that he might be just, and the justifier of him that

believeth in Jesus: `that is, in the matter of justification, where

grace is most free, God makes his righteousness shine forth, having

received satisfaction from Christ.

(3.) Comfort and duty are brought together. The end of all religion is

ut anima sit subjecta Deo et pacata sibi--that the soul may be quiet in

itself, and obedient to that which is supposed to be God. Now how shall

we do to retain a care of duty with a sense of comfort? Conscience

cannot be stifled with loose principles. The heathens could not be

quiet, and therefore, when their reason was discomposed and disturbed

with the rage of sensual lusts, and they knew not how to bridle them,

they offered violence to nature; pulled out their eyes, because they

could not look upon a woman without lusting after her; and raged

against their innocent members, instead of their unclean affections.

And we, that have the light of Christianity, know much more that we

cannot have comfort without duty; for though true peace of conscience

be founded in Christ,s satisfaction, yet it is found only in his

service: Mat. xi. 28, `Come to me, and I will give you rest;, but in

ver. 29 it is, `Take my yoke upon you, and ye shall find rest for your

souls., As we must come to Christ for comfort, so we must stay under

his discipline, if we would have a sense of it in our own souls. Well,

now, you shall see how excellently these are provided for in the

gospel. There is Spirit against weaknesses, and merit against defects

and failings, so that duty is provided for, and comfort. They need not

despair under weaknesses, having the assistance of a mighty Spirit;

they need not put out their eyes, having a God to quench their lusts;

[110] they need not despair under the sense of their defects, there

being such a full merit in the obedience of Christ. In short, when they

have largest thoughts of duty, they may have sweetest hopes of comfort,

and say, with David, Ps. cxix. 6, `I shall not be ashamed when I have

respect to all thy commandments.,

So much for the fifth observation.

Obs. 6. That God,s children are his first-fruits. The word hinteth two

things--their dignity and their duty; which two considerations will

draw out the force of the apostle,s expression.

1. It noteth the dignity of the people of God in two regards:--(1.) One

is, they are `the Lord,s portion,, la'os periou'sios, his `peculiar

people,, Titus ii. 14, the treasure people, the people God looketh

after. The world are his goods, but you his treasure. The word

ktisma'ton in the text.is emphatical. Others are but his creatures, you

his first-fruits. He delighteth to be called your God; he hath, as it

were, impropriated himself to your use and comfort: `Blessed is the

people whose God is the Lord,, Ps. cxliv. 15. He is Lord of all, but

your God. One said, Tolle meum et tolle Deum--it is the relation to God

that is sweet, and a general relation yieldeth no comfort. Oh! what a

mighty instance is this of the love of God to us, that he should reckon

us for his first-fruits, for his own lot and portion! (2.) That they

are the considerable part of the world. The first-fruits were offered

for the blessing of all the rest: Prov. iii. 10, `Offer thy

first-fruits, and so thy barns shall be filled with plenty, and thy

presses shall burst out with wine., So here; the children of God, they

are the `blessing in the cluster;, others fare the better for their

neighbourhood; they are the strength, the `chariots and horsemen, of a

nation. It was a profane suggestion in Haman to say, `It was not for

the king,s profit to suffer them to live., These are the first-fruits

that God taketh in lieu of a whole nation, to convey a blessing to the

rest.

2. It hinteth duty; as--;(1.) Thankfulness in all their lives.

First-fruits were dedicated to God in token of thankfulness. Cain is

implicitly branded for unthankfulness because he did not offer the

first-fruits. You, that are the first-fruits of God, should, in a sense

of his mercy, live the life of love and praise. The apostle saith the

mercies of God should persuade us to offer ourselves, Rom. xii. 1. Now,

under the gospel, there are no sin-offerings, all are thank-offerings.

Well, then, give up yourselves in a reasonable way, logike` la'treia,

of sacrifice. It is but reason that when God hath begotten us we should

be his first-fruits. The principle and motive of obedience under the

gospel is not terror, but gratitude: Luke i. 74, `That we, being

delivered out of the hands of our enemies, should serve him without

fear,, &c. Your lives should show you to be first-fruits, to be yielded

to God as a testimony of thankfulness. (2.) It noteth holiness. The

first-fruits were holy unto the Lord. God,s portion must be holy; and

therefore of things that were in their own nature an abomination the

first-fruits were not to be offered to God, as the first-born of a dog

or ass, but were to be redeemed with money. God can brook no unclean

thing. Sins in you are far more irksome and grievous to his Spirit than

in others. You shall see, Jer. xxxii. 30, it is said, `The children of

Israel and Judah have only done evil before me from their youth., The

Septuagint read, mo'noi poiountes te`n amarti'an, `they alone, or they

only, have been sinners before me;, as if God did not take notice of

the sins of other nations: Israel, God,s portion, are the only sinners.

(3.) It noteth consecration. You are dedicate things, and they must not

be alienated; your time, parts, strength, and concernments, all is the

Lord,s; you cannot dispose of them as you please, but as it may make

for the Lord,s glory; you are not first-fruits when you `seek your own

things;, you are not to walk in your own ways, nor to your own ends;

you may do with your own as it pleaseth you, but you cannot do so with

what is the Lord,s. First-fruits were passed over into the right of

God, the owner had no property in them. Well, then:--(1st.) You are not

to walk in your own ways; your desires and wills are not to guide you,

but the will of God. `There is a way (saith Solomon) that seemeth right

in a man,s own eyes;, a corrupt mind looketh upon it as good and

pleasant, and a corrupt will and desire is ready to run out after it.

So the prophet Isaiah, chap. liii. 6, `We are all gone astray, every

man to his own way., Oh! remember you are to study the mind and will of

God; your own inventions will seduce you, and your own affections will

betray you. (2d.) Not to your own ends: 2 Cor. v. 15, `Henceforth we

are no more to live to ourselves,, to our pleasure, profit, honour,

interests: we have no right and property in ourselves, it is all given

up to God. Those that gave up all to God did not reserve a liberty for

self-pursuits and self-interests. [111] All pleasures, honours,

profits, are to be refused or received as they make us serviceable to

the glory of God.

Ver. 19. Wherefore, my Moved brethren, let every man be swift to hear,

slow to speak, slow to wrath.

Wherefore, my beloved brethren, &c.--You see these words are inferred

out of the former. The apostle saith, wherefore. Some make the

consequence thus: He hath begotten you, therefore walk as men

regenerate; for they make these sentences to be of a general

concernment, and take them in the largest sense and extent of them. But

this seemeth harsh, partly because it is not the use of the gospel to

descend to such low civilities as the ordering of speech and the like;

much less would it urge such a weighty argument as regeneration in a

matter of such common importance; and indeed the inference in that

sense is no way clear, and it would be a great gap and stride to

descend from such a weighty and spiritual matter to mere rules of

civility: partly because the subsequent context showeth these sentences

must be restrained to the matter in hand; for, ver. 21, he

sub-inferreth out of these sayings an exhortation to hear the word

rightly; therefore I conceive the connection to stand thus: He had

spoken of the word of truth as being the instrument of conversion, and

upon that ground persuadeth to diligent hearing and reverent speaking

of it; for so these sentences must be restrained, and then the

coherence is more fluent and easy, as thus: You see what an honour God

hath put on the word, as by it to beget us to himself; therefore `be

swift to hear,, that is, of a docile or teachable mind, be ready still

to wait upon God in the word; be `slow to speak,, that is, do not

rashly precipitate your judgment or opinion concerning things of faith;

be `slow to wrath,, that is, be not angrily prejudiced against those

that seem to differ and dissent from you. Thus you see, if we consider

these directions under a special reference to the matter in hand, the

context is easy. I confess it is good to give scripture its full

latitude in application, and therefore rules may be commodiously

extended to repress the disorders of private conversation, as

garrulity, when men are full of talk themselves, and morosity, when

they cannot endure to hear others, and so also anger and private

revenge; especially when any of these is found, as usually they are, in

Christian meetings and conventions, little patience, and much talk and

anger. But the chief aim of the apostle is to direct them in the solemn

hearing of the word.

The notes are these:--

Obs. 1. From that wherefore. It is a great encouragement to wait upon

the ordinances, when we consider the benefits God doth dispense by

them. In the institution of every duty there is a word of command and a

word of promise. The command for our warrant, the promise for our

encouragement. The command that we may come in obedience, and the

promise that we may come in faith. Thus it is said, Isa. lv. 3, `Hear,

and your soul shall live., Hear, that is the command. Your soul shall

live, there is the promise. It is God,s mercy that no duty is a mere

task, but a holy means; and ordinances are appointed, not only in

sovereignty, but in mercy. Well, then, Christians are not only to look

to the ground of duties, but the end of them, that sweeteneth them to

us. God hath required nothing of you but for your own benefit: Prov.

ix. 12, `If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself., God hath

glory in your approaches, but you have comfort. Oh! consider, then,

every time you come to hear the word, the high privileges you may enjoy

by it! Say thus, when you come to hear: I am to hear that my soul may

live, I am going to the word that is to beget me, to make my soul

partaker of the divine nature. Christians do not raise their

expectations to such a height of mercies as are offered to them in the

ordinances.

Obs. 2. Again, from the illative particle wherefore. Experience of the

success of ordinances engageth us to a further attendance upon them. He

hath begotten you by the word of truth, `wherefore, be swift to hear.,

Who would baulk a way in which he hath found good, and discontinue duty

when he hath found the benefit of it? When God hath given you success,

he hath given you a seal of his truth, a real experience of the

comforts of his service. The Stancarists, [112] that think ordinances

useless for believers, fit to initiate us in religion, and no further,

are ignorant of the nature of grace, the state of their own hearts, and

the ends of the word. Because this proud sect is revived in our times,

and many, as soon as they have found the benefit of ordinances, think

they are above them, let us a little examine these particulars.

1. They are ignorant of the nature of grace, which always upon a taste

longeth for more: Ps. lxiii. 1, 2, `I long to see thy power and glory,

as I have seen thee in the sanctuary., When the springs lie low, a

little water cast in bringeth up more: so, after a taste, grace longeth

for more communion with God; they would see God as they have seen him:

so the apostle, 1 Peter ii. 3, 4, `If ye have tasted that he is

gracious, come to him as to a living stone;, that is, if you have had

any taste and experience of Christ in the word (which is the case in

the context), you will be coming to him for more. However it is with

spiritual pride, grace is quickened by former success and experience,

not blunted.

2. They are ignorant of the intent and end of the word, which is not

only to beget us, but to make the saints perfect, Eph. iv. 12, 13. The

apostles, when they had established churches, returned to `confirm the

disciples, hearts,, Acts xiv. 22. We are to look after growth, as well

as truth. Now, lest you should think it only concerneth the new-born

babes, or the weaker sort of Christians, you shall see those of the

highest form found need to exercise themselves herein: the prophets

`searched diligently, into the writings of other prophets, 1 Peter i.

11, 12. Daniel himself, though a prophet, and a prophet of high

visions, studied books, Dan. ix. 2. And still the greatest have need of

praying, meditating, reading, hearing, to preserve the work of grace

that is begun in their souls. That place is notable, Luke viii. 18,

`Take heed how you hear; for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and

whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken that which he seemeth to

have., Our Saviour upon this ground presseth them to a greater

conscience and sense of the duty of hearing, because those that have

grace already will have further confirmation and increase; and those

that, upon a presumption and pretence of having grace, neglect the

means of grace, shall lose that which they seemed to have; that is,

shall appear to be just nothing in religion, blasted in gifts, as well

as decayed in grace.

3. They are ignorant of the state of their own hearts. Are there no

graces to be perfected and increased? no corruptions to be mortified?

no good resolutions to be strengthened? no affections to be quickened

and stirred up? Is there no decay of vigour and livelihood? no deadness

growing upon their spirits? Certainly none need ordinances so much as

they that do not need them. The spirit is a tender thing, soon

discomposed. Things that are most delicate are most dependent. Brambles

grow of themselves, but the vine needeth props. Wolves and dogs can

rummage and seek abroad in the wilderness, but the sheep need a pastor.

They that look into their hearts would find a double need of

ordinances. (1.) Knowledge is imperfect. It is some good degree of

knowledge to be sensible of our own ignorance; none so proud and

contented as they that know least: 1 Cor. viii. 2, `If any man thinketh

he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing as he ought to know., At first

truths seem few, and soon learned; and it is some good progress in any

learning to be sensible and humbled with the imperfections of

knowledge; and it is so in divine matters. We see little in the word

till we come to be more deeply acquainted with it: and then, Ps. cxix.

18, `Open mine eyes, that I may see wonders in thy law;, then we come

to discern depths, and such wisdom as we never thought of. The word is

an ocean, without bottom and banks. A man may see an end of other

things, and get the mastery over an art: `I have seen an end of all

perfection, but thy commandment is exceeding broad,, Ps. cxix. 96. We

can never exhaust all the treasure and worth that is in the word. (2.)

Affections need a new excitement. Commands must be repeated to a dull

servant; such is our will. We need fresh enforcements of duty upon us.

Live coals need blowing, and a good soldier the trumpet to stir up his

warlike rage, 1 Cor. xiv. 31. All may learn, or all be comforted. The

apostle there specifieth the two ends of prophecy, which is either that

we may learn, or be comforted, or exhorted; the word is indifferent to

both those significations, either the improving of knowledge, or the

exciting of languishing affections.

Obs. 3. From that let every one. This is a duty that is universal, and

bindeth all men. None are exempted from hearing and patient learning:

`the eye hath need of the foot., Those that know most may learn more.

Junius was converted by discourse with a plough man. A simple laic (as

the story [113] calleth him) turned the whole Council of Nice against

Arianism. G-od may make use of the meanest things for the instruction

of the greatest. Paul, the great apostle, calleth Priscilla and Persis,

two women, his `fellow-helpers in the Lord., Rom. xvi. Torches are many

times lighted at a candle, and the most glorious saints advantaged by

the meanest. Christ would teach his disciples by a child: `He took a

child, and set him in the midst of them,, Mat. xviii. 2. It is proud

disdain to scorn the meanest gifts. There may be gold in an earthen

vessel. There is none too old, none too wise, none too high to be

taught. [114] Let every one.

Obs. 4. From that be swift, that is, ready. The commendation of duties

is the ready discharge of them. Swiftness noteth two things:--(1.)

Freeness of spirit; do it without reluctancy when you do it; no

offerings are accepted of God but such as are free-will offerings, Ps.

cxix. 108. (2.) Swiftness noteth diligence in taking the next occasion;

they will not decline an opportunity, and say, Another day. Delay is a

sign of unwillingness. You shall see, Ezek. i., the beasts had four

faces and four wings; they had four faces, as waiting when the Spirit

would come upon them; and four wings, as ready to look and fly into

that part of the world into which God would dispatch them. This

readiness to take occasions is showed in three things:--(1st.) In

restraining all debates and deliberations: `I consulted not with flesh

and blood, but immediately I went up to Jerusalem,, Gal. i. 10. When

the soul deliberateth about duty, it neglecteth it; do not debate when

God commandeth, whether it be best or no; the soul is half won when it

yieldeth to dispute things. God saith, Gen. ii. 17, `In the day that

thou eatest thereof, thou shalt die., And Eve repeateth, chap. iii. 3,

`Thou shalt not eat, lest ye die;, and Satan saith, ver. 4, `Ye shall

not surely die., God affirmeth, the woman doubteth, and Satan denieth.

It is not good to allow the devil the advantage of a debate; when you

pause upon things, Satan worketh upon your hesitancy. (2d.) In laying

aside all pretences and excuses. Duty would never be done if we should

allow the soul in every lesser scruple; there will still be `a lion in

the way,, and opening to the Spouse will be interpreted a defiling of

the feet. Peter, as soon as he heard the voice of Christ, cast himself

into the sea, others came about by ship, Mai xiv. 29; he did not plead

the waves between him and Christ. (3d.) In yielding yourselves up to

the whole will of God without reservations, do not allow one exception,

or reserve one carnal desire: Acts ix. 6, `Lord, what wilt thou have me

to do?, The ear and heart was open for every command. So 1 Sam. iii. 9,

`Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth., He was ready to receive

whatever God would command; but, alas! it is otherwise with us. Christ

cometh to offer himself to us, as he did to the blind man: Luke xviii.

41, `What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?, Christ is fain to ask

our pleasure, not we his. The master asketh what the servant will

command. Yea, we refuse him when he offereth himself to us: Heb. xii.

25, me` paraite'sate, `See that ye refuse not,, &c. The word

signifieth, do not urge vain pretences. This is the fourth note, but I

must be more particular.

Obs. 5. From that be swift to hear; that is, the word of God, for

otherwise it were good to be slow in hearing. We may wish ourselves

deaf sometimes, that we may not hear oaths, impurities, railings; as

old Maris was glad that he was blind, that he could not see such a

cursed apostate as Julian. Divers things are implied in this precept. I

shall endeavour to draw out the sense of it in these particulars.

1. It showeth how we should value hearing: be glad of an opportunity;

the ear is the sense of learning, [115] and so it is of grace; it is

that sense that is consecrated to receive the most spiritual

dispensations: Rom. x. 14, `How shall they believe in him of whom they

have not heard?, The Lord beginneth his sermon with `Hear, Israel,,

Deut. vi. When Christ was solemnly discovered from heaven to be the

great prophet of the church, the respect that is bespoken for him is

audience: Mat. xvii. 5, `This is my beloved Son, hear him., God is

pleased to appoint this way, do not despise it. Beading hath its use,

but the voice hath aliquid latentis energiae, a secret force upon the

soul, because of the sympathy between the external word and inward

reason; I mean, it hath a ministerial efficacy, by which the authority

and sovereign efficacy of the Spirit is conveyed. God would insinuate a

real efficacy in a moral way, and therefore useth the voice. The

apostle had spoken much of the word, and then he saith, `This is the

word which is preached to you,, 1 Peter i. 25. It is not the word read,

but the word preached. You may judge it a vain artifice, count it `the

foolishness of preaching,, but it is under the blessing of a solemn

institution: `It pleased the Father,, &c., 1 Cor. i. 21. Therefore, by

the external voice there is meant, then, a ministerial excitation.

Reading doth good in its place; but to slight hearing, out of a

pretence that you can read better sermons at home, is a sin. Duties

mistimed lose their nature; the blood is the continent of life when it

is in the proper vessels; but when it is out, it is hurtful, and

breedeth putrefactions and diseases.

2. It showeth how ready we should be to take all occasions to hear the

word. If ministers must preach `in season and out of season,, a people

are bound to hear. It is observed that a little before the French

massacre Protestants were cloyed with the word; and so it is now.

Heretofore they would run far and near to enjoy such an opportunity:

Mat. iii. 5, `Jerusalem and Judea, and all the region round about, came

to hear John., Some of those places mentioned were thirty miles from

�non beyond Salem, which was the place where John baptized: 1 Sam. iii.

1, `The word of the Lord was precious in those days; for there was no

open vision., Heretofore lectures were frequented when they were more

scarce. The wheat of heaven was despised when it fell every day: Amos

viii. 12, `I will send a famine of the word, and they shall wander from

sea to sea, from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro,

and shall not find it., Then they would go far and near for a little

comfort and counsel. This is one of those enjoyments which is valued

when it is wanted. When manna is a common food, men lust for quails:

`Nothing but this manna!, This swiftness here showeth the content men

should take in hearing the word; but, alas! now men pretend every vain

excuse, their merchandise, their farm, and so cannot wait upon the word

of God: it may be on the Lord,s day, when they dare do nothing else;

but few take other occasions and opportunities. David saith, Ps. xxvi.

8, `I have loved the habitation of thy house, the place where thine

honour dwelleth., It was comfort to him to wait upon God, to come to

the doors of wisdom, a burden to us.

3. It noteth readiness to hear the sense and mind of others upon the

word. We should not be so puffed up with our own knowledge, but we

should be swift to hear what others can say. It is a great evil to

contemn others, gifts; there is none so wise but he may receive some

benefit by the different handling of what he himself knoweth. It is an

advantage to observe the different breathings of the Spirit of God in

divers instruments. Job would not `despise the cause of his servants,,

Job xxxi. And as we should not contemn their gifts, so we should not

contemn their judgments. In this being swift to hear is condemned that

idiognomosu'ne that private spirit, and over prizing of our own

conceits and apprehensions, so that we are not patient to hear anything

against them. Men are `puffed up with their own mind,, though it be

`fleshly, and carnal, Col. ii. 18; they make a darling and an idol of

their own thoughts. The apostle saith, 1 Cor. xiv. 30, `If anything be

revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace., You

do not know what may be revealed to another; no man is above a

condition of being instructed. Divide self from thy opinion, and love

things not because they suit with thy prejudices, but truth. `Be swift

to hear,, that is, to consider what may be urged against you.

4. It noteth what we should do in Christian meetings. They are apt to

degenerate into noise and clamour; we are all swift to speak, but not

to hear one another, and so all our conferences end in tumult and

confusion, and no good is gotten by them: every man,s `belly is like a

bottle full of wind, ready to burst for want of vent,, Job xxxii. 19.

If we were as patient and swift to hear as we are ready to speak, there

would be less of wrath and more of profit in our meetings. I remember

when a Manichee contested with Augustine, and with importunate clamour

cried, `Hear me, hear me,, the father modestly answered, Nec ego te,

nec tu me, sed ambo audiamus apostolum--neither hear me, nor I thee,

but let us both hear the apostle. It were well if we could thus repress

the violences and impetuousness of our spirits; when one crieth, Hear

me, and another, Hear me, let us both hear the apostle, and then we

shall hear one another. He saith, `Be swift to hear, slow to speak.,

When Paul reproveth the disorder and tumult that was in the Corinthian

assemblies, he adviseth them to speak ana` me'ros, l by turn or

course,, 1 Cor. xiv. 27; and ver. 31, `Ye may all prophesy one by one,

that all may learn, and all be comforted;, that every one should have

free liberty to speak, according as their part and turn came, and not

in a hurry and clatter, which hindered both the instruction and comfort

of the assembly.

Obs. 6. That there are many cases wherein we must be slow to speak.

This clause must also be treated of according to the restriction of the

context; slow in speaking of the word of God, and that in several

cases.

1. It teacheth men not to adventure upon the preaching of the word till

they have a good spiritual furniture, or are stored with a sufficiency

of gifts. It is not for every one that can speak an hour to adventure

upon the work of teaching. John was thirty years old when he preached

first, Luke iii. 1. In the fifteenth year of Tiberius, [116] that was

John,s thirtieth year. Augustus reigned fifty-five years, and John was

born in his fortieth year, and preached in the fifteenth of Tiberius,

his next successor. Every one itcheth after the dignity of being a

teacher in Israel. There is somewhat of superiority in it (upon which

reason the apostle forbiddeth women to teach, 1 Cor. xiv. 34, because

by the law of their creation they cannot be superiors), and somewhat of

profit, and therefore the time is hastened and precipitated. Few stay

till their youthful heats be spent, and thirty years, experience hath

fitted them for so great a work and burthen. It is observable that

Jesus Christ had also fulfilled thirty years ere he entered upon his

public ministry. Though I do not tie it merely to the years; either too

young or too weak, it is all one to me. There are (as Ignatius saith in

his epistle to the Magnesians) te`n poli'an ma'tin phe'rpmtes, some

that in vain hang out the bush of grey hairs, when they have no good

wine to vend or utter. Indeed, the drift of that whole epistle is to

persuade them to reverence their bishop, though but of small years,

[117] where he instanceth in Daniel, Solomon, Jeremiah, Samuel, Josiah,

whose youth was seasoned with knowledge and piety, and concludeth that

it is not age but gifts make a minister, and, through the abundance of

Spirit, there may be an old mind in a young body; and Timothy, though

younger in years, was an elder in the church. For my own particular, I

must say, as Pharaoh,s chief butler said, Gen. xli. 9, `I remember my

faults this day., I cannot excuse myself from much of crime and sin in

it; but I have been in the ministry these ten years, and yet not fully

completed the thirtieth year of my age; the Lord forgive my rash

intrusion. Whatever help or furtherance I have contributed to the faith

and joy of the saints by my former public labours, or my private

ministerial endeavours, or shall do by this present work, I desire it

may be wholly ascribed to the efficacy of the divine grace, which is

many times conveyed and reached forth by the most unworthy instruments.

But to return. Tertullian [118] hath a notable observation concerning

some sectaries in his time, Nunquam citius proficitur quam in castris

rebellium, ubi ipsum illic esse promereri est--that men usually have a

quick dispatch and progress in the tents of heresy, and become teachers

ere they are scarce Christians. He goeth on: Neophytos collocant, ut

glori� eos obligent, quia veritate non possunt--they set up young men

to teach, that they may win them by honour, when they cannot gain them

by truth. Certainly this is a bait that pride soon swalloweth; and that

which hath drawn many into error, is a liberty to teach before they are

scarce anything in religion. Oh! consider, hasty births do not fill the

house, but the grave. Men that obtrude themselves too soon upon a

calling do not edify, but destroy. It is good for a while to be slow to

speak. Aquinas, when he heard Albertus, was called Bos mutus, the dumb

ox, because for a great while he was altogether silent. It is not the

Spirit of God, but the spirit of vainglory which putteth men upon

things which they are not able to wield and manage. It is good to take

notice of those compressions and constraints that are within our

spirits; but it is good also to take heed that they do not arise from

pride, or some carnal affections.

2. It showeth that we should not precipitate our judgments concerning

doctrines and points of divinity. That we may not rashly condemn or

defend anything that is contrary to the word of God, or of which we

have certainty from the word. Be slow to speak; that is, do not speak

till you have a sure ground. The sudden conceptions of the mind are not

always the best. To take up things hastily engageth a man to many

inconveniences. Moses would not give an answer suddenly; Num. ix. 8, `I

will hear what the Lord will speak concerning you., That great prophet

was at a stand till he had spoken with God. Under the law the tip of

the priest,s ear was to be sprinkled with blood; first he must hear

Christ, and then speak to the people. Well, then, be not too hasty to

defend any opinion till you have tried it. How mutable do men of a

sudden spirit and fiery nature appear to the world! Rashly professing

according to their present apprehensions, they are forced to change

often. There should be a due pause ere we receive things, and a serious

deliberation ere we defend and profess them.

3. That we be not more forward to teach others than to learn ourselves.

Many are hasty to speak, but backward to do, and can better master it

and prescribe to others than practise themselves, which our apostle

noteth: James iii. 1, `My brethren, be not many masters;, that is, be

not so forward to discipline others when you neglect your own souls.

The apostle speaketh so earnestly, as if he meant to rouse a benumbed

conscience: Rom. ii. 21, `Thou which teachest another, teachest thou

not thyself?, And I have heard that a scandalous minister, in reading

of it, was struck at the heart and converted. Since the fall, light is

more directive than persuasive; and therefore a heathen could observe,

that it is far more easy to instruct others than to practise ourselves.

[119]

4. That we do not vainly and emptily talk of the things of God, and put

forth ourselves above what is meet: it is good to take every occasion,

but many times indiscreet speaking doth more hurt than silence. Some

will be always bewraying their folly, and in every meeting engross all

the discourse: Prov. x. 19, `In the multitude of words there wanteth

not sin, but he that refraineth his lips is wise., We should weigh our

words before we utter them: when men are swift to speak and much in

talk, they bewray some folly which is a stain to them. So Prov. xvii.

27, `He that hath understanding spareth his words., Empty vessels sound

loudest; and men of great parts, like a deep river, glide on with the

least noise.

5. It teacheth us not to be over-ready to frame objections against the

word. It is good to be dumb at a reproof, though not deaf. Let not

every proud thought break out into thy speeches. Guilt will recoil at

the hearing of the word, and the mind will be full of vain surmises and

carnal objections; but alas! how odious would men appear if they should

be swift to utter them--if thoughts, that are the words of the mind,

should be formed into outward words and expressions. Thoughts may be

corrected upon further information, but words cannot be recalled;

thoughts do only stain our own spirits, words convey a taint to others;

thoughts are more indeliberate than words; in thoughts we mi with our

mind only, in words with our mind and tongue.

Obs. 7. That renewed men should be slow to wrath. You must understand

this with the same reference that you do the other clauses; and so it

implieth that the word must not be received or delivered with a

wrathful heart: it concerneth both hearers and teachers.

1. The teachers. They must be slow to wrath in delivering the word.

(1.) Let not the word lacquey upon private anger: spiritual weapons

must not be used in your own cause; you have not a power to cast out of

Christ at your own pleasure. The word is not committed to you for the

advancing of your esteem and interests, but Christ,s. The apostle had

`vengeance in a readiness,, 2 Cor. x. 6, but it was for disobedience to

Christ, not for disrespect to his own person. Men that quarrel for

esteem bring a just reproach and scandal upon their ministry. (2.) Do

not easily deliver yourselves up to the sway of your own passions and

anger: people will easily distinguish between this mock thunder and

divine threatenings. Passionate outcries do only fright the easy and

over-credulous souls, and that only for the present; proofs and

insinuations do a great deal more good: snow that falleth soft, soaketh

deep. In the tempest Christ slept; when passion is up, true zeal is

usually asleep.

2. The people. It teacheth them patience under the word. Do not rise up

in arms against a just reproof; it is natural to us, but be slow to it;

do not yield to your nature. David said `I have sinned against the

Lord,, 2 Sam. xii. 13, when Nathan set home his fact with all the

aggravations: and it is an accusation against a king, 2 Chron. xxx vi.

12, `He humbled not himself before Jeremiah the prophet, speaking from

the mouth of the Lord., Mark, it is not said, `before the Lord,, but

`before Jeremiah., God was angry with a great king for not humbling

himself before a poor prophet. Anger doth but bewray your own guilt.

One was reported to have uttered something against the honour of

Tiberius; the crafty tyrant did the more strongly believe it, because

it was the just report of his own guilt. Quia vera erant dicta

credebantur, saith the historian. [120] So many think we aim at them,

intend to disgrace them, because indeed there is a cause, and so storm

at the word. Usually none are angry at a reproof but those that most

deserve it; and when conviction, which should humble, doth but

irritate, it is an ill sign. Those that were `pricked at the hearts,,

Acts ii. 37, were much better tempered than those that were `cut to the

heart,, Acts vii. 54, as humiliation is a better fruit of the word than

impatience. You shall see the children of God are most meek when the

word falleth upon their hearts most directly. David saith, `Let the

righteous reprove me, and it shall be an oil,, c. Reproof to a gracious

soul is like a sword anointed with balsam; it woundeth and healeth at

the same time. So Hezekiah said, Isa. xxxix. 8, `Good is the word of

the Lord which thou hast spoken: `it was a sad word, a heavy

threatening; yet the submission of his sanctified judgment calleth it

good. In such cases you should not storm and rage, but give thanks, and

say, as David to Abigal, `Blessed be the Lord that sent thee to meet me

this day:, bless God for meeting with you in the word.

Obs. 8. That it is some cure of passion to delay it. `Be slow to

wrath., Anger groweth not by degrees, like other passions, but at her

birth she is in her full growth; the heat and fury of it is at first,

and therefore the best cure is deliberation: [121] Prov. xix. 11, `The

discretion of a man deferreth his anger;, that is, the revenge which

anger meditateth. Many men are like tinder or gunpowder, take fire at

the least spark of offence, and, by following their passions too close,

run themselves into inconveniences; therefore it is good to check these

precipitant motions by delay and due recourse to reason: Prov. xiv. 29,

`He that is hasty in spirit exalteth folly., When men are quick and

short of spirit, they are transported into many indecencies, which

dishonour God, and wound their conscience, and afterward have cause

enough, by a long repentance, to bewail the sad effects of a short and

sudden anger. Athenodorus advised Augustus, when he was surprised with

anger, to repeat the alphabet, which advice was so far good, as it

tended to cool a sudden rage, that the mind, being diverted, might

afterward deliberate. So Ambrose [122] counselled Theodosius the Great

(after he had rashly massacred the citizens of Thessalonica) to decree,

that in all sentences that concerned life, the execution of them should

be deferred till the thirtieth day, that so there may be a space for

showing mercy, if need required. Well, then, indulge not the violence

and swiftness of passion; sudden apprehensions usually mistake, the

ultimate judgment of reason is best. Motions vehement, and of a sudden

irruption, run away without a rule, and end in folly and inconvenience.

It is a description of God that he is `slow to wrath;, certainly a

hasty spirit is most unlike God. It is true that some good men have

been observed to be oxu'choloi, hasty, and soon moved, as Calvin. [123]

Augustine observes the like of his father, Patricius, [124] and some

observe the same of Cameron; [125] but for the most part these motions

in those servants of God were but (as Jerome calleth them) propassions,

sudden and irresistible alterations that were connatural to them, and

which they by religious exercises in a great mea sure mortified and

subdued; and if anger came soon, it stayed not long. Solomon says,

Eccles. vii. 9, `Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry, for anger

resteth in the bosom of fools., That anger is [126] most culpable which

soon cometh, but resteth or stayeth long, as being indulged. So Solomon

saith elsewhere, Prov. xiv. 17, `He that is soon angry dealeth

foolishly, but a man of wicked devices is hated;, implying, that sudden

anger is an effect of folly and weakness, which may be incident to the

best, but to concoct anger into malice is an argument of wickedness,

and is found only in the most depraved natures; in short, it is

contemptible to be angry suddenly, but to plot revenge abominable.

Ver. 20. For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

Here he rendereth a reason of the last clause, why they should take

heed of this indignation and rising of their hearts against the word,

because the wrath of man would hinder them from attaining that

righteousness and accomplishing that duty which God requireth in his

word.

For the wrath of man.--There is an emphasis in that word: he doth not

say wrath in general, for there is always a righteousness in the wrath

of God. The apostle saith, Rom. i. 18, it is `revealed from heaven

against the unrighteousness of men,, or, rather, the wrath of man, to

show that, under what disguises soever it appeareth, it is but human

and fleshly: there is nothing of God, but much of man in it.

Worketh not, ou katerga'zetai--doth not attain, doth not persuade or

bring forth, any righteous action; yea, it hindereth God from

perfecting his work in us.

The righteousness of God.--That is, say some, justice mixed with mercy,

which is the righteousness that the scriptures ascribe to God, and

anger will not suffer a man to dispense it; but this seems too much

strained and forced. Others say the meaning is, it doth not execute

God,s just revenge, but our own malice. But rather the righteousness of

God is put for such righteousness as God requireth, God approveth, God

effecteth; and in this sense in scripture things are said to be of God

or of Christ which are effected by his power or commanded in his word:

thus faith is said to be the work of God, John vi. 29, because he

commandeth we should labour in it, which plainly is the intent of that

context; and the apostle useth the word `righteousness,, because anger

puts on the form of justice and righteousness more than any other

virtues. It seemeth to be but a just displeasure against an offence,

and looks upon revenge not as irrational excess, but a just punishment,

especially such anger as carrieth the face of zeal, which is the anger

spoken of in the text. Rage and distempered heats in controversies of

religion, and about the sense of the word, such carnal zeal, how just

and pious soever it seem, is not approved and acquitted as righteous

before God. It is observable that there is a litotes in the apostle,s

expression--more is intended than said; for the apostle means, it is so

far from working righteousness, that it worketh all manner of evil;

witness the tragical effects of it in the world: the slaughters that

Simeon and Levi wrought in Shechem: Sarah in her anger breaks two

commandments at once, takes the name of God in vain, and falsely

accuseth Abraham, Gen. xvi. 5.

Obs. 1. From the context. The worst thing that we can bring to a

religious controversy is anger. The context speaketh of anger

occasioned by differences about the word. Usually no affections are so

outrageous as those which are engaged in the quarrel of religion, for

then that which should bridle the passion is made the fuel of it, and

that which should restrain undue heats and excesses engageth them. How

ever, this should not be. Christianity, of all religions, is the

meekest and most humble. It is founded upon the blood of Christ, who is

a Lamb slain. It is consigned and sealed by the Spirit of Christ, who

descended like a dove. Both are emblems of a meek and modest humility.

And should a meek religion be defended by our violences, and the God of

peace served with wrathful affections, and the madness of an evil

nature bewray itself in the best cause? Christ,s war fare needeth not

such carnal weapons; as Achish said, `Have I need of mad men?, 1 Sam.

xxi. 15. So, hath Jesus Christ need of our passions and furies? Doth

the God of heaven need `a tongue set on fire of hell,? James iii. 6.

Michael the archangel was engaged in the best cause against the worst

adversary, with Satan about the body of Moses; and yet the purity of

his nature would not permit him to profane his engagement with any

excess and indecency of passion: `He durst not bring against him a

railing accusation,, Jude 9. And as the wrath of man is unsuitable to

the matters of God, so it is also prejudicial. When tongue is sharpened

against tongue, and pen against pen, what followeth? Nothing but mutual

animosities and hatreds, whereby, if we gain aught of truth, we lose

much of love and goodness. Satan would fain be even with God. The

devil,s kingdom is mostly ruined by the rage of his own instruments;

and you cannot gratify Satan more than when you wrong the truth by an

unseemly defence of it; [127] for then he seemeth to be quits with

Christ, overturning his kingdom by those which are engaged in the

defence of it. Briefly, then, if you would do good, use a fit means.

The barking dog loseth the prey. Violence and furious prosecution

seldom gaineth. Those engage most successfully that use the hardest

arguments and the softest words; whereas railings and revilings, as

they are without love, so they are without profit. Be watchful; our

religious affections may often overset us.

06s. 2. From that worketh not the righteousness. Anger is not to be

trusted; it is not so just and righteous as it seemeth to be. Of all

passions this is most apt to be justified. As Jonah said to God, `I do

well to be angry,, Jonah iv. 9, so men are apt to excuse their heats

and passions, as if they did but express a just indignation against an

offence and wrong received. Anger, like a cloud, blindeth the mind, and

then tyranniseth over it. There is in it somewhat of rage and violence;

it vehemently exciteth a man to act, and taketh away his rule according

to which he ought to act. All violent concitations of the spirit

disturb reason, and hinder clearness of debate; and it is then with the

soul as it is with men in a mutiny, the gravest cannot be heard; and

there is in it somewhat of mist and darkness, by which reason, being

beclouded, is rather made a party than a judge, and doth not only

excuse our passion, but feed it, as being employed in representing the

injury, rather than bridling our irrational excess. Well, then, do not

believe anger. Men credit their passion, and that foments it. In an

unjust cause, when Sarah was passionate, you see how confident she is,

Gen. xvi. 5, `The Lord judge between me and thee., It would have been

ill for her if the Lord had umpired between her and Abraham. It was a

strange confidence, when she was in the wrong, to appeal to God. You

see anger is full of mistakes, and it seemeth just and righteous when

it doth nothing less than work the righteousness of God. The heathens

suspected themselves when under the power of their anger. `I would beat

thee,, saith one, `if I were not angry,, [128] When you are under the

power of a passion, you have just cause to suspect all your

apprehensions; you are apt to mistake others, and to mistake your own

spirits. Passion is blind, and cannot judge; it is furious, and hath no

leisure to debate and consider.

Obs. 3. From that anger of man and righteousness of God. Note the

opposition, for there is an emphasis in those two words man and God.

The point is, that a wrathful spirit is a spirit most unsuitable to

God. God being the God of peace, requireth pacatum animum--a quiet and

composed spirit. Thunder is in the lower regions, inferiora fulminant;

all above is quiet. Wrathful men are most unfit either to act grace or

to receive grace; to act grace by drawing nigh to God in worship, for

worship must carry proportion with the object of it, as the God that is

a spirit, John iv. 27, will be served in spirit; so the God of peace

with a peaceable mind. So to receive grace from God: angry men give

place to Satan, but grieve the Spirit, Eph. iv. 26, 27, with 30, and so

are more fit to receive sin than grace. God is described, Ps. ii. 4, to

`sit in the heavens,, which noteth a quiet and composed posture; and

truly, as he sitteth in the heavens, so he dwelleth in a meek and quiet

spirit.

Obs. 4. The last note is more general, from the whole verse: that man,s

anger is usually evil and unrighteous. Anger and passion is a sin with

which the people of God are many times surprised, and too often do they

swallow it without grief and remorse, out of a conceit partly that

their anger is such as is lawful and allowed; partly that it is but a

venial evil, and of sudden surreption, for which there is a pardon of

course.

I shall therefore endeavour two things briefly:--

1. Show you what anger is sinful.

2. How sinful, and how great an evil it is.

First, To state the matter, that it. is necessary, for all anger is not

sinful; one sort of it falleth under a concession, another under a

command, another under the just reproofs of the word.

[1.] There are some indeliberable motions, which Jerome calleth

propassions, [129] sudden and irresistible alterations, which are the

infelicities of nature, not the sins; [130] tolerable in themselves, if

rightly stinted. A man is not to be stupid and insensate: anger in

itself is but a natural motion to that which is offensive; and (as all

passions) is so long lawful as it doth not make us omit a duty, or

dispose us to a sin, or exceed the value of its impulsive cause. So the

apostle saith, `Be angry, and sin not,, Eph. iv. 26. He alloweth what

is natural, forbiddeth what is sinful.

[2.] There is a necessary holy anger, which is the whetstone of

fortitude and zeal. So it is said, `Lot,s righteous soul was vexed,, 2

Peter ii. 7. So Christ himself, Mark iii. 5. `He looked about him with

anger., So Moses, wrath waxed hot, Exod. xi. 8. This is but an advised

motion of the will, guided by the rules of reason. Certainly they are

angry and sin not who are angry at nothing but sin: it is well when

every passion serveth the interests of religion. However, let me tell

you, this being a fierce and strong motion of the spirit, it must be

used with great advice and caution. (1.) The principle must be right.

God,s interests and ours are often twisted, and many times self

interposeth the more plausibly because it is varnished with a show of

religion; and we are more apt to storm at indignities and affronts

offered to ourselves rather than to God. The Samaritans rejected

Christ, and in the name of Christ the apostles, they presently called

for fire from heaven; but our Lord saith, Luke ix. 55, `Ye know not

what mariner of spirit ye are of., It is good to look to the impulses

upon which our spirits are acted; pride and self-love is apt to rage at

our own contempt and disgrace; and the more securely when the main

interest is God,s. A river many times loseth its savour when it is

mingled with other streams; and zeal that boileth up upon an injury

done to God may prove carnal, when it is fed with the accessions of our

own contempt and interest. [131] It is observed of Moses, that he was

most meek in his own cause. When Miriam and Aaron spoke against him, it

is said, Num. xii. 3, `The man Moses was meek above all men in the

earth;, but when the law was made void, he broke the tables, and his

meek spirit was heightened into some excess of zeal. By that action you

would have judged his temper hot and furious. Lot,s spirit was vexed,

but it was with Sodom,s filthiness, not with Sodom,s injuries. Zeal is

too good an affection to be sacrificed to the idol of our own esteem

and interests. (2.) It must have a right object: the heat of

indignation must be against the crime, rather than against the person:

good anger is always accompanied with grief; it prompteth us to pity

and pray for the party offending. Mark iii. 5, Christ `looked about him

with anger, and was grieved for the hardness of their hearts., False

zeal hath mischief and malice in it; it would have the offender rooted

out, and purposeth revenge rather than correction. (3.) The manner must

be right. See that you be not tempted to any indecency and

unhandsomeness of expression; violent and troubled expressions argue

some carnal commotion in the spirit. Moses was angry upon a good cause,

but he `spake unadvisedly with his lips,, Ps. cvi. 33. In religious

contests men are more secure, as if the occasion would warrant their

excesses; and so often anger is vented the more freely, and lieth

unmortified under a pretence of zeal.

[3.] There is a sinful anger when it is either--;(1.) Hasty and

indeliberate. Kash and sudden motions are never without sin. Some

pettish spirits are, as I said, like fine glasses, broken as soon as

touched, and all of fire upon every slight and trifling occasion; when

meek and grave spirits are like flints, that do not send out a spark

but after violent and great collision. Feeble minds have a habit of

wrath, and, like broken bones, are apt to roar with the least touch: it

argueth much unmortifiedness to be so soon moved. Or, (2.) Immoderate,

when it exceedeth the merits of the cause, as being too much, or kept

too long: too much when the commotion is so immoderate as to discompose

the spirit, or to disturb reason, or to interrupt prayer, and the free

exercise of the spirit in duties of religion. When men have lost that

patience in which they should possess and enjoy themselves, Luke xxi.

19. There is a rational dislike that may be allowed, but such violent

commotions are not without sin. Too long: anger should be like a spark,

soon extinguished; like fire in straw, rather than like fire in iron.

Thoughts of revenge are sweet, but when they stay long in the vessel

they are apt to wax eager and sour. New wine is heady, but if it be

kept long, it groweth tart. Anger is furious, but if it be detained, it

is digested and concocted into malice. Aristotle reckoneth three

degrees of angry men, each of which is worse than the former; some are

hasty, others are bitter, others are implacable. [132] Wrath retained

desisteth not without revenge. Oh! consider this spirit is most

unchristian. The rule of the word is, `Let not the sun go down upon

your wrath,, Eph. iv. 26. This is a fire that must be covered ere we go

to bed: if the sun leave us angry, the next morning he may find us

malicious. Plutarch saith of the Pythagoreans that if any offence had

fallen out in the day, they would before sunset mutually embrace one

another, and depart in love. [133] And there is a story of Patricius

and John of Alexandria, between whom great anger had passed; but at

evening John sent to him this message, The sun is set; upon which they

were soon reconciled. (3.) Causeless, without a sufficient ground: Mat.

v. 22, `Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, is in

danger of judgment., But now the great inquiry is, What is a sufficient

cause for anger? Are injuries? I answer--No; our religion forbiddeth

revenge as well as injury, for they differ only in order. The ill-doing

of another doth not loosen and take away the bond of our love. When men

are provoked by an injury, they think they may do anything; as if

another,s injury had exempted them from the obedience of God,s law.

This is but to repeat and act over their sins: it was bad in them, it

is worse in us; for he that sinneth by example sinneth twice, [134]

because he had an instance of the odiousness of it in another. To

`answer a fool according to his folly `is to be `like him,, Prov. xxvi.

4; to practise that myself which I judge odious in another; and

certainly it cannot be any property of a good man purposely to be evil

because another is so. [135] But are mishaps a cause? I answer--No;

this were not only anger, but murmuring, and a storming against

providence, by which all events, that are to us casual, are determined.

But are the miscarriages of children and servants a cause? I answer--If

it be in spiritual matters, anger justly moderated is a duty. If in

moral and civil, only a rational and temperate displeasure is lawful.

For it is but a natural dislike and motion of the soul against what is

unhand some and troublesome. But we must see that we regard measure,

and time, and other circumstances. (4.) Such as is without a good end.

The end of all anger must be the correction of offences, not the

execution of our own malice. Always that anger is evil which hath

somewhat of mischief in it, which aimeth not so much at the conviction

and reclaiming of an offender as his disgrace and confusion. The

stirring of the spirit is not sinful till revenge mingle with it. Well,

then, as there must be a good cause, there must be a good end. Cain was

angry with Abel without a cause, and therefore his anger was wicked and

sinful, Gen. iv. 5. But Esau had some cause to be angry with Jacob, and

yet his anger was not excusable, because there was mischief and revenge

in it, Gen. xxvii. 41.

Secondly, My next work is to show you how sinful it is. I have been

larger in the former part than my method permitted; I shall the more

contract myself in this. Consider an argument or two.

1. Nothing maketh room for Satan more than wrath: Eph. iv. 26, 27, `Be

angry and sin not;, and it followeth, `Give not place to the devil;, as

if the apostle had said, If you give place to wrath, you will give

place to Satan, who will further and further close with you. When

passions are neglected they are ripened into habits, and then the devil

hath a kind of right in us. The world is full of the tragical effects

of anger, and therefore, when it is harboured and entertained, you do

not know what may be the issue of it.

2. It much woundeth your own peace. When the apostle had spoken of the

sad effects of anger, he added, Eph. iv. 30, `And grieve not the Holy

Spirit, by which you are sealed to the day of redemption., The Spirit

cannot endure an unquiet mansion and habitation: wrathful and fro ward

spirits usually want their seal, that peace and establishment which

others enjoy; for the violences of anger do not only discompose reason,

but disturb conscience. The Holy Ghost loveth a sedate and meek spirit;

the clamour and tumult of passion frighteth him from us, and it is but

just with God to let them want peace of conscience that make so little

conscience of peace.

3. It disparageth Christianity: the glory of our religion lieth in the

power that it hath to sanctify and meeken the spirit. Now when men that

profess Christ break out into such rude and indiscreet excesses, they

stain their profession, and debase faith beneath the rate of reason, as

if morality could better cure the irregularities of nature than

religion. Heathens are famous for their patience under injuries,

discovered not only in their sayings and rules for the bridling of

passion, but in their practice. Many of their sayings were very strict

and exact; for, by the progressive inferences of reason, they fancied

rules of perfection, but indeed looked upon them as calculated for

talk, rather than practice. But when I find them in their lives passing

by offences with a meek spirit, without any disturbance and purposes of

revengeful returns, I cannot but wonder, and be ashamed that I have

less command and rule of my own spirit than they had, having so much

advantage of rule and motive above them. As when I read that Lycurgus

[136] had one of his eyes struck out by an insolent young man, and yet

used much lenity and love to the party that did it, how can I choose

but blush at those eager prosecutions that are in my own spirit upon

every light distaste, that I must have limb for limb, tooth for tooth,

and cannot be quiet till I have returned reviling for reviling? &c.

Certainly I cannot dishonour the law of Christ more than to do less

than they did by the law of nature.

Ver. 21. Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of

naughtiness, and receive with meekness the ingrafted word, which is

able to save your souls.

The apostle having formerly spoken of the power of the word, and from

thence inferred that it should be heard willingly, and without a

cavilling or contradicting spirit, and to that purpose having shown the

evil of wrath, he again enforceth the main exhortation of laying aside

all wrathful and exulcerated affections, that they might be fitter to

entertain the word with an honest and meek heart, for their comfort and

salvation. There is in the verse a duty, and that is, `receiving of the

word;, the help to it, and that is, `laying aside, evil frames of

spirit. Then there is the manner how this duty is to be performed,

`with meekness;, then the next end, and that is `ingrafting the word;,

then the last end, which is propounded by way of motive, `which is able

to save your souls.,

Wherefore, that is, because wrath is such an hindrance to the

righteousness which God requireth; or it may be referred to the whole

context, upon all these considerations.

Lay apart, apothemenoi.--The force of the word implieth we should put

it off as an unclean rag or worn garment: the same metaphor is used by

the apostle Paul: Eph. iv. 22, `That ye put off the old man, which is

corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts;, and Col. iii. 8, in a very

like case, `But now put off these, anger, malice, wrath, blasphemy,

filthy communication.

All filthiness, pasan rhuparian.--The word is sometimes put for the

filthiness of ulcers, and for the nastiness and filth of the body

through sweating, and is here put to stir up the greater abomination

against sin, which is elsewhere called `the filth of the flesh,, 1

Peter iii. 21. Some suppose the apostle intendeth those lusts which are

most beastly, and have greatest turpitude in them; but either the sense

must be more general to imply all sin, or more particularly restrained

to filthy and evil speaking, or else it will not so well suit with the

context.

And superfluity of naughtiness, te`n perisseian kakias. It may be

rendered `the overflowing of malice;, and so it noteth scoffs, and

railings, and evil speakings, which are the superfluity of that in

which everything is superfluous; and these are specified in a parallel

place of the apostle Peter, 1 Peter ii. 1, to which James might allude,

writing after him. Beza rendereth it `the excrement of wickedness.,

Some make it an allusion to the garbage of the sacrifices in the brook

Kedron. Most take it generally for that abundance of evil and

filthiness that is in the heart of man.

And receive.--A word often used for the appropriation of the word, and

admitting the power of it into our hearts. Receive, that is, give it

more way to come to you; make more room for it in your hearts. Thus it

is charged upon them, 2 Thes. ii. 10, that `they received not the love

of the truth., So it is said of the natural man, ou de'chetai, `He

receiveth not the things of God., This is a notion so proper to this

matter, that the formal act of faith is expressed by it, John i. 11,

`To as many as received him,, &c.

With meekness; that is, with a teachable mind, with a modest,

submissive spirit.

The ingrafted word, logon emphuton.--Some refer it to reason, others to

Christ, but with much absurdity; for this word noteth the end and fruit

of hearing, that the word may be planted in us; and the apostle showeth

that, by the industry of the apostles, the word was not only propounded

to them, but rooted in them by faith. The like metaphor is elsewhere

used: `I have planted,, 1 Cor. iii. 6, that is, God by his means; and

the metaphor is continued, Col. i. 6, lo'gos karpophoroumenos, a phrase

that noteth the flourishing and growing of the word after the planting

of it in the soul.

Which is able to save; that is, instrumentally, as it is accompanied

with the divine grace; for the gospel is `the power of God unto

salvation., Rom. i. 16.

Your souls; that is, yourselves, bodies and souls. Salvation is attri

buted to the soul by way of eminency, the principal part being put for

the whole: Rom. xiii. 1, `Let every soul be subject to the higher

powers,, that is, every person. So in other places the same manner of

expression is used in this very matter: 1 Peter i. 9, `The end of your

faith, the salvation of your souls;, so Mat. xvi. 20, `Lose his own

soul,, that is, himself. In such forms of speech the body is not

excluded, because it always followeth the state of the soul.

The notes are many: I shall be the briefer.

Obs. 1. From that laying aside. Before we come to the word there must

be preparation. They that look for the bridegroom had need trim up

their lamps. The instrument must be tuned ere it can make melody. Hash

entering upon duties is seldom successful. God may meet us unawares,

such is his mercy; but it is a great adventure. The people were to wash

their clothes when they went to hear the law, Exod. xix. 10. Something

there must be done to prepare and fix the heart to seek the Lord, 2

Chron. xx. 19; Ps. lvi. 8. Solomon saith, `Take heed to thy foot when

thou goest into the house of God,, Eccles. v. 1. The heathens had one

in their temples to remember them that came to worship of their work;

he was to cry, Hoc age. Many come to hear, but they do not consider the

weight and importance of the duty. Christ saith, Luke viii. 18, `Take

heed how you hear., It were well there were such a sound in men,s ears

in the times of their approaches to God; some to cry to them, `Oh, take

heed how you hear., It is good to be `swift to hear,, but not to be

rash and inconsiderate. Do not make such haste as to forget to take God

along with you. You must begin duties with duties. [137] Special duties

require a special setting apart of the heart for God, but all require

something. Inconsiderate addresses are always fruitless. We come on,

and go off, and there is all. We do not come with expectation, and go

without satisfaction. Well, then, come with more advised care when you

come to wait upon God; look to your feet, and come prepared. Let me

speak one word by way of caution, and another by way of direction.

1. By way of caution. (1.) Do not exclude God out of your preparations.

Usually men mistake in this matter, and hope by their own care to work

themselves into a fitness of spirit. Preparation consisteth much in

laying aside evil frames; and before you lay aside other evil frames,

lay aside self-confidence: Prov. xvi. 1, `The preparations of the heart

in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord;, the very

dispositions and motions of the spirit are from him. It is a wrong to

that text to expound it so as if the preparation were from man and the

success from God; both are from the Lord. God,s children have entered

comfortably upon duties, when they have seen God in their preparations:

Ps. lxxi. 16, `I will go forth in the strength of God;, that is, to the

duty of praise, as is clear in the context. (2.) Though you cannot get

your hearts into such a frame as you do desire, trust God: `Faith is

the evidence of things not seen,, Heb. xi. 1; and that help which is

absent to sense and feeling may be present to faith. A bell may be long

in rising, but it ringeth loud when it is once up. You do not know how

God may come in. The eunuch read, and understood not, and God sent him

an interpreter, Acts viii. When you begin duty you are dead and

indisposed; but you do not know with what sensible approaches of his

grace and power he may visit you ere it be over. It is not good to

neglect duty out of discouragements; this were to commit one sin to

excuse another: `Say not, I am a child,, Jer. i. 6: `I am slow of

lips,, `Who made the mouth?, Exod. iv. 10, 11.

2. By way of direction. I cannot go out into all the severals of

preparation, how the heart must be purged, faith exercised, repentance

renewed, wants and weaknesses reviewed, God,s glory considered, the

nature^ grounds, and ends of the ordinances weighed in our thoughts.

Only, in the general, so much preparation there must be as will make

the heart reverent. God will be served with a joy mixed with trembling:

the heart is never right in worship till it be possessed with an awe of

God: `How dreadful is this place!, Gen. xxviii. 17. And again, such

preparation as will settle the bent of the spirit heavenward. It is

said somewhere, `They set themselves to seek the Lord; and David saith,

Ps. lvii. 7, `My heart is fixed, my heart is fixed;, that is, composed

to a heavenly and holy frame. And again, such preparation as will make

you come humble and hungry. Grace is^usually given to the desiring

soul: `He hath filled the hungry with good things,, Luke i. 53. Again,

such as erecteth and raiseth the heart into a posture of expectation.

It is often said, `Be it to thee according to thy faith., They that

look for nothing find nothing; Christ,s greater things are for those

that believe, John i. 50.

Obs. 2. Christian preparation consists most in laying aside and

dispossessing evil frames. Weeds must be rooted out before the ground

is fit to receive the seed: `Plough up your fallow ground, and sow not

among thorns,, Jer. iv. 3. There is an unsuitableness between a filthy

spirit and the pure holy word; and therefore they that will not leave

their accustomed sins are unfit hearers. The matter must be prepared

ere it can receive the form. Some translate Paul,s dokimazeto heauton,

1 Cor. xi. 28, `Let him purge himself,, get away his dross and

corruption. All this showeth the need of renewing repentance before the

hearing the word; that sin being dispossessed, there may be room for

the entrance of grace. Noxious weeds are apt to grow again in the best

minds; therefore, as the leper under the law was still to keep his hair

shaven, Lev. xiv., so should we cut and shave, that though the roots of

sin remain, yet they may not grow and sprout. There is an extraordinary

vanity in some men, that will lay aside their sins before some solemn

duties, but with a purpose to return to the folly of them; as they

fable the serpent layeth aside his poison when he goeth to drink. They

say to their lusts as Abraham to his servants, `Tarry you here, for I

must go yonder and worship; I will come again to you,, Gen. xxii. 5.

They do not take an everlasting farewell of their sins. But, however,

they are wiser than those that come reeking from their sins into God,s

presence: this is to dare him to his face. The Jews are chidden for

praying with their `hands full of blood,, Isa. i. 15. They came boldly,

before they had been humbled for their oppression: `If her father had

spat in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days?, Num. xii. 14.

After great rebellions there should be a solemn humbling and purging.

What can men that come in their sins expect from God? Their state

confuteth their worship. God will have nothing to do with them, and he

marvelleth they should have anything to do with him. He hath nothing to

do with them: Job viii. 20, `He will not help the evil doers;, in the

original, `He will not take the wicked by the hand;, and he wondereth

you should have anything to do with him: `What hast thou to do to take

my words into thy mouth?, Ps. l. 16.

Obs. 3. From the word laying aside, apothemenoi. Put it off as a rotten

and filthy garment. Sin must be left with an utter detestation: Isa.

xxx. 22, `Thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth; thou shalt

say, Get ye hence., Sin is often expressed by abomination; it is so to

God, it should be so to men. Faint resistance argueth some inclination

of the mind to it. Here affections should be drawn out to their height;

grief should become contrition, anger should be heightened into rage

and indignation, and shame should be turned into confusion; no

displeasure can be strong and keen enough for sin.

Obs. 4. From that all. We must not lay aside sin in part only, but all

sin. So in Peter, the particle is universal, pasan kaki'an, 1 Peter ii.

1, `all malice: `and David saith, `I hate every false way,, Ps. cxix.

True hatred is eis ta` ge'ne, [138] to the whole kind. When we hate sin

as sin, we hate all sin. The heart is most sincere when the hatred is

general. The least sin is dangerous, and in its own nature deadly and

destructive. Caesar was stabbed with bodkins. We read of some that have

been devoured of wild beasts, lions and bears; but of others that have

been eaten up of vermin, mice, or lice. Pope Adrian was choked with a

gnat. The least sins may undo you. You know what Christ speaketh of a

little leaven. Do not neglect the least sins, or excuse yourselves in

any Rimmon. Carry out yourselves against all known sins, and pray as

he, Job xxxiv. 32, `That which I see not, teach thou me; if I have done

iniquity, I will do so no more.,

Obs. 5. From that word filthiness. Sin is filthiness; it snllieth the

glory and beauty of the soul, defaceth the image of God. This

expression is often used, `Filthiness of flesh and spirit,, 2 Cor. vii.

1, where not only gross wickedness, such as proceedeth from fleshly and

brutish lusts, is called filthiness, but such as is more spiritual,

unbelief, heresy, or misbelief, &c., nay, original corruption is called

so: Job xiv. 4, `Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?, so Job

xv. 14, `How can man be clean?, Nay, things glorious in the eyes of

men. Duties they are called dung, because of the iniquity that is found

in them: Mal. ii. 3, `I will spread dung upon your faces, even the dung

of your solemn feasts., So it was in God,s eyes. The Spirit of God

everywhere useth comparisons taken from things that are most odious,

that our hearts may be wrought into the greater detestation of sin.

Certainly they are much mistaken that think sin an ornament, when the

Spirit of God calleth it dung and excrement. But more especially I find

three sins called filthiness in scripture:--(1.) Covetousness, because

it debaseth the spirit of man, and maketh him stoop to such indecencies

as are beneath humanity; so it is said, `filthy lucre,, 1 Peter v. 2.

(2.) Lust, which in scripture dialect is called filthiness, or the sin

of unclearness, 1 Thes. iv. 7, because it maketh a man to subject or

submit his desires to the beasts, happiness, which is sensual

pleasures. (3.) In this place, anger and malice is called filthiness.

We please ourselves in it, but it is but filthiness; it is brutish to

yield to our rage and the turbulent agitation of our spirits, and not

to be able to withstand a provocation; it is worse than poison in toads

or asps, or what may be conceived to be most filthy in the creatures;

poison in them doth hurt others, it cannot hurt themselves; anger may

not hurt others, it cannot choose but hurt us. Well, then, all that

hath been said is an engagement to us to resist sin, to detest it as a

defilement; it will darken the glory of our natures. There are some

`spots that are not as the spots of God,s children,, Deut. xxxii. 5.

Oh! let us get rid of these `filthy garments,, Zech. iii. 4-6, and

desire change of raiment, the righteousness of Christ. Ay! but there

are some lesser sins that are spots too: `The garment spotted by the

flesh,, Jude 23; unseemly words are called `filthiness,, Eph. v. 4, and

duties `dung.,

Obs. 6. From that superfluity of wickedness. That there is abundance of

wickedness to be purged out of the heart of man. Such a fulness as

runneth over, a deluge of sin: Gen. vi. 5, `All the imaginations of the

heart are evil, only evil, and that continually;, it runneth out into

every thought, into every desire, into every purpose. As there is

saltness in every drop of the sea, and bitterness in every branch of

wormwood, so sin in everything that is framed within the soul. Whatever

an unclean person touched, though it were holy flesh, it was unclean;

so all our actions are poisoned with it. Dan. ix. 27, we read of `the

overspreading of abominations;, and David saith, Ps. xiv., `They are

all become vile, and gone out of the way;, all, and all over. In the

understanding there are filthy thoughts and purposes; there sin

beginneth: fish stink first at the head. In the will filthy motions;

the affections mingle with filthy objects. The memory, that should be

like the ark, the chest of the law, retaineth, like the grate of a

sink, nothing but mud and filthiness. The conscience is defiled and

stained with the impurities of our lives; the members are but

instruments of filthiness. A rolling eye provoketh a wanton fancy, and

stirreth up unclean glances: 2 Peter ii. 14, `Having eyes full of

adultery;, in the original, moichali'dos, `full of the adulteress., The

tongue bewrayeth the rottenness of the heart in filthy speaking. Oh!

what cause we have to bless God that there is `a fountain opened for

uncleanness,, Zech. xiii. 1. Certainly conversion is not an easy work,

there is such a mass of corruption to be laid aside.

Obs. 7. From that receive. Our duty in hearing the word is to receive

it. See places in the exposition. In the word there is the hand of

God,s bounty, reaching out comfort and counsel to us; and there must be

the hand of faith to receive it. In receiving there is an act of the

understanding, in apprehending the truth and musing upon it. So Christ

saith, Luke ix. 44, `Let these sayings sink down into your minds,, Let

them not float in the fancy, but enter upon the heart, as Solomon

speaketh of wisdom,s entering into the heart, Prov. ii. 10. And there

is an act of faith, the crediting and believing faculty is stirred up

to entertain it. So the apostle saith, `mingled with faith in the

hearing,, Heb. iv. 2, that is, mingled with our heart, or closely

applied to our hearts. And there is an act of the will and affections

to embrace and lodge it in the soul, which is called somewhere `a

receiving the truth in love,, when we make room for it, that carnal

affections and prejudices may not vomit and throw it up again. Christ

complaineth somewhere that `his word had no place in them,, ou cho'ran

e'chei en umin, it cannot find any room, or be safely lodged in you;

but, like a hot morsel or queasy bit, it was soon given up again.

Obs. 8. The word must be received with all meekness. Christ was

anointed to preach glad tidings to the meek, Isa. lxi. 1. They have

most right in the gospel. The main business will be to show what this

meekness is. Consider its opposites. Since the fall graces are best

known by their contraries. It excludeth three things:--(1.) A wrathful

fierceness, by which men rise in a rage against the word. When they are

admonished, they revile. Deep conviction provoketh many times fierce

opposition: Jer. vi. 10, `The word of the Lord is to them a reproach.,

They think the minister raileth when he doth but discover their guilt

to them. (2.) A proud stubbornness, when men are resolved to hold their

own; and though the premises fall before the word, yet they maintain

the conclusion: Jer. ii. 25, `Refrain thy foot from bareness, and thy

throat from thirst;, that is, why will you trot to Egypt for help, you

will get nothing but bareness and thirst; but they said, `Strangers

have we loved, and them will we follow;, that is, Say what thou wilt,

we will take our own way and course. So Jer. xliv. 16, 17, `We will not

hearken to thee, but will certainly do whatsoever goeth out of our own

mouth., Men scorn to strike sail before the truth, and though they

cannot maintain an opposition, yet they will continue it. (3.) A

contentious wrangling, which is found in men of an unsober wit, that

scorn to captivate the pride of reason, and therefore stick to every

shift. The psalmist saith, Ps. xxv. 8, 9, `He will teach sinners the

way. The meek he will guide in judgment; the meek he will teach his

way., Of all sinners, God taketh the meek sinner for his scholar. There

is difficulty enough in the scriptures to harden the obstinate. Camero

[139] observeth that the scriptures are so penned that they that have a

mind to know may know; and they that have a mind to wrangle may take

occasion enough of offence, and justly perish by the rebellion of their

own reason; for, saith he, God never meant to satisfy hominibus

praefracti ingenii, men of a stubborn and perverse wit. And Tertullian

[140] had observed the same long before him: that God had so disposed

the scriptures, that they that will not be satisfied might be hardened.

Certain we are that our Saviour Christ saith, Mark iv. 11, 12, that

`these things are done in parables, that seeing they might not see, nor

perceive and understand;, that is, for a just punishment of wilful

blindness and hardness, that those that would not see might not see. So

elsewhere our Lord saith, that `he that will do the will of God shall

know what doctrine is of God,, John vii. 17. When the heart is meekened

to obey a truth, the mind is soon opened to conceive of it.

Secondly, My next work is to show what it includeth. (1.) Humility and

brokenness of spirit. There must be insection before insition, meekness

before ingrafting. Gospel revivings are for the contrite heart, Isa.

lvii. 15. The broken heart is not only a tamed heart, but a tender

heart, and then the least touch of the word is felt: `Those that

tremble at my word,, Isa. lxvi. 2. (2.) Teachableness and tractableness

of spirit. There is an ingenuous as well as a culpable facility: `The

wisdom that is from above is gentle, and easy to be entreated,, James

iii. 17. It is good to get a tractable frame. The servants of God come

with a mind to obey; they do but wait for the discovery of their duty:

Acts x. 33, `We are all here present before God, to hear the things

that are commanded thee of God., They came not with a mind to dispute,

but practise. Oh! consider, perverse opposition will be your own ruin.

It is said, Luke vii. 30, `They rejected the counsel of God,, but it

was `against themselves;, that is, to their own loss. So Acts xiii. 46,

`Ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life.,

Disputing against the word, it is a judging yourselves; it is as if, in

effect, you should say, I care not for God, nor all the tenders of

grace and glory that he maketh to me.

Obs. 9. The word must not only be apprehended by us, but planted in us.

It is God,s promise: Jer. xxxi. 33, `I will put my laws in their

hearts, and write them in their inward parts;, that is, he will

enlighten our minds to the understanding of his will, and frame our

hearts and affections to the obedience of it, so that we shall not only

know duty, but have an inclination to it, which is the true ingrafting

of the word. Then `the root of the matter is within us,, Job xix. 28;

that is, the comfort of God,s promises rooted in the heart. So 1 John

iii. 9, `His seed abideth in him;, that is, the seed of the word

planted in the heart. Look to it, then, that the word be ingrafted in

you, that it do not fall like seed on the stony ground, so as it cannot

take root. You will know it thus:--(1.) If it be ingrafted, it will be

lo'gos karpophorou'menos, `a fruitful word,, Col. i. 6; it will spring

up in your conversation; the `stalk of wickedness,, Ezek. vii. 11, will

not grow so much as the word. (2.) The graft draweth all the sap of the

stock to itself. All your affections, purposes, cares, thoughts, will

serve the word: Rom. vi. 17, eis hon paredothete tupon didaches. They

were delivered over into the stamp and mould of the word that was

delivered to them. All affections and motions of the spirit are cast

into the mould of religion.

Obs. 10. That the word in God,s hand is an instrument to save our

souls. It is sometimes called `the word of truth,, at other times, `the

word of life;, the one noteth the quality of it, the other the fruit of

it. It is called `the power of God., Rom. i. 16, and `the arm of the

Lord:, Isa. liii. 1, `Who hath believed our report? to whom is the arm

of the Lord revealed?, By our report God,s arm is conveyed into the

soul. The use to which God hath deputed the word should beget a

reverence to it. The gospel is a saving word; let us not despise the

simplicity of it. Gospel truths should not be too plain for our mouths,

or too stale for your ears. `I am not ashamed of the gospel,, saith the

apostle, `for it is the power of God to salvation.,

Obs. 11. That the main care of a Christian should be to save his soul.

This is propounded as an argument why we should hear the word; it will

save your souls. Usually our greatest care is to gratify the body.

Solomon saith, `All a man,s labour is for the mouth;, that is, to

support the body in a decent state. Oh! but consider this is but the

worser part; and who would trim the scabbard and let the sword rust?

Man is in part an angel, and in part a beast. Why should we please the

beast in us, rather than the angel? In short, your greatest fear should

be for the soul, and your greatest care should be for the soul. Your

greatest fear: Mat. x. 28, `Fear not them that can destroy the body,

but fear him that can cast both body and soul into hell fire., There is

a double argument. The body is but the worser part, and the body is

alone; but on the other side, the soul is the more noble part, and the

state of the body dependeth upon the well or ill being of the soul: he

is `able to cast both soul and body,, &c., and therefore it is the

greatest imprudence in the world, out of a fear of the body, to betray

the soul. So your greatest care, riches and splendour in the world,

these are the conveniences of the body, and what good will they do you,

when you come to be laid in the cold silent grave? Mat. xvi. 26, `What

profit hath a man, if he win the whole world, and lose his own soul?,

It is but a sorry exchange that, to hazard the eternal welfare of the

soul for a short fruition of the world. So Job xxvii. 8, `What is the

hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh his

soul?, There is many a carnal man that pursueth the world with a

fruitless and vain attempt; they `rise early, go to bed late, eat the

bread of sorrows;, yet all will not do. But suppose they have gained

and taken the prey in hunting, yet what will it profit him when body

and soul must part, and though the body be decked, yet the soul must go

into misery and darkness, without any furniture and provision for

another life? what hope will his gain minister to him? Oh! that we were

wise to consider these things, that we would make it our work to

provide for the soul, to clothe the soul for another world, that we

would wait upon God in the word, that our souls may be furnished with

every spiritual and heavenly excellency, that we may not be `found

naked,, saith the apostle, 2 Cor. v. 3.

Obs. 12. That they that have received the word must receive it again:

though it were ingrafted in them, yet receive it that it may save your

souls. God hath deputed it to be a means not only of regeneration, but

salvation; and therefore, till we come to heaven, we must use this

help. They that live above ordinances, do not live at all, spiritually,

graciously. Painted fire needeth no fuel. The word, though it be an

immortal seed, yet needeth constant care and watering. But of this

before.

Ver. 22. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving

your own selves.

This verse catcheth hold of the heel of the former. He had spoken of

the fruit of the word, the salvation of the soul; that it may be

obtained, he showeth that we should not only hear, but practise.

But be ye doers of the word; that is, real observers. There is a

sentence of Paul that, for sound, is like this, but is indeed quite to

another sense: Rom. ii. 13, `For not the hearers of the law, but the

doers, are just before God., Doer is there taken for one that

satisfieth the law, and fulfilleth it in every tittle; for the

apostle,s drift is to prove that the Jews, notwithstanding their

privilege of having the oracles of God committed to them, were never a

whit the nearer justification before God. But here, by doers are

implied those that receive the work of the word into their hearts, and

express the effect of it in their lives. There are three things which

make a man a poiete`s, a doer of the word--faith, love, and obedience.

And not hearers only.--Some neither hear nor do; others hear, but they

rest in it. Therefore the apostle doth not dissuade from hearing;

`Hear,, saith he, but `not only.,

Deceiving, paralogizome'noi.--The word is a term of art: it implieth a

sophistical argument or syllogism, which hath an appearance or

probability of truth, but is false in matter or form; and is put by the

apostle to imply those false discourses which are in the consciences of

men. Paul useth the same word to imply that deceit which men impose

upon others by colourable persuasions: Col. ii. 4, `Let no man

paralogi'ze, deceive you with enticing words.,

Your own selves.--The argument receiveth force from these words. If a

man would baffle other men, he would not put a paralogism upon himself,

deceive himself in a matter of so great consequence. Or else it may be

a monition; you deceive yourselves, but you cannot deceive God.

The notes are:--

Obs. l.^That hearing is good, but should not be rested in. The apostle

saith, `Be not hearers only., Many go from sermon to sermon, hear much,

but do not digest it in their thoughts. The Jews were much in turning

over the leaves of `the scriptures, but did not weigh the matter of

them: therefore I suppose our Saviour reproveth them, John v.39, `You

search the scriptures., That ereunate there seemeth to be indicative,

rather than imperative, especially since it followeth, `for in them ye

think to have eternal life., They thought it was enough to be busy in

the letter of the scripture, and that bare reading would yield them

eternal life: so do others rest in hearing. They that stay in the means

are like a foolish workman, that contenteth himself with the having of

tools. It is a sad description of some foolish women, 2 Tim. iii. 7,

that they are `ever learning, and never coming to the knowledge of the

truth., Much hearing will increase our judgment, if there be not a

lively impression upon our hearts. The heart of man is so sottish, that

they content themselves with the bare presence of the ordinances in

their place; it is satisfaction enough that they `have a Levite to

their priest,, Judges xvii. 13. Others content themselves with their

bare presence at the ordinances, though they do not feel the power of

them.

Obs. 2. That the doers of the word are the best hearers. That is good

when we hear things that are to be done, and do things that are to be

heard. That knowledge is best which is most practical, and that hearing

is best which endeth in practice. David saith, Ps. cxix. 105, `Thy word

is a lantern to my feet, and a light to my steps., That is light indeed

which directeth you in your paths and ways. Mat. vii. 24, `He that

heareth my words, and doeth them, I will liken him to a wise builder.,

That is wisdom, to come to the word so as we may go away the better.

Divers hearers propound other ends. Some come to the word that they may

judge it; the pulpit, which is God,s tribunal, is their bar; they come

hither to sit judges of men,s gifts and parts: James iv. 11, `Thou art

not a doer of the law, but a judge., Others come to hear pleasing

things, to delight themselves in the elegancy of speech, rarity of

conceits, what is finely couched and ordered, not what is proper to

their case. This is not an act of religion so much as curiosity, for

they come to a sermon with the same mind they would to a comedy or

tragedy; the utmost that can be gained from them is commendation and

praise: Ezek. xxxiii. 32, `Thou art to them as a lovely song, or one

that hath a pleasant voice; but they hear thy words, and do them not:,

they were taken with the tinkling and tunableness of the expressions,

but did not regard the heavenly matter. So, that fond woman suddenly

breaketh out into a commendation of our Lord, but, it seemeth, regarded

the person more than the doctrine: Luke xi. 27, `Blessed is the womb

that bare thee, and the paps that gave thee suck;, for which our

Saviour correcteth her in the next verse, `Yea, rather blessed are they

that hear the word of God, and keep it., You are mistaken; the end of

preaching is not to exalt men, but God. You will say An excellent

sermon! But what do you gain by it? The hearer,s life is the preacher,s

best commendation, 2 Cor. iii. 1, 2. They that praise the man but do

not practise the matter, are like those that taste wines that they may

commend them, not buy them. Others come that they may better their

parts, and increase their knowledge. Every one desireth to know more

than another, to set up themselves; they do so much excel others as

they excel them in knowledge: and therefore we are all for notions and

head-light, little for that wisdom that `entereth upon the heart,,

Prov. ii. 10, and serveth to better the life; like children in the

rickets, that have big heads but weak joints: this is the disease of

this age. There is a great deal of curious knowledge, airy notions, but

practical saving truths are antiquated and out of date. Seneca observed

of the philosophers, that when they grew more learned they were less

moral. [141] And generally we find now a great decay of zeal, with the

growth of notion and knowledge, as if the waters of the sanctuary had

put out the fire of the sanctuary, and men could not be at the same

time learned and holy. Others hear that they may say they have heard;

conscience would not be pacified without some worship: `They come as my

people use to do,, Ezek. xxxiii. 31; that is, according to the fashion

of the age. Duties by many are used as a sleepy sop to allay the rage

of conscience.

The true use of ordinances is to come that we may profit. Usually men

speed according to their aim and expectation: `Desire the sincere milk

of the word, that ye may grow thereby,, 1 Peter ii. 2. So David

professeth his aim, Ps. cxix. 11, `Thy word have I hid in my heart,

that I might not sin against thee., The mind, like the ark, should be

the chest of the law, that we may know what to do in every case, and

that truths may be always present with us, as Christians find it a

great advantage to have truths ready and present, to talk with them

upon all occasions, Prov. vi. 21, 22. Oh! it is sweet when we and our

reins can confer together, Ps. xvi. 7.

If you cannot find present profit in what you hear, consider how it may

be useful for you to the future. Things I confess are not so acceptable

when they do not reach the present case; but they have their season,

and if come to you, you may bless God that ever you were acquainted

with them: Isa. xlii. 23, `Who will hearken and hear for the time to

come?, You may be under terrors, and under miseries, and then one of

these truths will be exceeding refreshing; or you may be liable to such

or such snares when you come to be engaged in the world, or versed in

such employments, therefore treasure up every truth of God: provision

argueth wisdom; it may concern you in time. Jer. x. 11, the prophet

teacheth them how they should defend their religion in Babylon;

therefore that sentence is in Chaldee, that he might put words in their

mouths, against they came to converse with the Chaldeans: `Thus shall

ye say to them, The gods that made not the heavens and the earth, they

shall perish from the earth., It is good to provide for Babylon whiles

we are in Sion, and not to reject truths as not pertinent to our case,

but to reserve them for future use and profit.

Obs. 3. From that paralogizome'noi Do not cheat yourselves with a

fallacy or false argument. Observe, that self-deceit is founded in some

false argumentation or reasoning. Conscience supplieth three

offices--of a rule, a witness, and a judge; and so accordingly the act

of conscience is threefold. There is sunte'resis, or a right

apprehension of the principles of religion; so conscience is a rule:

there is sunei'desis, a sense of our actions compared with the rule or

known will of God, or a testimony concerning the proportion or

disproportion that our actions bear with the word: then, lastly, there

is kri'sis, or judgment, by which a man applieth to himself those rules

of Christianity which concern his fact or state. All these acts of

conscience may be reduced into a syllogism or argument. As for

instance: he that is wholly carnal hath no interest in Christ; there is

the first act, knowledge: but I am wholly carnal; there is the second

act, conscience: therefore I have no interest in Christ; there is the

third act, judgment. The first act of conscience maketh the

proposition, the second the assumption, the third the conclusion. Now

all self-deceit is in one of these; propositions. Sometimes conscience

is out as a law in the very principles; sometimes as a witness in the

assumption; some times as a judge it suspendeth and hideth the

conclusion. Sometimes, I say, it faileth as a law, by making an

erroneous principle to be the bottom of a strong hope; as here, the

principle is naught: `They that hear the word shall be saved., At other

times it erreth in the application of the rule; as 1 John i. 6, `If we

say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and

do not the truth;, so 1 John ii. 4. The principle was right, `They that

have communion with God are happy;, but `We have communion with God,,

that was false, because they walked in darkness. So as a judge it doth

not pass sentence, but out of self-love forbeareth to judge of the

quality of the action or state, that the soul may not be affrightened

with the danger of it. You see the deceit; how shall we help it? I

answer severally to all these acts and parts of conscience:--

First, That you may build upon right principles:--(1.) It is good to

`hide the word in our hearts,, and to store the soul with sound

knowledge, and that will always rise up against vain hopes; as he that

would get weeds destroyed must plant the ground with contrary seeds.

When there is much knowledge, your own reins will chasten you; and

those sound principles will be talking to you, and speaking by way of

check and denial to your sudden and rash presumptions: `Bind the law to

thine heart, and when thou wakest it shall talk to thee,, Prov. vi. 22.

(2.) In the witnessing of conscience observe the reason of it, and let

the principle be always in sight: do not credit a single testimony

without a clear rule or positive ground. A corrupt conscience usually

giveth in a bare report, because the grounds are so slender and

insufficient that they come least in sight; for upon a trial conscience

would be ashamed of them: as, for instance, this is the report of

conscience, Sure I am in a good condition: now ask why? and the

conscience will be ashamed of the paralogism in the text--I hear the

word, make much of good ministers, &c. And yet this is the secret and

inward thought of most men, upon which they build all their hopes;

whereas true grounds are open and clear, and are urged together with

the report, and so beget a firm and steady confidence in the spirit; as

1 John ii. 3, `Hereby we are sure we know him,, that is, enjoy him,

have communion with him; for knowing there is knowing him by sense and

experience. Now whence did this confidence arise? You shall see from an

open and clear ground: We are sure (saith he) because `We keep his

commandments,, (3.) The grounds upon which conscience goeth should be

full and positive. There are three sorts of marks laid down in

scripture: some are only exclusive, others inclusive: and between these

a middle sort of marks, which I may call positive. For exclusive marks,

their intent is to deceive i false hope, or to shut out bold

pretenders, by showing them how far they come short of an interest in

Christ; and usually they are taken from a necessary common work, as

hearing the word, praying in secret, attendance upon the ordinances; he

that doth not these things is certainly none of God,s: but in case he

doth them, he cannot conclude his estate to be gracious. It is the

paralogism mentioned in the text, to reason from negative marks and the

common works of Christianity. It is true, all go not so far; therefore

Athanasius wished utinam omnes essent liypocritae--would to God that

all were hypocrites, and could undergo the trial of these exclusive

marks. All are not diligent hearers; but, however, it is not safe to be

hearers only. But, then, there are other marks which are inclusive,

which are laid down to show the measures and degrees of grace, and are

rather intended for comfort than conviction, which, if they are found

in us, we are safe, and in the state of grace; but if not, we cannot

conclude a nullity of grace. Thus faith is often described by such

effects as are proper to the radiancy and eminent degree of it, and

promises are made to such or such raised operations of other graces.

The use of these notes is to comfort, or to convince of want of growth.

But, again, there is a middle sort of marks between both these, which I

call positive; and they are such as are always and only found in a

heart truly gracious, because they are such as necessarily infer the

inhabitation of the Spirit, and are there where grace is at the lowest.

Such the apostle calleth ta echomena tes soterias, Heb. vi. 9, `Things

that accompany salvation,, or which necessarily have salvation in them,

the sure symptoms of a blessed estate. He had spoken before of a common

work, enlightening, and slight tastes and feelings, ver. 4-6. But,

saith he, `We are persuaded better things of you,, and that you have

those necessary evidences to which salvation is infallibly annexed.

Now, these must be by great care collected out of the word, that we may

be sure the foundation and principle is right.

Secondly, That conscience as a witness may not fail you, take these

rules:--(1.) Note the natural and first report of it ere art hath

passed upon it. Sudden and indeliberate checks at the word, or in

prayer, being the immediate births of conscience, have the less of

deceit in them. I have observed that the deceitfulness that is in a

wicked man,s heart is not so much in the testimony itself of his

conscience, as in the many shifts and evasions he useth to avoid the

sense of it. Every sinner,s heart doth reproach and condemn him; but

all their art is how to choke this testimony, or slight it. You know

the apostle John referreth the whole decision of all doubts concerning

our estate to conscience, 1 John iii. 20, 21. For certainly the first

voice of conscience is genuine and unfeigned; for it being privy to all

our actions, cannot but give a testimony concerning them; only we elude

it. And therefore let wicked men pretend what peace they will, their

consciences witness rightly to them; and were it not for those sleights

by which they put it off, they might soon discern their estate. The

apostle saith, they are `all their lifetime subject to bondage,, Heb.

ii. 15. They have a wound and torment within them, which is not always

felt, but soon awakened, if they were true to themselves. The

artificial and second report of conscience is deceitful and partial,

when it hath been flattered or choked with some carnal sophisms and

principles. But the first and native report, which of a sudden pincheth

like a stitch in the side, is true and faithful. (2.) Wait upon the

word. One main use of it is to help conscience in witnessing, and to

bring us and our hearts acquainted with one another: Heb. iv. 12, `The

word is quick and powerful, a discerner of the thoughts and intents of

the heart;, it revealeth all those plots and disguises by which we

would hide our actions from our own privity and conscience. He saith

there, it `divideth between soul and spirit., The soul cleaveth to sin,

and the spirit, or mind, plotteth pretences to hide it; but the word

discovereth all this self-deceiving sophistry. So 1 Cor. xiv. 25, `The

secrets of his heart are made manifest:, that is, to himself, by the

conviction of the word. (3.) Ascite conscience, and call it often into

the presence of God: 1 Peter iii. 21, `The answer of a good conscience

towards God., Will it witness thus to the all-seeing God? When Peter,s

sincerity was questioned he appeal eth to Christ,s omnisciency: John

xxi. 17, `Lord, thou knowest all things, and thou knowest that I love

thee., Can you appeal to God,s omnisciency, and assure your hearts

before him? So 1 John iii. 20, `If our hearts condemn us, God is

greater than conscience, and knoweth all things., God,s omnisciency is

there mentioned, because that is the solemn attribute to which

conscience appealeth in all her verdicts, which are the more valid when

they can be avowed before the God that knoweth all things.

Thirdly, That conscience may do its office as a judge, you must do

this:--(1.) When conscience is silent, suspect it; it is naught; we are

careless, and our heart is grown senseless and stupid with pleasures. A

dead sea is worse than a raging sea. It is not a calm this, but a

death. A tender conscience is always witnessing; and therefore, when it

never saith, What have I done? it is a sign it is seared. There is a

continual parley between a godly man and his conscience; it is either

suggesting a duty, or humbling for defects; it is their daily exercise

to judge themselves. As God after every day,s work reviewed it, and

`saw that it was good,, Gen. i, so they review each day, and judge of

the actions of it. (2.) If conscience do not speak to you, you must

speak to conscience. David biddeth insolent men, Ps. iv. 4, to `commune

with their hearts, and be still., Take time to parley, and speak with

yourselves. The prophet complaineth, Jer. viii. 6, `No man asketh

himself, What have I done?, There should be a time to ask questions of

our own souls. (3.) Upon every doubt bring things to some issue and

certainty. Conscience will sometimes lisp out half a word. Draw it to a

full conviction. Nothing maketh the work of grace so doubtful and

litigious as this, that Christians content themselves with

semi-persuasions, and do not get the case fully cleared one way or

another. The Spirit delighteth in a full and plenary conviction: John

xvi. 8, ele'nxei, `He shall convince the world of sin, of

righteousness, and of judgment., Conviction is a term of art; it is

done when things are laid down so clearly that we see it is impossible

it should be otherwise. [142] Now this the Spirit doth, whether it be

in a state of sin or righteousness. God saith he would deal with his

people so roundly, `that they might remember, and not open their mouth

any more for shame,, Ezek. xvi. 63; that is, leave them so convinced,

that they might not have a word to say but `Unclean! unclean!, It is

good upon every doubt to follow it so close that it may be brought to a

certain and determinate issue.

Obs. 4. That men are easily deceived into a good opinion of themselves

by their bare hearing. We are apt to pitch upon the good that is in any

action, and not to consider the evil of it: I am a hearer of the word,

and therefore I am in a good case. Christ,s similitude implieth that

men build upon their hearing, and make it the foundation of their

hopes, Mat. vii. 24, to the end. Watch over this deceit; such a weighty

structure should not be raised upon so sandy a foundation. (1.)

Consider the danger of such a self-deceit: hearing without practice

draweth the greater judgment upon you. Uriah carried letters to Joab,

and he thought the contents were for his honour and preferment in the

army, but it was but the message of his own destruction. We hear many

sermons, and think to come and urge this to God; but out of those

sermons will God condemn us. (2.) Consider how far hypocrites may go in

this matter. They may sever themselves from following errors, and hear

the word constantly: Luke vi. 47, `Whosoever cometh to me,, &c. They

may approve of the good way, and applaud it: `Blessed is the womb that

bare thee, and the paps that gave thee suck,, &c., Luke xi. 27, 28.

They may hold out a great deal of glavering and false affection: Luke

vi. 46, `Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?,

They may be endowed with church gifts of prophecy and miracles, be able

to talk and discourse savourily of the things of God, do much for the

edification of others: `Many will say to me in that day,, &c., Mat.

vii. 22. They may have a vain persuasion of their faith and interest in

Christ: they will say, `Lord, Lord,, Mat. vii. 21. They may make some

progress in obedience, abstain from grosser sins, and things publicly

odious: `Herod did many things,, Mark vi.; and Christ saith, `Every

tree that bringeth not forth good fruit,, &c., Mat. vii. 19. There must

be some thing positive. There may be some external conformity; ay! but

there is no effectual change made;, the tree is not good,, Mat. vii.

18. Well, therefore, outward duties with partial reformation will not

serve the turn. (3.) Consider the easiness of deceit: Jer. xvii. 9,

`The heart of man is deceitful above all things; who can find it out?,

Who can trace and unravel the mystery of iniquity that is in the soul?

Since we lost our uprightness we have many inventions, Eccles. vii. 29,

shifts and wiles whereby to avoid the stroke of conscience: they are

called, Prov. xx. 27, `the depths of the belly., Look, as in the belly

the inwards are folded, and rolled up within one another, so are there

turnings and crafty devices in the heart of man.

Ver. 23, 24. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is

like to a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth

himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of

man he was.

Here James amplifieth the former reason, which was taken from the

vanity and unprofitableness of bare hearing, by a similitude taken from

a man looking in a glass.

If any be a hearer of the word and not a doer; that is, contenteth

himself with bare hearing, or bare knowing the word of God, and doth

not come away with impulses of zeal, and resolutions of obedience.

Is like a man:--In the original it is andri`, a word proper to the

masculine sex, and therefore some frame a criticism. The apostle doth

not say, `like a woman ,, they are more diligent and curious. They view

themselves again and again, that they may do away every spot and

deformity. But this is more witty than solid. The apostle useth ane`r

promiscuously for man and woman, as ver. 12, `Blessed is the man that

endureth temptation,, the man or woman: only the masculine sex is

specified, as most worthy.

That beholdeth his natural face, to prosopon tes geneseos, `the face of

his nativity.,--What is intended by that? Some say, the face as God

made it at its birth, that he may behold God,s work in it, and so take

occasion to condemn painting, and the artificial cerusse and varnish of

the face; or his natural face, upon which men bestow least care. In

painting, there is more exactness: or natural face, as importing a

glance, as a man passeth by a glass, and seeth that he hath the face of

a man, not exactly surveying the several lineaments. Others think the

apostle hinteth the thing intended by the similitude--our natural and

original deformity--represented in the words, and that he complicateth

and foldeth up the thing signified with the expressions of the

similitude; but that seemeth forced. I suppose, by `natural face,, he

meaneth his own face, the glass representing the very face which nature

gave him.

He goeth his way, and straightway for getteth what manner of man he

was.--He forgetteth the fashion of his countenance, the spots

represented therein, and so fitly noteth those weak impressions which

the discoveries of the word leave upon a careless soul, who, after his

deformity is represented, is not affected with it so as to be brought

to repentance.

The notes are these:--

Obs. 1. That the word of God is a glass. But what doth it show us? I

answer--;(1.) God and Christ: 2 Cor. iii. 18, `We all with an open face

behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord, and are changed into the

same image from glory to glory., A glass implieth the clear est

representation that we are capable of here upon earth. I confess a

glass is sometimes put for a dark vision; as 1 Cor. xiii. 12, `Now we

see but as in a glass, darkly; but then we shall see face to face.,

Then we shall see God himself: 1 John iii. 2, `We shall see God as he

is., But here we have his image and reflection in the word: as

sometimes the `heart of flesh, is put for an earthly mind, sometimes

for a tender heart. In opposition to `a heart of stone,, the `heart of

flesh, is taken in a good sense; but, in opposition to pure and sublime

affections, in a bad sense. So, in opposition to the shadows of the

law, seeing in a glass importeth a clear discerning; but in opposition

to `face to face,, but a low and weak conception of the essence of God.

Oh! study the glory of God in the word. Though you cannot exhaust and

draw out all the divine perfections in your thoughts, yet `your ear may

receive a little thereof,, Job iv. 11. When we want the sun, we do not

despise a candle. (2.) The word is a glass to show us ourselves; it

discovereth the hidden things `of the heart, all the deformities of the

soul: Mark iv. 22, `There is nothing hidden that shall not be made

manifest., The word discovereth all things. Our sins are the spots

which the law discovereth; Christ,s blood is the water to wash them

off, and that is discovered in the gospel. [143] The law discovereth

sins: Rom. vii. 9, `I was alive without the law, but when the

commandment came, sin revived, and I died., We think ourselves well and

in a good case, till the law falleth upon the spirit with full

conviction, and then we see all the spots and freckles of our souls.

The gospel discovereth how we may do away our sins, and deck and attire

our souls with the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Use. It ministereth a meditation to you. When you are at your glass,

consider the word of God is a glass: I must look after the estate and

complexion of my soul. Take but a part of the law and exercise yourself

with it every day, and you will soon see the deformity of your own

spirit: do not look in a flattering glass. We love a picture that is

like us, rather than that which is flourished and varnished with more

art.

Obs. 2. That the knowledge of formal professors is but slight and

glancing: like a man beholding his face in a glass, or like the glaring

of a sunbeam upon a wave, it rusheth into the thoughts, and it is gone.

The beast under the law that did not chew the cud was unclean. There is

much in meditation and a constant light. Some men, if they should be

considerate, would undo all their false hopes; therefore, usually,

carnal men,s thoughts are but slight and trivial; they know things, but

are loath to let their thoughts pause upon them: Luke ii. 5 it is said,

`Mary pondered all these sayings., A slippery, vain, inconsistent mind

will be hardly held to truths. When we apprehend a thing, curiosity

being satisfied, we begin to loathe it; and, therefore, it is an hard

matter to agitate the thoughts again to that point to which they have

once arrived; the first apprehension doth, as it were, deflower it.

Obs. 3. Vain men go from the ordinances just as they came to them: he

beholdeth, and goeth away. Like the beasts in Noah,s ark, they went in

unclean, and came out unclean. So many come unhumbled and unmortified,

and so they go away. Oh! let it never be said of you.

Obs. 4. Slight apprehensions make a very weak impression: things work

when the thoughts are serious and ponderous: musing maketh the fire

burn, Ps. xxxix. 3. When God,s arrows stick fast, they make us roar to

the purpose, Job vi. 4. And David, when he would express his deep

affection, he saith, Ps. li. 3, `My sin is ever before me:, it would

not out of his thoughts. Well, then, a weak impression is an argument

of a slight apprehension: thoughts always follow affection. They that

`heal their wounds slightly,, Jer. vi. 14, show that they were never

soundly touched and pricked at heart. Men thoroughly affected say--I

shall remember such a sermon all my life time. David saith, Ps. cxix.

93, `I will never forget thy precepts; for by them thou hast quickened

me., Others let good things slip, because they never felt the power of

them.

Ver. 25. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and

continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the

work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

In this verse you have the third reason why they should hear the word

so as to practise it. The first was, they would but deceive themselves,

and go away with a vain mistake. The next, that bare hearing would be

of little benefit; no more than for a man to glance his eye upon a

glass, and to have a slight view of his countenance. And now, because

due and right hearing will end in blessedness. This verse is full of

matter. I shall drop it out as the order of the words yieldeth it.

But whoso looketh, ho de parakupsas: a metaphor taken from those that

do not only glance upon a thing, but bend their body towards it, that

they may pierce it with their eyes, and narrowly pry into it. The same

word is used for the stooping down of the disciples to look into

Christ,s sepulchre, Luke xxiv. 12, and John xx. 4, 5, and that narrow

search which the angels use to find out the mysteries of salvation: 1

Peter i. 12, `Which things the angels desire to look into;, where there

is a plain allusion to the cherubim whose faces were bowed down towards

the ark, as desirous to see the mysteries therein contained. The word

implieth three things:--(1.) Deepness of meditation. He doth not glance

upon, but `look into the perfect law of liberty., (2.) Diligence of

inquiry; they do not content themselves with what is offered to their

first thoughts, but accurately pry into the mind of God revealed in the

word. (3.) Liveliness of impression: they do so look upon it as to find

the virtue of it in their hearts: 2 Cor. iii. 18, `We, with open face

beholding the glory of the Lord as in a glass, are changed into the

same image from glory to glory., Such a gaze as bringeth the glory of

the Lord into our hearts, as Moses, face shone by talking with God; and

we, by conversing with the word, carry away the beauty and glory of it

in our spirits.

Into the perfect law.--Some understand the moral law, in opposition to

the ceremonial, as not being clear and full, and not able to justify,

though men rested in the observances of it; and not perfect, because

not durable, and was not to remain for ever. Thus Heb. vii. 19, `The

law made nothing perfect, but only the bringing in of a better hope., A

man could not be sanctified, justified, saved, without Christ, by the

dispensation of Moses. So Heb. ix. 9, `That service could not make the

comer thereunto perfect, as appertaining to the conscience., The soul

could find no ease and rest in it without looking to Christ. But though

this sense be probable, yet I rather understand the whole doctrine and

word of God, and chiefly the gospel. The will of God in scripture is

called a law. So a godly man is said to `meditate on the law day and

night,, Ps. i.; and `thy law do I love,, Ps. cxix., where by law is

understood the whole word; and the gospel is called no'mos pi'steos,

`the law of faith., Rom. iii. 27. Now this law is said to be perfect,

because it is so formally in itself, and they that look into it will

see that there needeth no other word to make the man of God perfect.

Of liberty.--It is so called, partly because of the clearness of

revelation: it is the counsel of God to his friends; or, saith

Piscator, because it spareth none, but dealeth with all freely, without

respect of persons, though they be higher, richer, stronger than

others; but rather because it calleth us into a state of freedom. See

other reasons in the notes.

And continueth therein; that is, persevereth in the study of this holy

doctrine, and remaineth in the knowledge, belief, and obedience of it.

He being not a forgetful hearer, akroates tes epilesmones, `a hearer of

oblivion,, a Hebraism; and he useth this term to answer the former

similitude of a man,s forgetting his natural face.

But a doer of the work; that is, laboureth to refer and bring all

things to practice. He is said to be a doer that studieth to do, though

his hand doth not reach to the perfectness of the work; that is,

mindful of the business cut out to him in the word.

He shall be blessed in his deed; that is, so behaving himself, or so

doing; or, as some more generally, he shall be blessed in all his ways,

whatsoever he doth shall be prosperous and happy. For they conceive it

to be an allusion to the words of the 1st Psalm, ver. 3, `Whatsoever he

shall do shall prosper: `for the psalmist speaketh there of doing the

law, and meditating in the law, as James speaketh here of looking into

the law of liberty, and walking in it. But here the Papists come upon

us, and say--Lo! here is a clear place that we are blessed for our

deeds. But I answer--It is good to mark the distinctness of scripture

phrase: the apostle doth not say for, but in his deed. It is an

argument or evidence of our blessedness, though not the ground of it;

the way, though not the cause.

The points are these:--

Obs. 1. From that he looketh. That we should with all seriousness and

earnestness apply ourselves to the knowledge of the gospel. There

should be deep meditation and diligent inquiry. Your first duty,

Christians, is to admit the word into your serious thoughts: Ps. i. 2,

`He meditateth in the law day and night., We should always be chewing

and sucking out the sweetness of this cud: Ps. xlv. 1, `My heart

inditeth a good matter., The word in the original signifieth baketh or

frieth; it is an allusion to the mincah, or meat-offering, that was

baked and fried in a pan. Truths are concocted and ripened by

meditation. And then there must be diligent inquiry, that we may not

content ourselves with the surface of truth, but get into the bowels of

it: 1 Peter i. 10, `Of which salvation the prophets have inquired

diligently., Though they had a more immediate assistance of the Spirit,

yet they would more accurately look into the depths and mysteries of

the gospel, and consider their own prophecies: Prov. ii. 4, `Search for

wisdom as for hidden treasures., Jewels do not lie upon the surface;

you must get into the caverns and dark receptacles of the earth for

them. No more do truths lie in the surface or outside of an expression.

The beauty and glory of the scriptures is within, and must be fetched

out with much study and prayer. A glance cannot discover the worth of

anything to us. He that doth but cast his eye upon a piece of

embroidery, doth not discern the curiousness and the art of it. So to

know Christ in the bulk doth not work half so kindly with us as when we

search out the breadth, and the depth, and the length, the exact

dimensions of his love to us.

Obs. 2. The gospel is a law. It is often invested with this title and

appellation: Rom. viii. 2, `The law of the Spirit of the life of Jesus

Christ hath made us free from the law of sin and death., The covenant

of works is there called `the law of sin and death,, because the use of

it to man fallen is to convince of sin, and to oblige and bind over to

death. But the gospel, or covenant of grace, is called the law of the

Spirit of the life of Christ, because the intent of it is, by faith, to

plant us into Christ, whose life we are enabled to live by the Spirit;

and it is called `the law of this life,, because everything that

concurreth in the right constitution and making of a law is found in

the gospel:--As (1.) Equity, without which a law is but tyranny. All

the precepts of the gospel are just and equal, most proportionate to

the dignity of man,s nature: it is holy, good, and comfortable. (2.)

There is promulgation, which is the life and form of the law, and

without which it were but a private snare to catch men and entrap them.

Now it is `proclaimed to the captives,, Isa. lxi. 1; it must be

`preached to every creature,, Mark xvi. (3.) The author, without which

it were sedition--God, who can prescribe to the creature. (4.) The end,

public good, without which a law were tyrannous exaction; and the end

is the salvation of our souls. Well, then, look upon the gospel as a

law and rule, according to which--;(1st.) Your lives must be conformed:

`Peace on them that walk according to this rule,, Gal. vi. 16; that is,

the directions of the gospel. (2d.) All controversies and doctrines

must be decided: `To the law and the testimony; if they speak not

according to this rule, it is because there is no light in them,, Isa.

viii. 20. (3d.) Your estates must be judged: `God will judge the

secrets of all men, according to my gospel., Rom. ii. 16. The whole

word carrieth the face of a law, according to which you shall be

judged; nay, the gospel itself is a law, partly as it is a rule, partly

because of the commanding prevailing power it hath over the heart. So

it is `the law of the Spirit of life;, so that they that are in Christ

are not without a law, not a'nomoi, but e'nnomoi. So the apostle, 1

Cor. ix. 21, `I am not without the law, but under the law to Christ;,

that is, under the rule and direction of the moral law, as adopted and

taken in as a part of the gospel by Christ.

Obs. 3. The word of God is a perfect law. So it is in divers respects.

(1.) Because it maketh perfect. The nearer we come to the word, the

greater is the perfection and accomplishment of our spirits. The

goodness and excellency of the creature lieth in the nearest conformity

to God,s will. (2.) It directeth us to the greatest perfection, to God

blessed for ever, to the righteousness of Christ, to perfect communion

with God in glory. (3.) It concerneth the whole man, and hath a force

upon the conscience: men go no further than outward obedience; but `the

law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul,, Ps. xix. 7. `It is

not a lame, defective rule; besides outward observances, there is some

what for the soul. (4.) It is a perfect law, because of the invariable

tenor of it; it needeth not to be changed, but is always like itself:

as we say, that is a perfect rule that needeth no amendment. (5.) It is

pure, and free from error. There are no laws of men but there are some

blemish in them. Of old, wickedness was enacted by a law [144]

--adultery: by a law of the Syrians, the virgins were to prostitute

themselves before marriage. So in the laws of every country there are

some marks of human error and frailty; but, Ps. cxix. 140, `Thy word is

pure, therefore thy servant loveth it., (6.) Because it is a sufficient

rule. Christ hath been `faithful in all his house,, in all the

appointments of it. Whatever is necessary for knowledge, for regulating

of life and worship, for confirmation of true doctrines, for

confutation of false, it is all in the word: 2 Tim. iii. 17, `That the

man of God may be perfectly furnished unto every good work., Well,

then--;(1.) Prize the word. We love what is perfect. (2.) Suffer

nothing to be added to it: Deut. iv., `Ye shall not add to the word

which I command you., So the whole Bible is concluded: Rev. xxii. 18,

`If any one add to these things, God shall add to him the plagues that

are written in this book., It will be a sad adding that incurreth these

plagues. The plagues written in that book were those dreadful judgments

that should be executed upon Antichrist and his adherents; they are

most for adding, coining new doctrines of faith, piecing up the word

with their own inventions. And, indeed, as they add, by obtruding upon

the world the traditions and usages of men, so others add by imposing

upon men,s reverence their own inventions and imaginations. They cry up

their fancies without the word, and private illuminations. God would

not leave the world at so great an uncertainty. Others urge the

commands of men. Certainly God never intended that the souls of his

people should be left as a prey to the present power.

Obs. 4. That the gospel, or word of God, is a `law of liberty., As it

is a perfect, so it is a free law. So it is in divers respects. (1.)

Because it teacheth the way to true liberty, and freedom from sin,

wrath, death. Naturally we are under the law of sin and death,

entangled with the yoke of our own corruptions, and bound over to

eternal misery; but the gospel is a doctrine of liberty and

deliverance: John viii. 36, `If the Son shall make you free, you shall

be free indeed., There is no state so free as that which we enjoy by

the gospel. (2.) The bond of obedience that is laid upon us is indeed

and in truth a perfect freedom. For,--

1. The matter itself of our obedience is freedom.

2. We do it upon free principles.

3. We have the help of a free Spirit.

4. We do it in a state of freedom.

1. The matter is freedom. Duty is the greatest liberty, and sin the

greatest bondage. You cannot have a worse restraint than to be left to

`walk in the ways of your own hearts., The sinning angels are said to

be `kept in chains of darkness,, Jude 6. A wicked man is in bondage

here and hereafter; now in snares, then in chains; here 1 taken captive

by Satan at his will, and pleasure, 2 Tim. ii. 26, and hereafter bound

up with Satan in chains of darkness. Sin itself is a bondage, and hell

a prison, 1 Peter iii. 19. Were there nothing in sin but the present

slavery, it is enough to dissuade us. Who would be a vassal to his own

lusts? at the command of pride, and every unclean motion? But, alas!

the present thraldom is nothing to what is future. The condition of a

sinner for the present is servile, but hereafter woful and dreadful.

Satan,s work is drudgery, and his reward is death, How can we remain in

such an estate with any pleasure? From the beginning to the end it is

but a miserable servility. Why should we account Christ,s service a

burthen, when it is the most happy liberty and freedom? The world is

all for `casting aside the cords, for breaking these bonds,, Ps. ii. 3.

Which would you have? the cords of duty or the chains of darkness? We

cannot endure the restraints of the word, or the severe, grave precepts

of Christianity; we look upon them as an infringement of our carnal

ease and liberty. Oh! consider these are not gyves, but ornaments: Ps.

cxix. 45, `I shall walk at liberty, for I seek thy precepts;,

beddachah, `at large., That is the only free life that is spent in

loving, enjoying, and praising God. Oh! do not count it, then, to be

the only free and pleasant life to know nothing, to care for nothing,

in matters of religion. Who would dote upon his shackles, and think

gyves a liberty? Peter ii. 19, `While they promise themselves liberty,

they themselves are the servants of corruption; for of whom a man is

overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage., The apostle alludeth

to the law of nations, by which it is lawful to make slaves of those

that are over come and taken in war. Now those that preach carnal

doctrine, and tell men they may live as they list, they help on the

victory of sin, and so bring men into a vassalage and servitude to

their own lusts. So Rom. vi. 20, `When ye were servants of sin, ye were

free from righteousness., You would expatiate, and run out at large,

and you thought this was a freedom; but all the while you were

servants, and servants to the basest master, your own sin. It was Ham,s

curse to be a servant of servants. It is a goodly preferment, is it

not, to be Satan,s vassal, lust,s slave? I remember Austin saith of

Home, that she was the great mistress of the world, and the drudge of

sin. [145] And Chrysostom saith, that Joseph was the freeman, and his

mistress was the servant, when she obeyed her lusts. [146]

2. We do it upon free principles. Whatever we do, we do it as `the

Lord,s freemen,, 1 Cor. vii. 22, upon principles of love and

thankfulness. God might rule us `with a rod of iron,, but he urgeth the

soul with `constraints of love., In one place, `I beseech you by the

mercies of God,, &c., Rom. xii. 1; in another, `Grace teacheth us,,

&c., Titus ii. 12. The motives of the gospel are mercy and grace; and

the obedience of the gospel is an obedience performed out of gratitude

or thankfulness.

3. We have the assistance of a free Spirit, that disentangleth our

souls, and helpeth us in the work of obedience. David prayeth, `Uphold

me by thy free Spirit,, Ps. li. 12. A free Spirit, because he maketh us

free, helpeth us to serve God willingly and freely. There is spirit and

life in the commandment, somewhat besides a dead letter, and that

maketh it a `perfect law of liberty., Of old, there was light in the

commandment to guide their feet, but not fire to burn up their lusts;

there was no help to fulfil it: the light was directive, but not

persuasive.

4. We do it in a free state, in an estate of sonship, and well

pleasing: Rom. viii. 15, `Ye have not received the spirit of bondage

again unto fear; but a spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba,

Father., When a man is under a covenant of works, the testimony of his

conscience is suitable to his estate; and therefore in his natural

condition his spirit is servile, and all that he doth he doth as a

servant: but when he is regenerated, and claimeth by another tenure,

that of grace, the dispositions of his spirit are more filial and

child-like; he acteth as a son, with an ingenuous liberty and

confidence. Adam himself in innocency, because under a covenant of

works, was but as an honourable servant: Gal. iv. 31 , `We are not

children of the bond woman, but of the free., The new covenant giveth

us another kind of estate and spirit. So Luke i. 74, `Being delivered

out of the hands of our enemies, we serve him without fear;, that is,

without such a scrupulous awe and bondage, as otherwise would remain

upon the soul.

Use. Well, then, consider whether you be under a law of liberty, yea or

no. To this end--;(1.) Ask your souls, which is a bondage to you, sin

or duty? When you do complain of the yoke, what is grievous to you, the

commandment or the transgression? Do you `delight in the law of the

Lord in the inward man?, Only corruption that hangeth on so fast is a

sad burthen. The carnal heart hath a spite at the law, Rom. viii. 7,

not its own lusts. (2.) When you do duty, what is the weight that

poiseth your spirits to it? Your warrant is the command; but your poise

and weight should be love. [147] (3.) What is your strength for

duty--reason or the assistance of the free Spirit? He that cometh in

his own name usually standeth upon his own bottom. When our dependence

is on Christ, our tendency is to him. (4.) Would you have the work

accepted for its own sake, or your persons accepted for Christ,s sake?

It is an ill sign when a man,s thoughts run more upon the property and

quality of the work than upon the propriety and interest of his person.

In the law of liberty or covenant of grace, God,s acceptance beginneth

with the person; and though there be weak services, much deadness,

coldness, dulness, yet it is accepted, because it is done in a free

state. Works can never be so vile as our person was when we first found

favour with God. If it be thus with you, you have cause to bless God

for your freedom, to consider what you shall render again. Requite God

you cannot till you pay back as much as he gave you. [148] He hath

given his Son to free you, and you should give up yourselves.

Obs. 5. From that and abideth therein. This commendeth our knowledge of

and affection to the word, to continue in it. Hypocrites have a taste;

some men,s hearts burn under the ordinances, but all is lost and

drowned in the world again: John viii. 31, `If ye continue in the word,

then are ye my disciples indeed., There may be good flashes for the

present, but Christ saith, `If ye continue,, if ye ripen them to good

affections. So 2 John 9, `Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in

the doctrine of Christ, hath not God; but he that abideth in the

doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son., He that hath

not God hath lost himself; and he that hath God hath all things: now so

great a privilege is promised to perseverance. The corrupt angels lost

their glory when they left their love to the truth. Their sin is thus

expressed--they `abode not in the truth,, John viii. 44. Now to this

abiding in the word two things are opposite:--(1.) Apostasy, when we go

off from our former profession and zeal for God; a sad case! 2 Peter

ii. 21, `Better they had never known the holy commandment than to go

back from the knowledge of it after it was once delivered to them., The

less law the less transgression; apostates sin against more conviction:

Ps. cxix. 118, `Thou hast trodden down them that err from thy statutes:

God treadeth them under feet as unsavoury salt, [149] because they have

lost their smartness and savour. (2.) There is eterodidaskali'a, other

gospelling: Gal. i. 6, `Soon turned to another gospel., So 1 Tim. i. 3,

`Charge them that they teach no other doctrine., Men would have

something new and strange, which is usually the ground of heresy. So 1

Tim. vi. 3, `If any teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome

words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, he is proud, knowing

nothing., This desire to differ, and hear another gospel, is very

dangerous; new ways affected are the high way to an old error.

Well, then, if we must abide in the word, then--;(1.) Be sure to

cherish good motions if they come upon your hearts: you are to abide

therein: though the Spirit break in upon the soul of a sudden, let it

not go so. Usually our religious pangs are but like a sudden flash of

lightning into a dark place. (2.) Be careful to observe the first

decays and languishments of your spirits, that you may `strengthen the

things that are ready to die,, Rev. iii. 2. If the candle of the Lord

doth not shine as it was wont to do, complain of the first dimness and

decay.

Obs. 6. From that being not a forgetful hearer. That hearers must take

heed that they do not forget the good things dispensed to them. Helps

to memory are these:--(1.) Attention; men remember what they heed and

regard: Prov. iv. 21, `Attend to my sayings; keep them in the midst of

thine heart;, that is, in such a place where nothing can come to take

them away. Where there is attention, there will be retention: the

memory is the chest and ark of divine truths, and a man should see them

carefully locked up: Isa. xlii. 23, `Who will hearken and hear for the

time to come?, Hearkening noteth reverence and seriousness; as it is

said, Isa. xxxii. 3, `The ears of them that hear shall hearken., Now

reverence in the admission of the word helpeth us in the keeping of it:

truths are lost by slight hearing. (2.) Affection, that is a great

friend to memory; men remember what they care for: an old man will not

forget where he laid his bag of gold: delight and love are always

renewing and reviving the object upon our thoughts, Ps. cxix. David

often asserteth his delight in the law, and therefore it was always in

his thoughts: ver. 97, `Oh how love I thy law! it is my meditation all

the day,, (3.) Application and appropriation of truths; we will

remember that which concerneth ourselves: in a public edict, a man will

be sure to carry away that which is proper to his case and tenure: Job

v. 27, `Hear this, and know it for thy good;, there he spake to me;

this I must remember for ray comfort. So Prov. ix. 12, `Be wise for

thyself;, this is for your souls, and concerneth you nearly. (4.)

Meditation, and holy care to cover the word, that it be not snatched

from us by vain thoughts; that the fowls of the air do not peck up the

good seed, Mat. xiii. 4. You should often revolve and revive it upon

the thoughts: as an apple, when it is tossed in the hand, leaveth the

odour and smell of it behind when it is gone: Luke ii. 19, `Mary kept

these sayings, and pondered them in her heart;, she kept them, because

she pondered them. (5.) Observation of the accomplishment of truths:

you will remember things spoken long since, when you see them verified:

John ii. 19, `Then they remembered that it was written, The zeal of

thine house hath eaten me up., Such occasions observed will make old

truths come to mind afresh. So ver. 22, `Then they remembered he had

spoken `of destroying the temple in three days. So God saith, Hosea

vii. 12, `I will chastise them, as their congregation hath heard., When

the prophets are dead and gone, they may remember they were taught such

things along time since. (6.) Practise what thou nearest: you will

remember the good you get by it: `I will remember thy precepts, for by

them thou hast quickened me,, Ps. cxix. 93. Christians can discourse of

the circumstances of that sermon by which they have received profit.

(7.) Commit it to the Spirit,s keeping and charge: John xiv. 26, The

Comforter, anamne'sei shall bring things to your remembrance., Christ

chargeth the Holy Ghost with his own sermons; the disciples, memories

were too slippery: and truly this is the great advantage which they

have that have interest in the promise of the Spirit, that truths are

brought freshly to mind in the very season wherein they do concern

them.

Obs. 7. From that he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer. Sin

cometh for want of remembering: forgetful hearers are negligent: Ps.

ciii. 18, `Them that remember his commandments to do them., A godly man

hath an affective memory; he remembereth to do. Wicked men are often

expressed and set out by their bad memories; as Job viii. 13, `They

forget God;, so Ps. cxix. 139, `Mine enemies have forgotten thy word;,

that is, they do not practise it; yea, the sins of God,s people are

usually sins of forgetfulness and incogitancy; as Peter would never

have been so bold and daring upon the danger, and done what he did, if

he had remembered. The text saith, `When he remembered, he wept

bitterly,, Luke xxii. 61. So when they fainted under affliction: Heb.

xii. 5, `Ye have forgotten the consolation which speaketh to you as

children., A bad memory is the cause of a great deal of mischief in the

soul. So for distrust: Mark viii. 18, `Ye see and hear, but do not

remember;, they did not actually consider the former experience of the

loaves and fishes, and so distrusted. So for murmuring and impatience:

David murmured till he `remembered the years of the right hand of the

Most High,, Ps. lxxvii. 10. We find that seasonable truths give a great

deal of relief and ease to the mind in a temptation: Lam. iii. 21,

`This I recall to mind, and therefore I have hope;, whereas others are

troubled with every event of providence, because they do not remember

the comforts the scripture hath provided in such a case. They that came

to the sepulchre were troubled about the death and resurrection of

Christ, because they had forgotten what he had spoken to them in

Galilee, Luke xxiv. 6, 8. So when the Thessalonians were troubled at

the growing of errors, and extremely shaken in their confidence, Paul

saith, 2 Thes. ii. 5, `Remember ye not how I spake of those things?, It

is very observable that in many places of scripture all duty is

expressed by this word remember, as if it did necessarily imply

suitable actions and affections; so Exod. xx. 8, `Remember the

sabbath-day;, as if, then, they must needs sanctify it: so Eccles. xii.

1, `Remember thy Creator;, it is put for all that reverence, duty, and

worship which we owe to God. In other places the link between memory

and duty is plainly asserted: Num. xv. 40, `That ye may remember to do

all my commandments:, a seasonable recalling of truths doth much. You

see, out of all this, that we should not only get knowledge, but

remembrance; that we should not only faithfully lay up truths, but

seasonably lay them out; it is a great skill to do so, and we had need

call in the help of the Spirit. There are some truths that are of a

general use and benefit; others that serve for some cases and seasons.

In the general, hide the whole word in your heart, that ye may have a

fresh truth to check sin in every temptation, Ps. cxix. 11. So lay up

the mercies of God that you may be thankful; forget not all his

benefits, Ps. ciii. 2; your sins, that you may be humble: Deut. ix. 7,

`Remember and forget not how thou provokedst the Lord thy God in the

wilderness;, so remarkable experiences, `the years of God,s right

hand,, that you may be confident. Labour thus to get a present ready

memory, that will urge truths in the season when they do concern us.

Obs. 8. From that but a doer of the work. The word layeth out work for

us. It was not ordained only for speculation; it is a rule of duty to

the creatures. There is the `work of faith,, John vi. 29; the `labour

of love,, Heb. vi. 1; and `fruits worthy repentance,, Mat. iii. 8. All

this work is cut out to us in the gospel--faith, love, and new

obedience. Do not content yourselves, then, with a module of truth. The

apostle calleth it, Rom. ii. 20, mo'rphosin episte'mes, `a form of

knowledge., With a winter sun, that shineth, but warmeth not, let not

the tree of knowledge deprive you of the tree of life; work the works

of God. Faith is your work, repentance is your business, and the life

of love and praise your duty.

Obs. 9. From that shall be blessed in his deed. There is a blessedness

annexed to the doing of the work of the word; [150] not for the work,s

sake, but out of the mercy of God. See then that you hear so that you

come within the compass of the blessing; the blessing is usually

pronounced at the time of your addresses to God in this worship. See

that your own interest be clear, that when the minister, in God,s name,

saith, `Blessed is he that heareth the word and keepeth it,, you may

echo again to God, and bless him in your reins, for that he hath bowed

your heart to the obedience of it.

Ver. 26. But if any man among you seemeth to be religious, and bridleth

not his tongue, but deceiveth his own soul, this man,s religion is

vain.

The apostle having showed the blessedness of those which are doers of

the word, lest any should seem to challenge a share in it to whom it

doth not belong, he discovereth who are hearers only, and not doers of

the word; men that do allow themselves in any known sin; and he

instanceth in the evils of the tongue.

Quest. Before I open the words any further, I shall inquire why James

doth pitch so much weight upon this one particular, it seeming so

inconsiderable in itself, and it having so little respect to the

context.

Ans. The reasons assigned in the answer will afford us so many notes.

Reas. 1. Because this is a chief part of our respect to our neighbour,

and true love to God will be manifested by love to our neighbour. They

do not usually detract from others whom God hath pardoned. He that

saith, `Thou shalt love God,, hath also said, `Thou shalt love thy

neighbour;, though the object be diverse, yet the ground for obedience

is the same; therefore the apostles usually bring this argument to

unmask and discolour hypocritical persuasions; as 1 John ii. 9, `He

that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness

even till now;, so 1 John iii. 17, 18, `If he shut up his bowels from

his brother, how dwelleth the love of God in him?, How can it be

imagined that those that are sensible of the love of God should be

merciless towards others? So 1 John iv. 20, `He that loveth not his

brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?,

The good and attractiveness that is in others is an object of the

senses, and usually they make a strong impression. Well, then, do not

flatter yourselves with duties of worship, in the neglect of duties of

commerce.

Reas. 2. Because of the natural proneness that is in us to offend with

the tongue: censuring is a pleasing sin, extremely compliant with

nature. How propense the nature of man is to it I shall show you in the

third chapter. Speech is the discovery of reason; corruption soon

runneth out that way. Well, then, watch over it; the more natural

corruptions are, the more care should we use to suppress them: Ps.

xxxix. 1, `I will take heed to my ways, that I offend not with my

tongue., There needeth special caution for that; and as you should

watch, so you should pray, and desire God to watch over your watching:

Ps. cxli. 3, `Set a watch before my mouth, keep the door of my lips.,

The awe of God is a great restraint.

Reas. 3. Because it was the sin of that age, as appeareth by his

frequent dissuasives. See ver. 19; so chap. iii. per totum; so chap.

iv. ver. 11, &c. The note is--It is an ill sign to be carried away with

the evil of the times. It is a description of wicked men, Eph. ii. 2,

that they `walked according to the course of this world;, in the

original, kat' aiona, according to the age, as the manner of the times

went. So Rom. xii. 2: `Be not conformed to this world;, to aioni touto,

`to this age;, the meaning is, do not get into the garb of the times.

So 2 Chron. xvii. 4, `He walked after the trade of Israel., Many do so;

they walk after the fashion and trade of the country and times wherein

they live. Oh! consider, this is the sure note of a vain profession.

Sins, when they grow common, become less odious; and therefore slight

spirits commit them without remorse.

Reas. 4. Because it seemeth so small a sin, and having laid aside

grosser sins, they did the more securely continue in the practice of

it. They were not adulterers, drunkards; and therefore, flattering

themselves with a show of holiness, they did the more freely censure

and detract from others. Note, indulgence in the least sin cannot stand

with grace. Your `religion is vain, if you do not `refrain your

tongue., They are miserably mistaken that hope to redeem their souls

from the guilt of one sin by abstaining from the practice of another.

Some are precise in small things, that they may be excused for

nonobservance of `the weightier things of the law;, as the stomach,

when it cannot digest solid food, naturally desireth to fill itself

with water, or such light stuff as breedeth nought but wind. The

Pharisees `tithed mint and cummin,, &c. Others avoid grosser sins, and

hope that it is an excuse for other corruptions that are not so odious.

We all plead, `Is it not a little one, and my soul shall live?,

Reas. 5. Because this is usually the hypocrite,s sin. Hypocrites, of

all others, are least able to bridle their tongue; and they that seem

to be religious, are most free in censuring; partly because, being

acquainted with the guilt of their own spirits, they are most apt to

suspect others. Nazianzen saith of his father, ou'te ti` ton poneron

auto`s parade'che--he being of an innocent and candid soul, was less

apt to think evil of others; and he giveth this reason, bradu` ga`r eis

upo'noian kakou, to` pro`s kaki'an duski'neton--goodness is least

suspicious, and plain hearts think all like themselves. Partly because

they use to be much abroad that are so little at home. Censuring is a

trick of the devil, to take off the care from their own hearts; and

therefore, to excuse indignation against their own sins, their zeal is

passionate in declaiming against the sins of others. Gracious hearts

reflect most upon themselves; they do not seek what to reprove in

others, but what to lament in themselves. Partly because they are not

so meek and gentle as true Christians. When a man is sensible of his

own failings, he is very tender in reflecting upon the weaknesses of

others: Gal. vi. 1, `Ye which are spiritual, restore him with

meekness., They which are most spiritual are most tender to set a

fallen Christian in joint again, katarti'zete. Partly because an

hypocrite is a proud person: he would have every one to be his own

foil, and therefore he blemisheth others. Diotrephes would be prating

against John, because he `loved the preeminence,, 3 John 9, 10. Partly

because hypocrites are best at their tongue, and therefore cannot

bridle it. When men make religion a talk, their way is to blemish

others; it is a piece of their religion. The Lord give you to discern

into your own souls, whether these dispositions be in you or no.

Reas. 6. Because there is such a quick intercourse between the tongue

and the heart, that the tongue is the best discovery of it; and

therefore, saith the apostle, is `their religion vain,, if they `cannot

bridle their tongues., Seneca said, that the speech is the express

image of the heart; and a greater than he said, `Out of the abundance

of the heart the mouth speaketh., The quality of many men,s religion

may be discerned by the intemperateness of their language; words are

but the excrements and overflow of their wickedness. A man may soon

discern of what religion they are, saith Pareus of the Jesuits, qui

theologiam in caninam maledicentiam transferunt--that, like angry curs,

cannot pass by one another without snarling.

These reasons being premised, the opening of the verse will be the more

easy.

If any man seemeth to be religious.--To himself or others, by the

practice of some few things by worship, and some duties of the first

table.

And bridleth not his tongue; that is, doth not abstain from the evils

of the tongue, such as railing, reviling, censuring, and detraction,

which latter, I suppose, is chiefly intended.

But deceiveth his own soul.--It may be understood two ways:--(1.)

Though he detract from others, yet he hath too good an opinion of

himself. Self-love is the ground of hypocrisy; they do not search

themselves, suspect themselves. Judas said last, `Master, is it I?,

They are too equal to themselves, though too severe to others. (2.) The

other sense may be, he cometh at length to flatter himself, to deceive

his own soul, as well as to seem to others.

This man,s religion is vain; that is, either he maketh his graces and

the good things that are in him to be vain and unprofitable, or rather,

his religion is pretended to no purpose.

Obs. 1. Besides what I have observed already from hence, you may

collect from that seemeth to be religious, there may be religion only

in pretence and seeming. So 1 Cor. viii. 2, `If any man among you

thinketh he knoweth anything;, that is, pleaseth, flattereth himself in

the conceit of his knowledge. So Gal. vi. 3, `If any man think himself

to be something, when he is nothing;, that proudly overweeneth his own

worth. Well, then, rest not in a `form of godliness,, 2 Tim. iii. 5, or

in a `form of knowledge,, Rom. ii. 20; in a naked speculation, or in a

varnished profession. These things may carry a fair show and semblance

in the world, but are of no account before God. Still put yourselves to

this question, Am I yet beyond a hypocrite? Be what you would seem to

be. [151]

Obs. 2. From that bridleth not his tongue. That it is a great part of

religion to bridle the tongue. There are several evils that must be

restrained--lying, swearing, cursing, railing, ribaldry. I shall speak

of these five:--(1.) Lying. Beware of that, with all the kinds,

equivocation and dissimulation. Truth is the ground of commerce. It is

a sin destructive to the good of mankind. The devil, that is, the

accuser, he is called the liar too. Oh! do not cry up a report of

others, till you have sifted it. `Report, say they, and we will report

it,, Jer. xx. 10; that is, bring us anything, and we will blaze it; and

so a little water is evaporated into a great deal of steam and smoke.

Crassa negligentia dolus est, say the civilians--if you do not try it,

you are guilty. (2.) Cursing. There is corruption at the heart when the

tongue is so blistered. It is observable that when God would have the

curses pronounced upon Mount Ebal, he employed the servile tribes about

it, only Reuben was amongst them, that prostituted his father,s bed.

There is seldom any blessing for them that use themselves to curses.

(3.) Swearing. It is said the righteous `feareth an oath,, Eccles. ix.

2. Not only those false-mouthed oaths, but minced oaths, and vain

speeches, and peremptory asseverations in the slightest matters. Men

that lavish away deep asseverations upon every trifle are, if the

matter be anything more serious, put upon that which should be the last

reserve, an oath. (4.) Bailing. I take it not only for the gross

railing, but privy defamations and whisperings to the prejudice of

others, meddling with other men,s matters; as the apostles often speak

against these, so commending with a but, as the scripture saith of

Naaman, 2 Kings v. 1, `A great man, an honourable man, a mighty man,

but he was a leper., They say he is thus and thus, but, &c.; and so

wound while they pretend to kiss. They make their praise but a preface

to their reproach, which is but as an archer that draweth back his

hand, that the arrow may fly with the more force. It was a great praise

that Jerome gave Asella, Habebat silentium loquens--she was silent when

she spake; for she spake only of religious and necessary things, not

meddling with others, persons or fame. (5.) Ribaldry. Filthy `rotten

communication,, Col. iii. 8; sa'pros lo'gos, `filthy speaking,, Eph. v.

4. Many travel under the burthen of a profane jest. Oh! the filthy

breath that cometh out of their mouths! All foolish jesting cometh

under this head. Aristotle,s virtue, eutrapeli'a, is a sin with Paul,

Eph. v. 4.

Obs. 3. From that but deceiveth himself. Hypocrites come at length to

deceive themselves. A liar, by repeating his lies, beginneth to believe

them. Natural conscience is pacified with a show. It is just with God

to punish deceit with deceit. And as they cozen others, so they deceive

their own souls; as the carver fell in love with an image of his own

making, and thought it living. Hypocrisy endeth in hardness and gross

blindness, and by custom men dote upon that which at first they knew

was but paint and varnish; as if God would be as easily mocked and

deceived as men.

Obs. 4. From that this man,s religion is vain. Pretended religion will

be fruitless: shows are nullities with God. Of all things, a man cannot

endure that his serious actions shall be in vain and to no purpose; for

there usually hope is more strong, and therefore the disappointment

must needs be the more vexatious. This will be no small part of your

torment in hell, to think that all your profession is come to this. I

prophesied in Christ,s name, in his name I wrought miracles. I

conferred, repeated, closed with the better side, to my loss and

disadvantage, and yet am I now in hell. Oh! how sad will such

discourses be in the place of torment! Oh! consider, the greater rise

your hope had, the more bruising and crushing will your fall be, as a

stone that falleth from a high place is broken to powder.

Ver. 27.--Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is

this, to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, and

to keep himself unspotted from the world.

Here the apostle cometh to the positive part of the trial. As he must

not do hurt, lest his religion prove vain; so he must do good, that it

may be found pure and undefiled.

From the context observe:--

Obs. Negatives in religion are not enough: he must refrain his tongue,

and he must visit the fatherless. Our duty should carry proportion with

the divine grace to us. God,s mercies are not only privative but

positive; he doth not only bring us out of hell, but put us under an

assurance of glory. It was Absalom,s misery to be only acquitted from

the punishment, but not to see the king,s face. God,s grace is more

entirely dispensed; we are taken out of a state of wrath into a state

of love. God,s terms to Abraham were, to be `a shield and an exceeding

great reward;, to be a protector, and a saviour; and to all the

faithful, `a sun and a shield,, Ps. lxxxiv. 11. A shield against

danger, and a sun, the cause of all vegetation, life, and blessing. Now

we should imitate our heavenly Father; we should not rest in a bare

removal of evil, but be careful of that which is good: there should be

not only an abstinence from grosser sins, but a care to maintain

communion with God. The descriptions of the word are negative and

positive: `Walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, but walketh in

the ways of the Lord,, Ps. i. 1, 2; so Rom. viii. 1, `Walk not after

the flesh, but after the spirit., Some are not drunkards, not outwardly

vicious; but are they godly? Is there any savour and power of religion?

Are there any motions and feelings of the spiritual life within their

souls? God, that hateth sin, delighteth in grace; to be less evil, at

the best, will but procure you a cooler hell. It is vulgarly observed,

that the Pharisee,s religion ran upon nots, Luke xviii. 11. It is not

enough to live civilly and do no man wrong; there must be grace, and

the exercise of grace. I observe, that sins trouble the conscience more

than want of grace, partly because conscience doth not use to smite for

spiritual defects, and partly because sins work an actual distemper and

disturbance to reason. Oh! but consider; he that wanteth good works is

as much hated of God as the outwardly vicious; and the barren tree is

cut down as well as the poisonous tree--if it bear no fruit as well as

if it bear ill fruit. It is not enough for a servant that he doth his

master no hurt; he must do his master,s work: in the Gospel, he had not

misspent his talent, but hid it in a napkin.

But I come to the words. In the verse he presseth them to works of

charity, and an holy conversation, that so they might both show

themselves to be truly religious, and that their profession was that

pure and immaculate faith which Christian religion propoundeth.

Pure religion, and undefiled.--He doth not set down what is the whole

nature of religion, but only some particular testimonies of it.

Religion also requireth faith and worship, but the truth of these is

evidenced by charity and an holy life; and, therefore, the

anti-scripturists of our days grossly pervert this place, and the scope

of the apostle, when they would make all religion to consist in these

outward acts; for the apostle is dealing with hypocrites, who pretended

faith and worship, neglecting charity.

Before God and the Father is this; that is, before God, who is the

Father of Christ, and us in him. The like phrase is used in many other

places: 2 Cor. i. 3, `Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus

Christ;, so Eph. i. 3; so Eph. v. 20, `To the God, and the Father, in

the name of our Lord Jesus Christ:, and he saith, `Before God,, that

is, in his eye, and his esteem. Hypocrites may deceive men, for they

see only what is without; but God the Father judgeth rightly. And also

this is mentioned to imply the sincerity of such Christian offices;

they should be done as in the presence of God.

To visit.--Under this word by a synecdoche are comprehended all duties

of love. To visit, is to comfort them in their misery, to relieve them

in their necessities; and under this one kind of charity are

comprehended all duties to our neighbour.

The fatherless and the widows.--These are specified, but others are not

excluded: there are other objects of charity, as the poor, the sick,

the captive, the stranger, which are also spoken of in scriptures. But

the fatherless and widows do most usually want relief, and are most

liable to neglect and oppression. They are often mentioned elsewhere in

scripture; as Isa. i. 17, `Judge the fatherless, plead for the widow;,

so Ps. cxlvi. 9; so Prov. xv. 25, and xxiii. 10.

In their affliction; that is, in their straits, and when most op

pressed; and this is added lest men should think their duty performed

by visiting those amongst the fatherless and widows that are rich and

wealthy.

And to keep himself unspotted.--This is coupled with the former duty,

to show the inseparable connection that should be between charity and

holiness, and to show that that religion is false which doth not teach

holiness as well as charity: as Papists sever them, and cry up charity

as a merit to expiate the defect of holiness.

From the world.--The world, when it is taken in an ill sense, is

sometimes put for the men of the world, and sometimes for the lusts of

the world: 1 John ii. 15, `Whatever is in the world is either the lusts

of the eyes, the lusts of the flesh, or the pride of life., Now, to

`keep ourselves unspotted from the world,, is to keep ourselves from

the taint and infection of an evil example, and the prevalency and

sovereignty of worldly lusts.

Out of this verse observe:--

Obs. 1. That it is the glory of religion when it is pure: Ps. xix.,

`The commandment of the Lord is pure;, no doctrine so holy in itself,

and maketh such provision for good life. False religions are descried

by their impurity. God suffereth false worshippers to fall into

obscenities, that they may draw a just scorn upon themselves, Rom. i.

Popery is no friend to good life: pardons set at sale make way for

looseness. The true Christian religion is called `a holy faith,, Jude

20. No faith goeth so high for rewards, nor is so holy for precepts.

Well, then, an impure life will not suit with a holy faith. Precious

liquor must be kept in a clean vessel, and `the mystery of the faith,

held `in a pure conscience,, 1 Tim. iii. 9. We never suit with our

religion more than when the way is undefiled and the heart pure:

`Blessed are the undefiled in the way,, Ps. cxix. 1; and again,

`Blessed are the pure in heart,, Mat. v. 8.

Obs. 2. That a pure religion should be kept undefiled. A holy life and

a bounteous heart are ornaments to the gospel. Religion is not adorned

with ceremonies, but purity and charity. The apostle speaketh of making

the doctrine of God our Saviour comely, Titus ii. 10. It is with us

either to credit or to stain our religion: `Wisdom is,, or should be,

`justified of her children,, Mat. xi. 19. By the innocency of their

lives they bring a glory to their way. So also a bountiful man is an

honour to his profession, whereas a covetous man sullieth it; as the

apostle saith, Rom. v. 7, `For a righteous man would one scarcely die,

but for a good man would one even dare to die., A man of a severe

innocency is hated rather than loved, but a good or bountiful man

gaineth upon the hearts of others; they would even die for him.

Obs. 3. A great fruit and token of piety is provision for the

afflicted. In the 25th of Matthew you see acts of charity fill up the

bill. Works of mercy do well become them that do expect or have

received mercy from God; this is to be like God, and we should never

come to him, or go away from him, but with somewhat of his image in our

hearts: dissimilitude and disproportion is the ground of dislike. Now

one of the chief glories in the Godhead is the unweariedness of his

love and bounty: he visits the fatherless and the widows; so should we:

the spirit of our religion is forgiving; and therefore the cruel hard

heart is made by Paul a kind of `denying the faith,, 1 Tim. v. 8.

Obs. 4. Charity singleth out the objects that are most miserable. The

apostle saith, `the widows and fatherless,, and that `in their

afflictions., That is true bounty when we give to those that are not

able to make requital: Luke xiv. 12-14, `When thou makest a dinner or

supper, call not thy brethren, or friends, or rich neighbours,, &c. We

cannot do the least duty for God but we have some self aims. We make

our giving many times to be a kind of selling, and mind our advantage

in our charity. Oh! consider, our sweetest influences should fall on

the lower grounds: to visit the rich widows is but courtesy; to visit

the poor, and that in their affliction, that is charity.

Obs. 5. This charity to the poor must be performed as worship, out of

respect to God. The apostle saith to visit the fatherless is

threskei'a, worship. A Christian hath a holy art of turning duties of

the second table into duties of the first; and in respect to man, they

worship God. So Heb. xiii, 16, `To do good, and to communicate, forget

not; for with such sacrifice God is well pleased., To do good is a duty

of the second table; and sacrifice, while it was a part of God,s

worship, a duty of the first. Well, then, alms should be sacrifice; not

a sin-offering, but a thank-offering to God. This is the difference

between a Christian and others, he can make commerce worship. In common

business he acteth upon reasons and principles of religion, and

whatever he doth to man, he doth it for God,s sake, out of love to God,

fear of God. The world is led by interest, and they by conscience. The

men of the world are tied one to another, like Samson,s foxes by their

tails, by their mutual intertwisted interests; but they, in all their

relations, do what they do as in and to the Lord, Eph. v. 22; so Eph.

vi. 1; so ver. 7, et alibi. Well, then, we must be tender of the end

and reason of our actions in civil respects: alms is worship and

sacrifice, and therefore not to be offered to the idol of our own

credit and esteem, or to be done out of private ends, but in obedience

to God, and for his glory.

Obs. 6. From that before God. True religion and profession is rather

for God,s eye than man,s. It aimeth at the approbation of God, not

ostentation before men. David saith, Ps. xviii. 23, `I have been

upright before thee, and kept myself from my iniquity., That is a fruit

of true uprightness, to draw all our actions into the presence of God,

and to do what we do before him. So Ps. xvi. 8, `I have set the Lord

always before me., In every action he was thinking of the eye of God;

will this be an action for God,s notice and approbation? So Ps. cxix.

168, `I have kept thy testimonies; for all my ways are before thee., He

maketh that to be the reason of the integrity of his obedience, `My

ways are before thee;, under the observance and inspection of God.

Hypocrites cannot endure such thoughts. The prodigal was for a far

country, away from his father; and it is said, Job xiii. 16, `A

hypocrite will not come before him;, that is, be under God,s eye and

sight.

Obs. 7. From that before God and the Father. We serve God most

comfortably when we consider him as a Father in Christ. Lord, Lord, is

not half so sweet as Our Father. Duty in the covenant of grace is far

more comfortable, not only as we have more help, but because it is done

in a sweeter relation. We are not servants, but have received the

adoption of sons. Get an interest in God, that his work may be sweet to

you. Mercies yield the more sweetness when they come not only from a

Creator, but a Father; and duties are done with the more confidence

when we can come into the presence of God, not as servants, but sons. A

servant may use greater industry and pains than a son, and yet please

less.

Obs. 8. The relieving of the afflicted and the unspotted life must go

together. As the apostle coupleth them, so doth Christ: Mat. v. 7, 8,

`Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy;, and then

presently, `Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God., A

man that is charitable and not pure, is better to others than to

himself. Goodness and righteousness are often coupled in the Old

Testament: Micah vi. 8; so Dan. iv. 27. It is strange that men should

so grossly separate what God hath joined. There are some that are `pure

in their own eyes,, but content themselves with a cheap and barren

profession. Others are vicious and loose, and they are all for acts of

charity and mercy; and so covetousness lurketh under the veil of

profession on the one side, and on the other men hope to recompense God

for the excesses of an ill life by a liberal profusion, as if the

emptying of the purse were a way to ease the conscience. Well, then,

let the hand be open and the heart pure. You must `visit the fatherless

and the widow,, and `keep yourselves unspotted from the world.,

Obs. 9. The world is a dirty, defiling thing. A man can hardly walk

here but he shall defile his garments. (1.) The very things of the

world leave a taint upon our spirits. By worldly objects we soon grow

worldly. It is hard to touch pitch and not to be defiled. We see in

other things that our minds receive a tincture from those objects with

which we usually converse. Christ prayeth, John xvii. 15, `I pray not

that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but keep them from the

evil of the world., Christ knew what a temptation it is to live here in

the midst of honours, and pleasures, and profits. It was a happy thing

that Paul could say, Gal. vi. 14, `I am crucified to the world, and the

world is crucified to me., The world hated him, and he did not care for

the world. The world is crucified to many, but they are not crucified

to it; they follow after a flying shadow. (2.) The lusts of the world,

they stain the glory and deface the excellency of your natures:

`Corruption is in the world through lust,, 2 Peter i. 4. Your

affections were made for higher purposes than to be melted out in

lusts. To love the pleasures of the world, it is as if you should

defile your bed with a blackamoor, and be so sick of lust as to hug

nastiness. and embrace the dung, Lam. iv. 5. (3.) The men of the world

are sooty, dirty creatures. We cannot converse with them but they leave

their filthiness upon us. The apostle saith, 2 Tim. ii. 21, `If a man

purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel of honour, sanctified

and meet for the master,s use., From these, that is, from the leprosy

of evil examples, for the apostle speaketh of those vessels of

dishonour that are in the great house of God, the world, which a man

cannot touch without defilement. A man cannot hold any communion with

them, but he shall be the worse for them. `These are spots in your

love-feasts,, Jude 12; they defile the company.

Well, then--;(1.) Let us more and more grow weary of the world. A man

that would always live here is like a scullion that loveth to lie among

the pots. In those blessed mansions that are above, `there shall in no

wise enter anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh

abomination,, Rev. xxi. 27. There we shall have pure company, and be

out of the reach and danger of temptations. There are no devils in

heaven; they were cast out long since, 2 Peter ii. 6, and you are to

fill up their vacant rooms and places. The devil, when he was not fit

for heaven, he was cast into the world, a fit place for misery, sin,

and torment; and now this is the devil,s walk. He compasseth the earth

to and fro. Who would be in love with a place of bondage? with Satan,s

diocese? that odd, dirty corner of the universe, where a man can hardly

move back or forth, but he shall be defiled? (2.) While we live here,

let us keep ourselves as unspotted as we can. In a place of snares, we

should walk with the more care: Rev. iii. 4, `There are a few names

that have not defiled their garments; they shall walk with me in

white., There are some, though few, that escape the taint of the world.

You are kept by the power of God; yet, in some sense, you must keep

yourselves: you are to `watch, and keep your garments,, Rev. xvi. 15.

You are to act faith upon the victory of Christ, by which `he hath

overcome the world,, 1 John v, 4. You are to commend yourselves to God

in prayer, that he may keep and `present you faultless before the

presence of his glory,, Jude 24. You are to discourse upon the

promises, and to work them into your hearts by spiritual reasoning,

that you may `escape the corruption that is in the world through lust,,

2 Peter i. 4, and 2 Cor. vii. 1. You are to avoid communion with the

lepers of the world: we should learn a holy pride, [152] and scorn such

company. A man that keepeth ill company is like him that walketh in the

sun, tanned insensibly. All these things you must do. It is a folly to

think that because the power is from God, therefore the care should not

be in ourselves.

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[24] Eusebius Epiphanius, Gregory Nissen, and others.

[25] Chrysostom in Heb. xi.

[26] See Tertul. in Apol. cap. 39, Justin Mart. in fine Apol. 2, and

Clement. Alexand. lib. v. Stromat.

[27] Theoph. in loc.

[28] `Temno'menon tha'llei kai` to sidero anta'goni'zetai,--Naz. in.

Orat.

[29] `Exquisitior quaeque crudelitas vestra illecebra est; magis

sectae, plures efficimur, quoties metimur a vobis,,--&c. Tertul. in

Apol.

[30] `Ligabantur, includebantur, caedebantur, torquebantur, urebantur,

laniabautur, trucidabantur et tamen multiplicabantur.,--Aug. lib. xxii.

de Civit. Dei, c. 6.

[31] Philip, the Landgrave of Hesse, being asked how he could endure

his long and tedious imprisonment, `Professus est se divinas martyrum

consolationes sensisse.,--Manlius.

[32] `Magis damnati quam absoluti gaudemus.,--Tertul. in Apol.

[33] Theod. lib. iv. Haeret. Fabul.

[34] `Eum nulla adversitas dejicit, quem nulla prosperitas

corrumpit.,--Greg. Mor.

[35] `Ignis non est diversus et diversa agit; paleam in cineres vertit;

auro sordes tollit.,--Aug. in Ps. xxxi.

[36] `Senecae praedivitis hortos.,--Juvenal.

[37] `Probatio innocentiae nostrae est iniquitas vestra.,--Tertul. in

Apol.

[38] Justin Mart, in Apol. 2, circa finem.

[39] See Hist. of the Council of Trent, p. 418, 2d edit.

[40] `Ferendo discimus perferre; solidissima pars est corporis, quam

frequens usus agitavit.,--Seneca.

[41] Aug. in lib. de Corrept. et Grat. c. 3.

[42] `Gubernatoris artem tranquillum mare et obsequens ventus non

ostendit; adversi aliquid incurrat oportet, quod animum probet.,--Sen.

ad Marc. c. 5.

[43] `Non incepisse sed perfecisse virtutis est.,--Aug. ad Frat. in

Eremo. Ser. 8.

[44] `Turpe est cedere oneri, et luctari cum officio quod semel

recepisti; non est vir fortis et strenuus qui laborem fugit, nec

crescit illi animus ipsa rerum difficultate.,--Seneca.

[45] Baronius ad annum Christi, 357.

[46] Non dubitantis est, sed supponentis.

[47] `Haec beneficii inter duos lex est, alter oblivisci debet dati

statim, alter accepti nunquam.,--Sen. de Beneficiis.

[48] `Sapiens ad omnem incursum munitus et intentus, non si paupertas,

non si ignominia, non si dolor impetum faciant, pedem referet;

iuterritus et contra illa ibit et inter illa.,--Seneca.

[49] Clem. Alex. lib. vii. Strom.

[50] Greg. Naz. Orat. 40, de Baptismo, circa med.

[51] Empori'an mallon e' cha'rin poiousin.,--Isocrates.

[52] `Non est sportula quae negotiatur.,--Martial.

[53] Timeo Danaos, et dona ferentes.

[54] Grotius in Annot. in Mat. xviii. 19.

[55] `Sancti ad salutem per omnia exaudiuntur, sed non ad voluntatem,

ad voluntatem etiam Daemones exauditi sunt, et ad porcos quos

petiverant ire missi sunt.,--Aug. in Epist. Johan. tract. 6. So also

(Serm. 53, de Verbis Domini), `Quid prosit medicus novit, non

aegrotus.,

[56] `Turbo quidam animos nostros rotat, et involvit fugientes

petentesque eadem, et nunc in sublime allevatos, nunc in infima allisos

rapit.,--Seneca de Vita Beata.

[57] `Non posse praetenditur, non velle in causa est.,--Seneca.

[58] `To` sta'dion Perikles eit' e'dramen, eit8' eka'theto,

Oudeis oiden o'los; daimo'nios bradu'tes.,--Graec. Epigram.

[59] `Gaudium de veritate omnes volunt, multos expertus sum qui velint

fallere, qui autem falli neminem.,--Aug. lib. x. Confes. cap. 13.

[60] `Mirum novumque dictu quod patri exhibeatur petitio et filius

exaudiat, cum exauditio ad eum pertineat cui est porrecta

petitio.,--Simon de Cassia, lib. xiii. cap. 2.

[61] `Professus est se habere duas animas in eodem corpore, unam Deo

dicatam, alteram unicuique illam vellet.,--Callenucius lib. v. Hist.

Neap.

[62] The Arians, so called from Eusebius, the Arian Bishop of

Nicomedia, who recanted and fell again to his heresy.--Socrat.

Scholast. lib. i. cap. 25.

[63] `'Me'sos ap' amphoteron kakos pa'schei,--Nazar. Orat. 13.

[64] `Bonus animus nunquam erranti obsequium accommodat.,--Ambros.

[65] Sen. lib. de Tranquill.

[66] `Fides quae creditur, et fides qua creditur.,

[67] `Proai'resis ouk e'stin aduna'ton.,--Arist. Ethic.

[68] Tertul. in Apol. cap. 39.

[69] See Spanhemius in his Dubia Evangelica, part iii. dub. 77, largely

discussing this matter.

[70] Qu. `leaves,?--ED.

[71] Tho. Lyra.

[72] `Agatho`n o'nta diaphero'ntos kai` plou'sion einai diaphero'ntos

adu'naton.,--Plato.

[73] `Non possunt in coelum aspicere, quoniam mens eorum in humum

prona, terraeque defixa est; virtutis autem via non capit magna onera

portantes.,--Lactant. lib. sept.

[74] `Servatur pauper Lazarus, sed in sinu Abrahami divitis.,--August.

in Ps. li.

[75] `Dantur bonis ne putentur mala, malis ne putentur bona.,--August.

[76] `Pluit Gehennam e coelo.,--Salvian de Provid.

[77] `Beatus vir, non mollis vel effoeminatus, sed vir, dictus a

virtute animi, virore fidei, vigore spei.,--Aquinas in locum.

[78] Ferus in Mat. in cap. 16. v. 27.

[79] `Tetra'gonos ane`r.--Arist.,

[80] Sal. de Gub. Dei, lib. i.

[81] `Deus nihil coronat nisi dona sua.,--Aug., lib. v. horn. 14.

[82] `Miserum te judico quod nunquam fuisti miser; transistis sine

adversario vitam; nemo sciet quid potueris; ne tu quidem ipse; opus est

ad notitiam sui experimento, quae quisque posset nisi tentando non

didicit.,--Sen. lib. de Provid., cap. 4.

[83] `Drimu`s o chei'mon, alla` gluku`s o para'deisos; algeine` e`

me'nis, edeia e apo'lausis. mikro`n anamei'nomen kai` o ko'lpos emas

tha'lpsei tou patria'rchou,, &c.--Basil ad 40 Martyr.

[84] `Pericula non respicit martyr, coronas respicit.,--Basil, ubi

supra.

[85] `Promittendo se debitorem fecit.,--Aug.

[86] `Ado'kimos ane`r apei'rastos para` to theo.,--Clem. Rom. lib. ii.

Const., cap. 8.

[87] Euseb. Eccles. Hist., lib. ii. cap. 7.

[88] `Tou`s phoneis tes metanoi'as.,--Epiphan.

[89] So see Jerom. lib. iii. contra Jovin. et Aug. de Fide et Operibus,

cap. 25.

[90] `Diabolus tentat; Deus probat.,--Tertul. de Orat.

[91] `Homo Deum non nisi ex sensu suo metitur, nec de auctoritate ejus

cogitat, quin eam circumcidat, nec de libertate quin ei fibulam

impositam velit; Pelagiani omnes nascimur, immo cum supercilio

pharisaico. Hic character vix delebilis est: Homo sibi obnoxium Deum

existimat, non se Deo,, &c.--Spanhem. de Gratia Universali, in Praef.

ad Lect.

[92] Plutarch.

[93] Arist. Ethic., lib. vii. cap. 6.

[94] Plut. de Sera Num. Vindict.

[95] `Diaboli decipientis calliditas, et hominis consentientis

voluntas.,--Aug. de Peccat. Orig. lib. ii. cap. 37.

[96] Arist. Eth., lib. vii. cap vi.

[97] M. T. Cicero in Orat. pro Rege Deiot.

[98] `Homicidii festinatio est prohibere nasci; etiam conceptum utero

dum adhuc sanguis in hominem delibatur dissolvere non licet, nec refert

natura natam quis eripiat animam an nascentem disturbet.,--Tertul. in

Apol.

[99] Qu. `Not equal,?--ED.

[100] Qu. `Will not be,?--ED.

[101] David a Mauden in Prefat. Comment, in Decalog.

[102] Tacit. Anual., lib. xv.; Sueton. in Nero, cap. 16.

[103] See Usser de Britann. Eccl. Primordiis, p. 221.

[104] Camero de Eccles.

[105] `Prorsus in Montani partes transivit.,--Pamel. in Vita Tertul.

[106] Aug. lib. iv. contra Jul.

[107] Nazianz. in his Christius Patiens.

[108] Tertul. in lib. de Orat. Dom.

[109] August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xix. cap. 1.

[110] `Democritus excaecavit seipsum quod mulieres sine concupiscenti�

aspicere non posset, et doleret si non esset potitus: at Christianus

salvis oculis foeminam videt; animo adversus libidinem caecus

est.,--Tertul. in Apol., cap. 46.

[111] `Nesciunt suis parcere qtii nihil simm norunt.,--Ambros.

[112] From Stancaras, a professor at K�nigsberg, and afterwards in

Poland, where he died in 1574.--ED.

[113] Socrates Scholast., lib. ii., Eccles. Hist., cap. 8.

[114] Aei gera'sko polla` didasko'menos.--Solon.

[115] `Plus est in auribus quam in oculis situm, quoniam doctrina et

sapientia percipi auribus solia potest, oculis soils non

potest.,--Lactantius.

[116] Stapyld. in Prompt. Moral, in Dom. 3, Advent.

[117] Hortatur Magnesianos: `Me` kataphphonein tes eliki'as tou

episko'pou, ou proi` te`n phainome'nen aphorontas neo'teta alla` proi`

te`n en Theo phro'nesin.,--Ignat. Epist. ad Maqnes sub initio Epist.

[118] Tertul. in lib. de Prescript, adversus Haeret.

[119] `Hapantes e'smen eis to` nouthetein so'phoi, o'tan d' autoi`

poiomen moroi` ou gigno'skomen.,--Menander.

[120] Tacitus.

[121] `Maximum remedium iraedilatio est, ut primus ejus fervor

relanguescat, et caligo quae premit mentem aut resiliat aut minus densa

sit; graves habet impetus primo.,--Senec. de Ira, lib. ii. cap. 28, and

lib. iii. cap. 12.

[122] Ruff., lib. ii. Hist., cap. 18; Theod., lib. v. Hist., cap. 26.

[123] Beza in Vit� Calvini, p. 109.

[124] `Erat vero ille sicut benevolenti� praecipuus: ita ir�

fervidus.,--Aug. Confess., lib. ix. cap. 9.

[125] `Oxu'cholos quidam et adversus notos et familiares facile

irritabilis, sed qui etiam irani deponeret, atque ultro culpam et

errorem agnosceret.,--Icon. Carrier. Praef. Operibus.

[126] Qu. `is not,?--ED.

[127] `Affectavit quandoque diabolus veritatem defendendo

concutere.,--Tert.

[128] `Caedissem te nisi iratus essem.,--Plato.

[129] `Propa'theiai, non pa'the.--Hieron. Epist. ad Demet.

[130] `Infirmitates, non iniquitates.,--Ambros.

[131] Praei'a me`n psu'che ta`s kath' eautou diabola`s upophe'ron,

&c.,--Basil ad Fratres in Eremo.

[132] `Orgiloi`, pikroi`, cha'lepoi.,--Arist. Ethic., lib. iv. cap. 18.

[133] `Puthagorikoi` ge'nei mede`n prose'kontes, alla` koinou lo'gou

mete'chontes, ei'pote proachtheien eis loidori'an up' orges, pri`n to`n

elion dunai ta`s dexia`s emba'llontes alle'lois kai` aspasa'menoi

dielu'onto.,--Plutarch.

[134] `Qui exemplo peccat bis peccat.,

[135] `Qui referre injuriam nititur, eum ipsum a quo laesus est gestit

imitari; et qui malum imitatur bonus esse nullo pacto

potest.,--Lactant. de Vero Cultu, lib. 6. cap. 10.

[136] Plutarch, in Vita Lycurgi.

[137] `Iter ad pietatem est intra pietatem.,

[138] Arist. Rhet. in Pass. od.

[139] Camer, lib. de notis verbi Dei.

[140] `Non periclitor dicere ipsas scripturas ita dispositas esse, ut

materiam subministrarent haereticis.,--Tertul.

[141] `Boni esse desierunt simul ac docti evaserint.,--Seneca.

[142] `To` me` du'naton a'llos e'chein, all' o?ntos os emeis le'gomen,

&c.--Arist. Org.

[143] `Maculae sunt peccata quae ostendit lex; aqua est sanguis Christi

quem ostendit evangelium.,

[144] Osorius de Glor., lib. i.

[145] `Domitrix gentium, et captiva vitiorum.,--Aug. de Civit. Dei.

[146] Chrysos. Hom. 19, in priorem Ep. ad Corinth.

[147] `Amor meus est pondus meum, eo feror quocunque feror.,--Aug.

[148] `Deo redempti sumus, Deum debemus.,--Salvian.

[149] `Sic Ecebolius de ipso; Pate'sate me` to` a'las to`

anai'stheton.,--Socrat. Ecd. Hist. lib. iii. cap. 2.

[150] Qu. `Lord,?--ED.

[151] `Quod videri vis, illud esse debes.,

[152] `Discamus sanctam superbiam, et sciamus nos esse illis

meliores.,--Hieron.

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CHAPTER II.

VER. 1. My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the

Lord of glory, with respect of persons.

This chapter containeth two special admonitions, which were very

needful as the state of things then were. The first is against `respect

of persons,, because of outward advantages, especially in church

matters. The other is against a vain opinion and ostentation of faith,

where there was no presence or testimony of works to commend it. He

dealeth in the former admonition from the 1st verse to the 14th. And in

the latter from thence to the end of the chapter.

In this 1st verse he propoundeth the matter to them which he would have

them to avoid, `respect of persons `because of some outward excellency,

which hath no kind of affinity or pertinency at all to religion. The

sense will be most clear by a particular explication of the words.

My brethren.--An usual compilation throughout the epistle. Some think

he chiefly intendeth in this expression the presbyters and deacons, who

had a great hand (say they) in giving every one their convenient

places. But I know no reason why we should so restrain it, it being

applied in all the other passages of the epistle to the whole body of

those to whom he wrote; and here, where he dissuadeth them from respect

of persons, it seemeth to have a special respect, as noting the equal

interest of all Christians in the same Father.

Have not the faith.--Faith is not taken strictly, but more generally

for the profession of Christian religion, or the manifestations of the

grace of Christ in the souls of his people. The meaning is, have not

grace, have not religion, &c.

Of our Lord Jesus Christ.--He doth not mean the personal faith of

Christ, or, as some accommodate the expression, faith wrought by

Christ. This manner of speech doth not note the author so much as the

object. Faith of Christ, in the intent of the scripture, is faith in

Christ; as Gal. ii. 20, `I live by the faith of the Son of God;, so

Eph. iii. 12, `We have confidence, and access, by the faith of him;, so

Phil. iii. 9, `The righteousness which is through the faith of Christ;,

and so elsewhere. Now Christ is here called our Lord, because it is the

proper term for him as mediator and head of the Church, and by virtue

of our common and equal interest in him: the head is dishonoured in the

disrespect of the members.

The Lord of glory.--Some read, `The faith of the glory of Christ with

respect of persons;, that is, do not measure the glorious faith by

these outward and secular advantages, or `the faith of our glorious

Lord Jesus Christ;, for we supply the word Lord, which is but once in

the original, partly because he is called so in other places: 1 Cor.

ii. 8, `They would not have crucified the Lord of glory;, partly

because it is fitly repeated out of the context; partly because in this

place it hath the force of an argument. Christianity being a relation

to the Lord of glory, putteth honour enough upon men, though other wise

poor and despicable; and if men did believe Christ were glorious, they

would not so easily despise those in whom there is the least of Christ.

With respect of persons, en prosopolempsiais.--Respect of persons is

had when, in the same cause, we give more or less to any one than is

meet, because of something in his person which hath no relation to that

cause. The word properly signifieth accepting of one,s face or outside,

and so noteth a respect to others out of a consideration of some

external glory that we find in them. The phrase, when it is used in the

Old Testament, is rendered by the Septuagint by thauma'zein to`

pro'sopon, [153] wondering at a man,s face, as being overcome and

dazzled at the beauty of it; which probably gave occasion to that

expression of St Jude, ver. 16, thauma'zontes pro'sopa, which we

render, `having men,s persons in admiration because of advantage., But,

before we go on, we must rightly pitch and state the offence from which

our apostle dissuadeth, for otherwise absurdities will follow. Civility

and humanity calleth for outward respect and reverence to them that

excel in the world. To rise up to a rich man is not simply evil. If all

difference of persons, and respect to them, were sinful, there would be

no place for government and mastership. Therefore I shall inquire:--

I. What respect of persons is sinful.

II. The particular abuse which the apostle taxeth and noteth in this

expression.

First, What respect of persons is sinful? There is a holy and

warrantable respect of persons either by God or men:--(1.) By God; he

is said to `accept the faces, of his people, Gen. xix. 21--;naschati

panecha, so it is in the Hebrew; and so elsewhere God is often said to

respect their persons; their persons first, and then their services.

(2.) By men, when we prefer others out of a due cause, their age,

calling, gifts, graces: yea, it is lawful to put a respect upon them be

cause of that outward glory and excellency wherewith God hath furnished

them. There is a respect proper and due to their persons, though not so

much for their own sakes as for the bounty of God to them; as they that

bowed before the ass that carried about the rites of Isis, non tibi,

sed religioni, did obeisance to the religion, not the beast.

But then there is a vicious respect of persons, when the judgment is

blinded by some external glory and appearance, so that we cannot

discern truth or right, and a cause is over-balanced by such foreign

circumstances as have no affinity with it. Thus it is said, Lev. xix.

15, `Thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the

mighty; but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour., Neither

swayed with foolish pity, on the one hand, nor with respect to might,

power, friendship, greatness, on the other; as usually those are the

two prejudices against the execution of justice: either carnal pity

saith, He is a poor man, or else carnal fear saith, He is a great man;

and so the outward accidents of life are rather valued than the merits

of the cause. So Deut. i. 17, `Thou shalt not respect persons in

judgment, but hear the small as well as great.,

Secondly, What is this particular offence which the apostle calleth the

`having the faith of Christ in respect of persons,, which was the sin

of those times? I answer--;(1.) In the general, their having too great

a care of these differences and outward regards in their church

administrations, both in their worship, and courts, and censures, as we

shall show in the next verse. In the things of God all are equal; rich

and poor stand upon the same level and terms of advantage. Our

salvation is called `a common salvation,, Jude 3; and the faith of all,

for the essence and object of it, `a like precious faith,, 2 Peter i.

1. But now their respects were only carried out to those that lived in

some splendour in the world, with a manifest and sensible contempt of

their poor brethren, as if they were unworthy their company and

converse; as appeareth not only by the present context, but by chap, i.

8, 9, where he comforteth the poor despised brethren, showing that

grace was their preferment; and 1 Cor. x. 1, from ver. 19 onward,

`Every one took his own supper;, ver. 22, but `despised the church of

God;, that is, excluded the poor, who were the church as well as they.

So that mark, there was not only a difference made between the poor and

the rich, but great reverence showed to the one, with a proud contempt

of the other. (2.) More particularly--;(1st.) They over-esteemed the

rich, doing all the grace and reverence they could devise in the

congregation and courts of judicature; yea, they went so far as to

esteem the wicked rich above the godly poor, honouring and observing

those that were apt to hale them to the judgment-seats. (2d.) They

debased the poor, not considering them according to their eminency in

grace and high station in Christianity; passing by the appearance of

God in them, without any mark or notice; yea, they offered injury and

contumely to them, because of their outward abasure and despicableness,

out of a proud insolence, scarce behaving themselves towards them as

men, much less as Christians.

The notes are these:--

Obs. 1. That respect of persons in religious matters is a sin. We maybe

many ways guilty of it:--(1.) By making external things, not religion,

the ground of our respect and affection. The apostle saith, 2 Cor. v.

16, `Henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have

known Christ after the flesh, yet henceforth know we him no more.,

Knowing after the flesh is to love and esteem any one out of secular

and outward advantages. Paul, when a Pharisee, looked for a Messiah

coming in outward pomp and glory; but being converted, he had laid

aside those fleshly thoughts and apprehensions. It is true what Solomon

saith, `Wisdom with an inheritance is good., When grace and outward

excellency meet together, it maketh the person more lovely; but the

ground and rise of our affection should be grace. Love to the brethren

is an evidence, but we should be careful of the reason of that love,

that we love them qua brethren, because of that of God which we see in

them. That saying of Tertullian is usual, We must not judge of faith by

persons, but of persons by faith. [154] (2.) When we do not carry out

the measure and proportion of affection according to the measures and

proportions of grace, and pitch our respects there where we find the

ground of love most eminent. David,s delights were `to the saints, and

the excellent of the earth,, Ps. xvi. 3; that is, to those which were

most eminent among them. Some prefer a cold, neutral profession before

real grace, will not own mean Christians by any familiarity and

converse, though the power and brightness of God,s image shine forth

most clearly in them. The apostle saith, 1 Cor. xii. 23, `We bestow

most honour on the uncomely parts., Those who have least of worldly

pomp and grace, if they excel in Christ, should have most of Christian

respect and honour. (3.) When we can easily make greatness a cover for

baseness, and excuse sin by honour, whereas that is the aggravation;

the advantage of greatness maketh sin the more eminent and notable. It

is good to note with what freedom the scriptures speak of wicked

persons in the highest honour: Dan. iv. 17, he giveth kingdoms `to the

basest of men;, the world cannot think as basely of the children of

God, but the word speaketh as basely of them. The Turkish empire, as

great as it is, saith Luther, it is but a morsel, which the master of

the house throweth to dogs. [155] David maketh it a description of a

godly man, Ps. xv. 4, `In whose eyes a vile person is contemned, but he

honoureth them that fear the Lord;, let him be what he will be, if he

be a wicked person, he is to them a vile person. How low was that evil

king in the eyes of the holy prophet! 2 Kings iii. 14, `Were it not

that I regarded the presence of Jehoshaphat, the King of Judah, I would

not look towards thee, nor see thee,, (4.) When we yield religious

respects, give testimonies to men for advantage, and, under pretence of

religion, servilely addict ourselves to men for base ends; this Jude

noteth in that expression, Jude 16, `Having men,s persons in admiration

because of advantage., The apostle speaketh of some heretics that were

otherwise proud, but yet for advantage fawning and servile, as usually

none so base-spirited as the proud are, when it may make for their

worldly profit. [156] It was observed of our late bishops, by one of

their own party, [157] that (though they were otherwise of a proud,

insulting spirit) they were willing to take Ham,s curse upon them, that

they might domineer in the tents of Shem; to be servi servorum, slaves

to great men-servants, that they might bear rule over the tribe of

Levi. But to return; this is a clear respect of persons, when men keep

at a distance, and are proud to the poor servants of God, but can

crouch, and comply, and do anything for profit and advantage. It was a

brave resolution that of Elihu, Job xxxii. 21, `I cannot accept any

man,s person; I know not to give flattering titles,, (5.) When church

administrations are not carried on with an indifferent and even hand to

rich and poor, either by way of exhortation or censure. By way of

exhortation: Christ died for both, and we must have a care of both,

Exod. xxx. 15; the poor and the rich were to give the same atonement

for their souls; their souls were as precious to Christ as those that

glitter most in outward pomp. The apostle saith, `We are debtors both

to the bond and free., Rom. i. 14. Christ saith to Peter, `Feed my

lambs,, as well as `Feed my sheep,, John xxi. So for censure: Micaiah

feared not Ahab, nor John Baptist Herod and the Pharisees. It was an

excellent commendation that which they gave to Christ, Mark xii. 14,

`Thou carest for no man, and regardest the person of no man, but

teachest the way of God in truth., Ah! we should learn of our Lord and

Master. We are never true ministers of Jesus Christ till we deal alike

with persons that are alike in themselves. (6.) When we contemn the

truths of God be cause of the persons that bring them to us. Usually we

regard the man rather than the matter, and not the golden treasure so

much as the earthen vessel; [158] it was the prejudice cast upon

Christ, `Is not this the carpenter,s son?, We look upon the cup rather

than the liquor, and consider not what, but who bringeth it. Matheo

Langi, [159] Archbishop of Saltzburg, told every one that the

reformation of the mass was needful, the liberty of meats convenient,

and to be disburdened of so many commands of men just; but that a poor

monk (meaning Luther) should reform all was not to be endured. So in

Christ,s time the question was common, `Do any of the rulers believe in

him?, Thus you see we are apt to despise excellent things, because of

the despicableness of the instrument: `The poor man delivered the city,

(saith Solomon) `but he was forgotten,, Eccles. ix. 15, 16. The same

words have a different acceptation, because of the different esteem and

value of the persons engaged in them. Erasmus observed, that what was

accounted orthodox in the fathers, was condemned as heretical in

Luther. [160] Thus you see how many ways in religious matters we may be

guilty of respect of persons.

Use. Oh! consider these things. It is a heinous evil, and a natural

evil. We are marvellous apt to think that there is no eminency but what

consisteth in outward greatness. This is to disvalue the members of

Christ; yea, to disvalue Christ himself: `He that despiseth the poor,,

though they be but the common poor, `reproacheth their maker,, Prov.

xvii. 5. But to despise poor Christians that are again renewed to the

image of God, that is higher; and it is highest of all when a Christian

doth despise Christians; as it is far worse for a scholar to disvalue

scholarship, or a soldier his profession, than for other men. It is

nothing so bad in worldly men, that are acquainted with no higher

glory. Oh! consider what a dishonour it is to Christ for you to prefer

mammon before him, as if wealth could put a greater value upon a person

than grace.

Obs. 2. That Jesus Christ is a glorious Lord, not only in regard of his

own person, which is `the brightness of his Father,s glory,, Heb. i. 3,

or in regard of his present exaltation, whereby he hath `a name above

all names,, Phil: ii. 9. Not only as he enjoyeth it in himself, but as

he dispenseth it to others. He will give you as much glory as your

hearts can wish for. He putteth an honour upon you for the present. You

may be sure you shall not be disgraced by him, either in your hope; it

is such as `shall not make you ashamed., Rom. v. 5: false worshippers

may be ashamed, as Baal,s were, of their trust in their god, 1 Kings

xviii; or of your enjoyments: you are ( made comely in his comeliness,,

Ezek. xvi. 14; and the church is called `the fairest among women,,

Cant. v. 9; or of your service: your work is an ornament to you. God

himself is `glorious in holiness,, Exod. xv. 11. But for the future you

will always find him a Lord of glory; sometimes in this world, after

you have been a long time beclouded under disgrace, reproach, and

suffering. When hair is shaven, it cometh the thicker, and with a new

increase; so, when the razor of censure hath made your heads bare, and

brought on the baldness of reproach, be not discouraged: God hath a

time to `bring forth your righteousness as the noon-day,, Ps. xxxvii.

6, by an apparent conviction to dazzle and discourage your adversaries.

The world was well changed when Constantine kissed the hollow of

Paphnutius, eye, that was erewhile put out for Christ. Scorn is but a

little cloud that is soon blown over. But if Christ do not cause your

enemies to bow to you, yet he will give you honour among his people;

for he hath promised to honour those that honour him, 1 Sam. ii. 30;

and he is able to do it, for the hearts of all men are in his hands,

and he can dispose of their respects at pleasure. That sentence of

Solomon intimateth that God is resolved upon it, `A man shall be

commended according to his wisdom,, Prov. xii. 8. But, however, suppose

all this were not, in the next world you shall be sure to find Christ a

Lord of glory, when he cometh to put the same glory upon the saints

which the Father hath put upon himself, John xvii. 22, 24. `In that

day,, as the apostle saith, `he will be glorified in his saints, and

admired in all them that believe,, 2 Thes. i. 10. It is a notable

expression; not only admired in himself, but in his saints; as if he

accounted the social glory which resulteth to his person from the glory

of his children a greater honour to him than his own personal glory.

Well, then, look to your thoughts of Christ. How do you consider him?

as a Lord of glory? The apostle saith, `To them that believe, Christ is

precious,, 1 Peter ii. 7, in the original, time`, an honour. They

account no honour like the honour of having relation to Christ. You

will know this disposition by two notes:--(1.) All other excellencies

will be as nothing. Birth, `an Hebrew of the Hebrews;, dignity, `a

Pharisee;, moral accomplishments, `touching the law, blameless;, beauty

and esteem in the world, `if any man might have confidence in the

flesh, I much more;, yet `I count all things but dung and loss, for the

excellency of the knowledge of Christ,, Phil. iii. 8. (2.) All other

abasures will be nothing: pa'peinos, the `brother of base degree, may

count his baseness for Christ a preferment; let him `rejoice in that he

is exalted,, James i. 9. So of Moses it is said, he `esteemed the

reproaches of Christ better treasures than the riches of Egypt,, Heb.

xi. 26. Mark, he did not only endure the reproaches of Christ, but

counted them treasures, to be reckoned among his honours and things of

value. So Thuanus reporteth of Ludovicus Marsacus, a knight of France,

when he was led, with other martyrs that were bound with cords, to

execution, and he for his dignity was not bound, he cried, `Give me my

chains too; let me be a knight of the same order,, [161] Certainly it

is an honour to be vile for God, 2 Sam. vi. 22. To a gracious spirit,

nothing is base but sin and tergiversation; disgrace itself is

honourable, when it is endured for the Lord of glory.

Obs. 3. Those that count Christ glorious will account Christianity and

faith glorious. The apostle maketh it an argument here, `The faith of

our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory., He that prizeth the person

of Christ prizeth all his relatives. As among men, when we love a man,

we love his picture, and whatsoever hath relation to him. Grace is but

a ray, a derived excellency from Christ. A Christian is much known by

his esteem. What, then, do you account most excellent in yourselves or

others? (1.) In yourselves. What is your greatest honour and treasure?

What would you desire for yourselves or others? What would you part

with first? Theodosius valued his Christianity above his empire. Luther

said, he had rather be Christianus rusticus than ethnicus Alexander--a

Christian clown than a Pagan emperor. (2.) In others. Who are most

precious with you? those in whom you see most of the image of Christ?

We use to honour the servants of glorious kings: Prov. xii. 26, `The

righteous is more excellent than his neighbour., Who is the best

neighbour to you? those that fear God? and do you like them best, when

their conferences are most religious? You shall see this indefinite

proverb is restrained by another, Prov. xix. 1, where Solomon

intimateth that the righteous poor man is better than his rich

neighbour. There, indeed, is the trial. Communion with holy and

gracious spirits is far better than the countenance and respects of a

great man to you. Oh! do not despise those jewels of Christ that lie in

the dirt and dunghill. David could see silver wings in those doves that

had lain among the pots.

Ver. 2-4. For if there come into your assembly a man with a gold ring,

in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment;

and you have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say to

him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou

there, or sit under my footstool; are ye not then partial in

yourselves, and become judges of evil thoughts?

I have put all these verses together, because they make but one entire

sentence. The apostle proveth how guilty they were of this evil from

whence he dissuadeth them, by a usual practice of theirs in their

ecclesiastical conventions.

If there come into your assembly.--The word in the original is, eis

sunagogen, `into your synagogue,, by which some understand their

Christian assembly for worship: but that is not so probable, because

the Christian assembly is nowhere, that I can remember, expressed by

sunagoge, synagogue, but by ekklesi'a, church; and in the

church-meeting there may be, without sin, several seats and places

appointed for men of several ranks and dignities in the world; and it

is a mistake to apply the censure of the apostle to such a practice.

Others apply it to any common convention and meeting for the deciding

of controversies, establishing of public order, and disposing of the

offices of the church; and by synagogue they understand the court where

they judged all causes belonging to themselves. [162] Austin seemeth to

incline to this sense for one part of it, namely, for a meeting to

dispose of all offices that belonged to the church, which were not to

be intrusted to men according to their outward quality, but inward

accomplishments; [163] there being the same abuse in fashion in the

primitive times which, to our grief, hath been found among us, that men

were chosen and called to office out of a respect to their worldly

lustre rather than their spiritual endowments, and the gold ring was

preferred before the rich faith, a practice wholly inconsonant with

Christian religion and with the dispensation of those times; God

himself having immediately called fishermen, and persons otherwise

despicable, certainly of little note and remark in the world, to the

highest offices and employments in the church. If we take the words in

this restrained sense, for a court or meeting to dispose of

ecclesiastical offices and functions, the context may be accommodated

with a very proper sense, for, according to their offices, so had they

places in all church-meetings; and therefore the apostle Paul useth

that phrase, `He that occupieth the room of the unlearned,, 1 Cor. xiv.

16; or, as it is in the original, to'pon idio'tou, the place of the

private person. The elders they sat by themselves, [164] then others

that were more learned, then the ignorants; the church herein following

the custom of the synagogue, which (as the author of the Comment upon

the Epistles, that goeth under the name of Ambrose, observeth) was wont

to place the elders in chairs, the next in rank on benches, the novices

at their feet on mats; [165] and thence came the phrase of `sitting at

the feet, of any one for a disciple, as it is said Paul was `brought up

at the feet of Gamaliel., And for the women, Grotius telleth us, that

the first place was given to the widows of one man, then to the

virgins, then to the matrons. [166] Now, because they assigned these

places preposterously, out of a regard of wealth rather than grace, and

said to the rich, `Sit thou here, kalos, honourably,, and to the poor,

however qualified, `Stand thou there, or sit at my feet,, the place of

learners and idiots, the apostle doth with such severity tax the abuse,

to wit, their carnal partiality in distributing the honours of the

church. Thus you see the context will go on smoothly. But I must not

limit the text to this one use of the court or synagogue; and

therefore, if we take in the other uses of deciding all causes and

differences between the members of the Church, &c., every passage in

the context will have its full light and explication; for the apostle

speaketh of judging, and of such respect of persons as is condemned by

the law, ver. 9, which is an accepting of persons in judgment, Lev.

xix. 5. And therefore I understand this synagogue of an assembly met to

do justice. In which thought I am confirmed by the judgment and reasons

of a late learned writer, [167] who proveth that it was the fashion of

the Jews to keep court in their synagogues; and therefore do we so

often read those phrases. Mat. x. 17, `They shall scourge you in their

synagogues;, Acts xxii. 19, `Beaten in every synagogue;, Acts xxvi. 11,

`I punished them in every synagogue,, because, as he saith, where

sentence was given, there justice was executed; and it is probable

that, being converted to Christianity, they still held the same course.

And it is very notable, which he quoteth out of Maimonides, Sanhedrim,

cap. 21, `That it is expressly provided by the Jews, constitutions,

that when a poor man and a rich plead together, the rich shall not be

bidden to sit down, and the poor stand, or sit in a worse place, but

both sit, or both stand:, which is a circumstance that hath a clear

respect to the phrases used by the apostle here; and the rather to be

noted, because our apostle writeth to `the twelve tribes,, Hebrews by

nation, with whom these customs were familiar and of known use. So that

out of all we may collect that the synagogue here spoken of is not the

church assembly, but the ecclesiastical court or convention for the

decision of strifes, wherein they were not to favour the cause of the

rich against the poor; which is an explication that cleareth the whole

context, and preventeth the inconveniences of the received exposition,

which so far pleadeth the cause of the poor as to deny civility and due

respect to the rich and honourable in Christian assemblies.

A man with a gold ring, chrusodaktulios, `a gold-fingered man,, that is

the force of the original word. The gold ring was a badge of honour and

nobility; therefore Judah had his signet, Gen. xxxviii. 18-25; and

Pharaoh, as a token that Joseph was promoted to honour, `took off his

ring from his hand and put it upon Joseph,s, and arrayed him in

vestures of fine linen,, Gen. xlii. So Ahasuerus dealt with Mordecai,

Esther viii. 8.

In goodly apparel.--This also was a note of dignity: Gen. xxvii. 15,

`Rebecca took the goodly garment of her son Esau;, by which some

understand [168] the gorgeous priestly ornaments which be longed to him

as having the birthright. So when the prodigal returned, the father, to

do him honour, calleth for the best robe and a ring; some marks and

ornaments of honour which were put on upon solemn days. But the luxury

of after-times made the use more common. It is said of the rich man in

the Gospel, Luke xvi. 19, that he was `clothed in purple and fine

linen, and fared deliciously every day.,

A poor man in vile raiment.--In the original, estheti rhupara, `filthy,

sordid raiment;, it is the same word which the Septuagint use in Zech.

iii. 3, 4, where mention is made of the high priest,s `filthy

garments,, which was a figure of the calamitous state of the church;

where the Septuagint have ima'tia rhupara'.

And you have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing.--Epiblepein;

is to gaze and observe with some admiration and special reverence.

Sit thou here in a good place, kalos, `in an honourable or worthy

place;, and so it noteth, either the rash disposal of the honours of

the church into their hands, or the favouring of them in their cause,

as before.

Stand thou there, or sit under my footstool.--Expressions of contempt

and disrespect. Standing or sitting at the feet was the posture of the

younger disciples. Sometimes standing is put for those that stood upon

their defence; as Ps. cxxx. 3, `If thou shouldst mark what is done, who

can stand?, that is, in curia, in court, as those that make a bold

defence. So Eph. vi. 13, `Take the armour of God, that you may be able

to withstand in the evil day, and when you have done all, to stand;,

that is, before God,s tribunal: it is an allusion to the posture of men

in courts. This different respect of poor and rich bringeth to my mind

a passage of Bernard, who, when he chanced to espy a poor man meanly

apparelled, he would say to himself, Truly, Bernard, this man with more

patience beareth his cross than thou: but if he saw a rich man

delicately clothed, then he would say, It may be that this man, under

his delicate clothing, hath a better soul than thou hast under thy

religious habit. An excellent charity, and a far better practice than

theirs in the text, who said to him in the goodly raiment, `sit,, to

the poor, `stand., To the rich they assigned `a good place,, but to the

poor the room `under the footstool.,

Are ye not partial in yourselves?--This clause is severally rendered,

because of the different significations of the word diakrithete. Some

turn it without an interrogation, thus, `Ye were not judged in

yourselves, but,, &c.; as if the sense were--Though they were not

judged themselves, yet they judged others by these inevident signs. But

it is better with an interrogation; and yet then there are different

readings. Some thus, `Are ye not condemned in yourselves?, that is, do

not your own consciences fall upon you? Certainly the apostle applieth

the fact to their consciences by this vehement and rousing question;

but I think diakrithete must not be here rendered condemned. Others

thus, `Have ye not doubted or questioned the matter in yourselves?, for

that is another sense of the word in the text. But here it seemeth most

harsh and incongruous. Another sense of the word is, to make a

difference; so it is often taken: diakrino'menoi, `making a

difference,, Jude 22; oude`n diekri'ne, `He put no difference,, Acts

xv. 9; and so it may be fitly rendered here, `Have ye not made a

difference?, that is, an unjust difference, out of carnal affection,

rather than any true judgment. And therefore, for more perspicuity, we

explain, rather than interpret, when we render, Are ye not partial? It

is an appeal to their consciences in making such a difference: Are ye

not counterpoised with perverse respects? Many times we may know the

quality of an action by the verdict of conscience. Is not this

partiality? Doth not conscience tell you it is making a difference

which God never made? Sins directly disproportionate to our profession

are against conscience, and in such practices the heart is divided.

There are some disallowing thoughts which men strive to smother.

And become judges of evil thoughts.--From the running of the words in

our translation, I should have guessed the sense to be this, That by

these outward appearances of meanness and greatness in the world, they

judged of men,s hearts; which is here expressed by what is most

transient and inward in the heart, the thoughts. But this kritai

dialogismon poneron, is to be taken in quite another sense. [169] The

meaning is, you altogether judge perversely, according to the rule of

your own corrupt thoughts and intentions. Their esteem and their ends

were not right, but perverted by carnal affections. They esteemed

outward pomp above spiritual graces, which was contrary to reason and

religion; and they proposed to themselves other ends than men should do

in acts of choice and judicature. They had men,s persons in admiration,

because of advantage; and did not weigh so much the merits of the

cause, as the condition of the persons contending.

From these verses, besides the things touched in the explication, you

may observe:--

Obs. 1. That men are marvellous apt to honour worldly greatness. To a

carnal eye nothing else is glorious. A corrupt judgment tainteth the

practice. A child of God may be guilty of much worldliness, but he hath

not a worldly judgment. David,s heart went astray; but his judgment

being right, that brought him about again, Ps. lxxiii.: compare the

whole psalm with the last verse, `It is good for me to draw nigh to

God., Moses, uprightness and love to the people of God was from his

esteem: Heb. xi. 26, `Esteeming the reproach of Christ,, &c. When men

have a right esteem, that will make them prize religion, though

shrouded under poor sorry weeds; but when their judgments and conceits

are prepossessed and occupied with carnal principles, nothing seemeth

lovely but greatness, and exalted wickedness hath more of their respect

than oppressed grace. But you will say--May we not show honour and

respect to men great in the world if they are wicked?

I answer--There is a respect due to the rich, though wicked; but if it

be accompanied with a contempt of the mean servants of God, it is such

a partiality as doth not become grace. More particularly, that you may

not mistake in your respects to wicked men, take a direction or

two:--(1.) Great men in the world must have respect due to their

places, but the godly must have your converse and familiarity: `My

delight is in the excellent of the earth,, Ps. xvi. 3. A Christian can

not delight in the converse of a wicked man so as he can in the

children of God; besides that the object in the eye of grace hath more

loveliness, there is the advantage of sweet counsels and spiritual

communion: `Comforted by the mutual faith of you and me., Rom. i. 12.

(2.) You must be sure not to be ashamed of the meanest Christians, to

vouchsafe all due respects to them. Onesimus was a mean servant, yet,

when converted, Paul counted him `above a servant, as a brother,,

Philem. 16. So the messengers of the churches are called `the glory of

Christ,, 2 Cor. viii. 23, such as Christ will boast of. Christ is

ashamed of none but those that are ashamed of him: it is glory enough

in the eye of Christ and grace that they are holy. (3.) You must own

them for brethren in their greatest abasures and afflictions, as Moses

did the people of God, Heb. xi. 25. (4.) Be sure to drive on no

self-design in your respects; be not swayed by a corrupt aim at

advantage: this will make us take Egyptians for Israelites, and

perversely carry out our esteem. It chiefly concerneth ministers to

mind this, that they may not gild a potsherd, and comply with wicked

men for their own gain and advantage: it is a description of false

teachers, 2 Peter ii. 3, `Through covetousness they shall, with feigned

words, make merchandise of you: `they apply themselves to those among

whom they may drive on the trade best; not to the saints, but to the

rich, and soothe up them; where there is most gain, not where most

grace: Hosea vii. 3, `They made the rulers glad with their lies.,

Obs. 2. From that are ye not partial? He urgeth them with a question.

To bring us to a sense of things, it is good to put questions to our

consciences, because then we do directly return upon our own souls.

Soliloquies and discourses with yourselves are of excellent advantage:

Ps. iv. 4, `Commune with your own hearts, and be still., It is a hard

matter to bring a man and himself together, to get him to speak a word

to himself. There are many that live in the world for a long time--some

forty or fifty years--and all this while they cannot be brought to

converse with their own hearts. This questioning of conscience will be

of use to you in humiliation, faith, and obedience. (1.) In your

humbling work. There are several questions proper to that business, as

in the examination of your estate, when you bring your ways and the

commandment together, which is the first rise of humiliation: you will

find the soul most awakened by asking of questions. Oh!, what have I

done?, Jer. viii. 6. Do I walk according to the tenor of this holy law?

Can I say, `My heart is clean?, Prov. xx. 9. Then there is a second

question: When guilt is found out concerning the rigour of the law, and

the sureness of wrath, every violation is death: will God be partial

for thy sake?, His jealousy shall smoke against that man that saith, I

shall have peace, though I walk in the way of mine own heart,, Deut.

xxix. 19. Then there are other questions about the dreadfulness of

wrath: Ezek. xxii. 14, `Can my heart endure, and my hands be made

strong, in the days that God shall deal with me?, Shall I be able to

bear up under torments without measure and without end? Can I dwell

with those devouring burnings? Then there is a fourth question, after a

way of escape: `What shall I do to inherit eternal life?, Acts xvi. 30;

or, as it is in the prophet, `Wherewith shall I come before God?, Micah

vi. 8. With what recompense shall I appease his angry justice? Thus you

see the whole business of humiliation is carried on in these

interrogative forms. (2.) For the work of faith, these questions are

serviceable, partly to quicken the soul to the consideration of the

offer of God; as when the apostle had disputed of free justification,

he enforceth all by a question, `What shall we then say to these

things?, Rom. viii. 31. Soul, what canst thou object and urge against

so rich mercies? Paul, all the while before, had been but drawing the

bow,^ now he letteth fly the arrow. `What shall we say?, Partly because

it maketh us more sensible of the danger of not believing: Heb. ii. 3,

`How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?, If I neglect

God,s second offer, what will become of me? Thus it is an help to the

work of faith. (3.) In the work of obedience these questions are

serviceable; as when a temptation is like to carry it in the soul, it

is good to come in with a smart question: Gen. xxxix. 9, `How can I do

this wickedness, and sin against God?, So if the heart drive on heavily

in duties of worship, `Offer it now to the governor; would he accept it

at my hands?, Mal. i. 8. Would I do thus to an earthly prince in an

earthly matter? Thus you see questions are of singular use in every

part of the holy life. Be more frequent in them; and in every matter

take occasion to discourse with your own souls.

Obs. 3. From that judges of evil thoughts. Evils begin first in the

thoughts: Mat. xv. 19, `Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts;, that

is in the front of that black roll. Affections pervert the thoughts,

and thoughts stain the judgment. Therefore, when God would express the

wickedness of the old world, he saith, `The imagination of their

thoughts were evil,, Gen. vi. 5. The reason of atheism is blasphemy in

the thoughts: Ps. x. 4, `All their thoughts are that there is no God.,

The reason of worldliness is some wretched thought that is hidden in

the bosom: Ps. xlix. 11, `Their inward thought is that their houses

shall continue for ever., You see, then, there is reason why you should

go to God to cleanse your spirits from evil thoughts, why you should be

humbled under them, why you should watch against them: Isa. lv. 7, `Let

the wicked man forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts,

and return unto the Lord., Mark, not only his way, but his thoughts.

Trace every corrupt desire, every inordinate practice, till you come up

to some inward and hidden thought. There are implicit thoughts, and

thoughts explicit: explicit are those that are impressed upon the

conscience, and are more sensible; implicit are those which the

scripture calleth `hidden thoughts,, and the `sayings of the heart.,

Though the desires, purposes, actions, are according to them, yet we do

not so sensibly discern them; for they are so odious, that they come

least in sight. Many such there are; as this was the hidden thought

implied in the text, that wealth is to be preferred before grace; and

that made them judge so perversely. It is good therefore to wait upon

the word, which `discovereth the thoughts and intents of the heart,,

Heb. iv. 12, that upon every experience you may refer things to their

proper head and cause: sure there hath been a vile thought in me, that

there is no God; that the world is for ever; that riches are better

than grace; that the pleasures of sin are better than the hopes of

life, &c. It is good to interpret every action, and to observe the

language that is couched in it; your lives do but speak out these

thoughts.

Obs. 4. That this is an evil thought, that men are to be valued by

their outward excellency. It is against the dispensation of God, who

putteth the greatest glory upon those that are of least account and

esteem in the world. It is against the nature of grace, whose glory is

not sensible, obvious to the senses, but inward and hidden:^ Ps. xlv.

13, `The king,s daughter is all glorious within., A Christian,s inside

is best; all the world,s glory is in show, fancy, and appearance:

Agrippa and Bernice `came with great pomp,, Acts xxv. 23, meta` polles

phantasi'as, with much show and fancy. Painted things have a greater

show with them than real. Nazianzen saith, the world is Helena without,

and Hecuba within: there is nothing answerable to the appearance; but

now grace is under a veil, `it doth not appear what we shall be,, 1

John iii. 2. Thus Cant. i. 6, the church is said to be `black, but

comely;, full of spiritual beauty, though outwardly wretched, and

deformed with afflictions; which is there expressed by two similitudes,

like `the tents of Kedar, and the curtains of Solomon., The tents of

Kedar: the Arabians lived in tents, which were but homely and slender

in comparison of city buildings, obscure huts, sullied and blacked with

the weather, but rich within, and full of costly utensils; therefore we

hear of `the glory of Kedar,, Isa. xxi. 16. And Solomon,s curtains may

possibly signify the same thing. Josephus saith, Solomon had Babylonian

curtains, of a baser stuff and work, to hide the curious imagery that

was carved on the marble walls. The greatest glory is within the veil:

`The hidden man of the heart, is an ornament `of great price,, 1 Peter

iii. 4. And as it is against the nature of grace, so it is against all

right reason: we do not use to judge so in other cases: we do not prize

a horse for the gaudry of his saddle and trappings, but for his

strength and swiftness. That painter was laughed at who, because he

could not draw Helena fair, drew her rich. We do not therefore judge it

a good sword because it hath a golden belt. Well, then, if it be

against providence, and grace, and reason, go by a wiser rule in

valuing things and persons than outward excellency: do not think that

faith best which the ruler professeth, John vii. 48, nor those persons

best that glitter most with worldly lustre. Christ cometh often in a

disguise to us, as well as the Jews--to us in his poor members.

Ver. 5. Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of

this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he ha\*h

promised to them that love him?

In this verse the apostle urgeth another argument against respect of

persons: you will despise those whom God, out of his wise ordination,

hath called to the greatest honour. He instanceth in a threefold

dignity which the Lord putteth upon the godly poor: they are elected of

God, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom.

Hearken, my beloved brethren.--He exciteth their attention, and still

giveth them the loving compellation which he had formerly used. In all

grave and weighty matters, it is usual in the scripture to preface and

premise some craving of attention: `He that hath an ear to hear let him

hear,, Mat. xiii. 9; so James in the council of Jerusalem: Acts xv. 13,

`Men and brethren, hearken unto me., Here the apostle useth this

preface, partly to stir them up to consider the dispensation proper to

that age. So 1 Cor. i. 26, `Behold your calling, brethren, not many

wise, not many mighty,, &c.; that is, seriously consider the matter of

God,s calling in these times. Partly because he is about to urge a warm

argument against the perverseness of their respects, and when the

matter concerneth our case, it calleth for our best attention.

Hath not God chosen? that is, by the special designment of grace he

hath singled out the poor to be heirs of life. You will find it so

always, for the most part, but in those times especially. Partly to

confute the pride of great persons, as if God should respect them for

their outward dignity. The first choice that God made in the world was

of poor men; and therefore do we so often read that the poor received

the gospel; not only the poor in spirit, but the poor in purse. God

chose fishermen to preach the gospel, and poor persons to receive it:

few were won that were of any rank and quality in the world; and partly

that we might not think that wonderful increase and spreading of the

gospel to come to pass by the advantage of human power, fleshly aids

and props, but by the virtue of divine grace.

The poor of the world; that is, in regard of outward enjoyments: 1 Tim.

vi. 17, there he speaketh of `the rich of this world., There is another

world that hath its riches, but they that have estate there are usually

poor and despicable. The saints are described to be those that have not

their hopes in this world, 1 Cor. xv. 19, or poor in this world; that

is, in the opinion of the present world they are vile and abject.

Rich in faith.--So they may be said to be two ways: Either in regard of

high measures and raised degrees of faith; as Abraham was said to be

`strong in faith., Rom. iv. 20, or that woman, Mat. xv. 28, `O woman!

great is thy faith., So when the apostle presseth them to a spiritual

abundance in gifts and graces, he saith, Col. iii. 16, `Let the word of

God dwell in you, plousi'os, richly., Or rich, in opposition to worldly

poverty, as noting the recompense that is made up to them for their

outward poverty in their hopes and privileges. And mark, God is said to

`choose rich in faith;, that is, `to be rich in faith., It is such am

expression as is used Rom. viii. 29, `He hath chosen us like his Son;,

that is, `to be like his Son;, which is plainly averred by the apostle,

Eph. i. 4, `He hath chosen us in him that we might be holy:, not

because we are good, but that we might be good. This place cannot be

urged for the foresight of faith; for as he chose us rich in faith, so

he chose us heirs of glory: and therefore it doth not note the reason

of God,s choice, but the end; not that they were so, but that they

might be so.

Heirs of the kingdom.--Glory is often set out by a kingdom, and the

faithful as princes under years.

Which he hath promised.--Promises of this nature are everywhere: Prov.

viii. 17, `I love them that love me;, so Exod. xx. 6, `Showing mercy to

thousands of them that love me.,

To them that love him.--Why this grace is specified, see the reasons

alleged in the explication and notes of the 12th verse of the first

chapter. Only observe the order used by the apostle; first he placeth

election, then faith, then love.

The notes are these:--

Obs. 1. That oftentimes God chooseth the poor of this world. The lion

and the eagle are passed by, and the lamb and the dove chosen for

sacrifice. The gospel, that was `hidden from the wise and prudent, was

revealed to babes,, Mat. xi. 25. This God doth, partly to show the

glory of his power in preserving them, and truth amongst them, [170]

that were not upheld by worldly props. The church is called `the

congregation of the poor,, Ps. lxxiv. 19; a miserable sort of men, that

were destitute of all worldly advantages. Usually he showeth his power

by using weak means. Moses, hand was made leprous before it wrought

miracles, Exod. iv. Jericho was blown down with rams, horns, and Goliah

slain with a sling and a stone. Partly because God would show the

riches of his goodness in choosing the poor. All must now be ascribed

to mercy. At the first God chose the worst and the poorest, which was

an argument that he was not moved with outward respects; the most

sinful and the most obscure, [171] `that all flesh might glory in the

Lord,, 1 Cor. i. 28. A thief was made the delight of paradise, and

Lazarus taken into Abraham,s bosom. Those that had not the least

pretence of glorying in themselves are invited to grace. Partly because

God would discover his wisdom by making up their outward defects by

this inward glory. Levi, that had no portion among his brethren, had

the Lord for his portion. God is wanting to no creature; the rich have

somewhat, and the poor have `the favour of his people,, Ps. cvi. 4,

special mercies. The buyers, and sellers, and money-changers were

whipped out of the temple; the rich have least interest there. Partly

that the members might be conformed to the head, the saints to Christ,

in meanness and suffering: Zech. ix. 9, `Thy king cometh unto thee

poor., Partly because poverty is a means to keep them upright; riches

are a great snare. The moon is never eclipsed but when it is at the

full. Certainly God,s people are then in most danger. They say the sun

never moveth slower than when it is highest in the zodiac. Usually men

are never more flat in duty and dead in service than when mounted high

in worldly advantages. A pirate never setteth upon an empty vessel: the

devil is most busy in the fulness of our sufficiency. Those that were

taken up with the pleasantness of the country, and saw it fit for

sheep, would not go into Canaan. The disciples pleaded, `Lord, we have

left all things, and followed thee;, as if the keeping of an estate,

and the keeping of Christ were hardly compatible. Well, then--(1.) You

that are poor, bless God; it is all from mercy that God should look

upon you. It is a comfort in your meanness; rejected by the world,

chosen by God. He that is happy in his own conscience cannot be

miserable by the judgment of others: Isa. lvi. 3, 4, `Let not the

eunuch say, I am a dry tree; for I will give him an everlasting name.,

Be not discouraged, though outwardly mean. The poor man is known to God

by name: Luke xvi., he hath a proper name, Lazarus; whereas the rich

man is called by an appellative name. Among men it is^ otherwise.

Divitum nomina sciuntur, pauperum nesciuntur, saith Cajetan. However we

forget the poor, we will be sure to remember the rich man,s name and

title. (2.) You that are rich, consider this is not the favour of God,s

people; be not contented with common bounty. You may have an estate,

and others may have higher privileges. As Luther, [172] profess that

you will not be contented so; you will not be quiet till you have the

tokens of his special mercy.

Obs. 2. There are poor in this world, and poor in the world to come.

Dives, that fared deliciously every day, and was clothed in fine linen,

yet wanted a drop to cool his tongue. Desideravit guttam, saith Austin,

qui non dedit micam; he wanted a drop, that would not give a crumb:

Isa. lxv. 13, 14, `Behold my servants shall eat, but ye shall be

hungry; behold my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: they

shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed., Ye are left to your choice, to

be rich in this world, but poor in the world to come; though here you

swim and wallow in a sea of pleasures, yet there you may want a drop to

cool your tongue.

Obs. 3. The poor of this world may be spiritually rich. The apostle,s

riddle is made good, 2 Cor. vi. 10, `As having nothing, yet possessing

all things;, nothing in the world, and all in faith.

Obs. 4. Faith maketh us truly rich; it is the open hand of the soul, to

receive all the bounteous supplies of God. If we be empty and poor, it

is not because God,s hand is straitened, but ours is not opened. A man

may be poor notwithstanding the abundance of wealth: it putteth a

difference between you and others for a while, but in the grave `the

poor and the rich meet together,, Job iii. 19; that is, are all in the

same estate without difference. In the charnel-house all skulls are in

the same case, not to be distinguished by the ornaments or abasures of

temporal life. It is grace alone that will make you to excel for ever.

Nay, riches cannot make you always to differ in this world: `They take

to themselves wings, and fly away,, Prov. xxiii. 5. Well, then, you

that are poor, do not envy others, plenty; you that are rich, do not

please yourselves in these enjoyments. Istae divitiae nec verae sunt,

nec vestrae--they are neither true riches, neither can you always call

them your own.

Obs. 5. The Lord loveth only the godly poor. There are a wicked poor

whose hearts are ignorantly stubborn, whose lives are viciously

profane. Christ saith, `Blessed are the poor, for yours is the kingdom

of God,, Luke vi. 20. In the evangelist Matthew it is explained, 1

Blessed are the poor in spirit,, Mat. v. 3. David saith, `The abjects

gathered themselves against me,, Ps. xxxv. 15. Many times men of that

quality are malignant opposites to the children and cause of God, saucy

dust, that will be flying in the faces of God,s people; and their rage

is the more fierce because there is nothing of knowledge, politic

restraints, and civil or ingenuous education, to break the force of it.

Obs. 6. All God,s people are heirs; they are heirs, they are but heirs.

They are heirs; that cometh to them by virtue of their sonship: Rom.

viii. 17, `If children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with

Christ,, Jesus Christ was the natural son and the natural heir; and we,

being adopted sons, are adopted heirs. He is called, Heb. i. 2, `the

heir of all things;, and he hath invested us with his own privileges.

Do but consider what an heir a child of God is, one that is received

into the same privileges with Christ; and therefore the apostle saith,

he is a `joint-heir., In a spiritual manner, and as we are capable, we

shall possess the same glory that Christ doth. Again, they are heirs

whose right is indefeasible. Men may appoint heirs, and alter their

purpose, especially concerning adopted heirs; but God never changeth.

In assurance of it we have earnest, 2 Cor. i. 22, and we have

first-fruits, Rom. viii. 23. We have earnest to show how sure, we have

first-fruits to show how good, our inheritance is; a taste how good,

and a pledge how sure. Well, then, you that have tasted of the grapes

of Eshcol, have had any sense of your adoption, you may be confident

God will never alter his purposes of love. Again, they are heirs that

not only look to inherit the goods of their heavenly Father, but his

person. God doth not only make over heaven to you, but himself: `I will

be your God;, quantus quantus est, God is yours. So Ps. xvi. 5, `The

Lord is the portion of mine inheritance., Again, they are heirs that

possess by [173] their father,s lifetime. Men give their estates to us

when they can possess them no longer. But this is our happiness, that

God and we possess it together; and therefore it is said, `glorified

with him., Again, they are heirs to an estate that will not be

diminished by the multitude of co-heirs. Many a fair stream is drawn

dry by being dispersed into several channels; but here, the more the

greater the privilege. What a happiness is it to enjoy God among all

the saints! They `shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob.,

We may jointly inherit without envy. The company is a part of the

blessing: it is one of the apostle,s motives, `Ye are come to an

innumerable company of saints and angels,, Heb. xii. 22, 23. It was a

foolish question, that, `Who shall be greatest in the kingdom of

heaven?, Mat. xviii.; for when God is all in all, he will fill up every

vessel. Such a question suiteth with our present state; but in glory,

as there is no sin to provoke such curiosity, so there is no want to

occasion it. They are but heirs: alas! now they groan and wait for the

adoption, Rom. viii. 23, that is, for the full enjoyment of the

privileges of it. So 1 John iii. 2, `We are the sons of God, but it

doth not appear what we shall be;, we have a right, but not full

possession. Hope cannot conceive what the estate will be when it cometh

in hand. There is much goodness laid out, but more laid up, Ps. xxxi.

19. It is observable that all Christian privileges are spoken of in

scripture as if they did not receive their accomplishment till the day

of judgment. I have spoken already of adoption, that the saints wait

for it. For justification, then, we shall know the comfort of it; when

Christ, in his solemn and most imperial day, in the midst of the

triumph of his justice, shall remember only the services, and pass by

the sins, of the faithful. Then shall we know the meaning of that

promise, `I am he that forgiveth your iniquities, and will remember

your sins no more., Our comfort now is mixed, and we are often harassed

with doubts and fears; but when our pardon is solemnly proclaimed

before all the world, then shall we indeed know what it is to be

absolved. Therefore the scripture speaketh as if an act for our

justification were only passed then: Acts iii. 19, `Repent, that your

sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from

the presence of the Lord., And possibly that may be the reason of that

expression that intimateth forgiveness of sins in the world to come:

Mat. xii. 32, `It shall never be forgiven, in this world, or in the

world to come;, i.e., an act of pardon can neither now be really

passed, or then solemnly declared. So for redemption: we shall not

understand that privilege till we are redeemed from death and the

grave, and have a full and final deliverance from all evils; therefore

we are said to `wait for the redemption of our bodies., Rom. viii. 23,

and `lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh,, Luke xxi.

28. And that possibly may be the reason why the apostle, when he

numbereth up the fruits of our union with Christ, he putteth redemption

last, 1 Cor. i. 30. Here we have righteousness, wisdom, grace, but in

the world to come we have redemption; therefore, the day of the Lord is

called `the day of redemption,, Eph. iv. 30. So also for union with

Christ; it is begun here, but so often interrupted, that it is rather

an absence than a union: 2 Cor. v. 6, `Whiles we are at home in the

body, we are absent from the Lord., The apostle speaketh so, because we

do not so freely enjoy the comforts of his presence. So Phil. i. 23, `I

desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ;, a Christian is with

Christ here, but rather without him. Then shall we know what it is to

be with him, when we shall in body and soul be translated into heaven,

and be always in his eye and presence. So for sanctification: there is

so much of the old nature remaining, that there is scarce anything of

the new; and therefore the day of judgment is called palingenesi'a, the

regeneration,, Mat. xix. 28; that is, the time when all things are made

new, when we come to be settled in our everlasting state; and that may

be the occasion of the apostle,s expression, 1 Thes. iii. 13,

`Sanctified at Christ,s coming., Thus you see, in all points of

Christian privilege, we are, though heirs, yet but heirs. Well, then,

you that `have the first-fruits of the Spirit,, come and rejoice in

your hopes: `Behold what manner of love the Father hath showed you!, 1

John iii. 1. We were strangers, yet we are made sons--nay, heirs; we

were of low degree--it may be poor, beggarly in the world--yet have we

this exousi'an, this dignity put upon us, to be chosen to the fairest

kingdom that ever was and will be, John i. 12. We were enemies,

rebellious as well as despicable, yet still heirs: from `children of

wrath,, made `heirs of glory., God needed not such an adoption; he had

a Son who is called his delight and rejoicing before all worlds, Prov.

viii. 31, and yet he would make thee, that wast a stranger to his

family, a rebel to his crown, so base in the world, a joint-heir with

his only Son. Oh! what love and thankfulness should this beget in us!

Every person of the Godhead showeth his love to us; the Father he

adopteth us: `Behold what manner of love the Father,, &c.; the Son for

a while resigneth and layeth aside his honour--nay, dieth, to purchase

our right, Gal. iv. 6; and `the Spirit witnesseth that we are the sons

of God., Rom. viii. 15. Oh! adore the love of the Trinity with high and

raised thoughts. Consider what a comfort here is against all the

discouragements and abasures that we meet with in the world; princes in

disguise are often slighted, and the heirs of heaven are made the

world,s reproach. But why should you be dejected? 2 Sam. xiii. 4, `Why

art thou so lean from day to day? art not thou the king,s son?, Are not

you heirs of the kingdom of glory? And, by the way, here is some advice

to the world: Do not contemn the meanest that are godly--they are

heirs; every one worshippeth the rising sun, and observeth the heir.

Oh! make you friends of them, they will stead you another day: Luke

xvi. 9, `Make you friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that, when

ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations;, that is,

with that wealth, which is usually abused to sin, make you friends of

the poor godly saints; they with Christ shall judge the world, 1 Cor.

vi. 2. Make them friends, that they may give their suffrage to you, and

receive you into heavenly joys. A main thing that Christ taketh notice

of at the day of judgment, is this: `Thus have ye done to one of my

naked brethren,, Mat. xxv. 40.

Obs. 7. That the faithful are heirs to a kingdom. Heaven and glory is

often set out to us under that notion. You have places every where.

Kingdoms are for kings; and every saint is a spiritual king: Rev. i. 6,

`He hath made us kings and priests unto God his Father., Suitable to

which expression it is said, 1 Peter ii. 9, that we are `a royal

priesthood., These two dignities are joined together, because

heretofore their kings were priests; and the heads of the families were

the priests of it. Cohen signifieth both a prince of Midian and a

priest of Midian. But to return. They are kings because of that

spiritual power they have over themselves, sin, Satan, and the world;

and be cause they are kings, therefore their glory must be a kingdom.

Again, Christ is a king, and therefore they are kings, and his kingdom

is their kingdom. Being united to Christ, they are possessed of his

royalty. Again, there is a very great resemblance between the glory we

expect and a kingdom: Luke xii. 32, `Fear not, little flock; it is your

Father,s pleasure to give you a kingdom., It is called a kingdom in

regard of its splendour, festivity, and glory. That is the highest

excellency and note of a difference amongst men. And also in regard of

attendants; angels are `ministering spirits,, Heb. i. 14. They are so

already; but there they are as porters standing at the twelve gates of

our city, Rev. xxi. 12. Nay, Christ himself will gird himself, and

serve those whom he findeth watching at his second coming, Luke xii.

37. And it is a kingdom in regard of power and dominion. `All things

are theirs,, 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22. They `shall judge the world,, 1 Cor.

vi. 2, 3; yea, the evil angels. And also in regard of abundance of

content and satisfaction. There is `fulness of pleasures for evermore,,

Ps. xvi. 11. All these things concur to make it a kingdom. It is a

state of the highest honour and glory, great pleasure and contentment,

noble attendants, vast dominion. To all these you may add the great

liberty and freedom which we shall enjoy from sins and troubles. We

shall be above the control of Satan, and the opposition of a vile

heart. Oh! then, we that expect these things, `what manner of persons

ought we to be?, The apostle hath an exhortation suitable to this

purpose: 1 Thes. ii. 11, 12, `Walk worthy of God, that hath called you

to his kingdom., Live as kings for the present, commanding your

spirits, judging your souls, above ordinary pursuits--it is not for

eagles to catch flies; above ordinary crosses--cogita te Caesarem esse.

Remember thou shalt one day be a king with God in glory. Enter upon thy

kingdom by degrees: `The kingdom of God is joy and peace in the Holy

Ghost., Rom. xiv. 17. But now for others, who as yet remain, at the

best, but in an uncertain estate, it is a motive to press them to do

what they can to interest themselves in these hopes: Mat. xi. 12, `The

kingdom of heaven suffereth violence., It is a kingdom, and therefore

men are so violent for it. Oh! consider, it is for a crown, and that

will encourage you to all earnestness of pursuit. A lazy wish, a drowsy

prayer, is not enough.

Obs. 8. That heaven is a kingdom engaged by promise. It is not only

good, to tempt your desires, but sure, to support your hopes. Look upon

it not only as a kingdom, but as a promised kingdom, and judge him

faithful that hath promised. None can comfort themselves in these hopes

but they that have interest in the promise. They can plead with God for

their own souls--We have thy word; there is a `promise wherein thou

hast caused us to hope,, Ps. cxix. 49. Heaven is not only prepared, but

promised. You may not only have loose hopes, but a steadfast

confidence.

Obs. 9. That the promise of the kingdom is made to those that love God.

Love is the effect of faith, and the ground of all duty, and so the

best discovery of a spiritual estate. They do not believe that do not

love; and they cannot obey that do not love. Look, then, to this grace.

Do you love God? When promises have the condition specified in them, we

cannot take comfort in the promise till we are sure of the condition.

As Christ asked Simon Peter, `Lovest thou me?, so commune with your own

souls, Dost thou love God? Nay, urge the soul with it again, Dost thou

indeed love God? The effects and products of love are many. Those which

love God, love that which is of God. As (1.) His glory. Their great

desire and delight is to honour him, that they may be any way

serviceable to the glory of God. The sin mentioned, 2 Tim. iii. 2,

`Lovers of themselves,, is the opposite frame to this. When all that

men do is with a self-respect, they have little love to God. (2.) His

commandments. I observed before, that usually men love sin and hate the

commandment. They are vexed with those holy laws that thwart their

corrupt desires. Natural conscience impresseth a sense of duty, and

vile affection worketh a dislike of it. But now, 1 John v. 3, `This is

the love of God, that his commandments are not grievous., Duty is their

delight, and ordinances their solace: Ps. xxvi. 8, `How have I loved

the habitation of thine house, and the place where thine honour

dwelleth!, They will desire to be often in the company of God, to be

there where they may meet with him. (3.) His friends. They love

Christians as Christians, though otherwise never so mean. Love of the

brethren is made an evidence of great importance, 1 John iii. 14. By

these discoveries may you judge yourselves.

Ver. 6. But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and

draw you before the judgment-seats?

Here the apostle endeavoureth to work them to a sense of their own

miscarriage. For, having proved respect of persons a sin, he falleth.

directly upon their consciences; and you have been guilty of it, you

have despised the poor. And then, to show that their practice was not

only vain and evil, but mad and senseless, he urgeth a new argument:

`Do not rich men oppress you?, He doth, in effect, ask them, whether

they would show so much honour to their executioners and oppressors?

But you will say, Doth not the apostle herein stir them up to revenge?

and are we not `to love our enemies, and to do good to them that hate

us,? I answer--(1.) It is one thing to love enemies, another to esteem

them out of some perverse respect; and there is a difference between

fawning and offices of humanity and civility. (2.) Some have deserved

so ill of the church, that they cannot challenge the least civil

respect from the people of God: 3 John 10, `Bid him not God speed., So

2 Kings iii. 14, `Were it not for Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, I

would not look towards thee, nor see thee,, (3.) The apostle doth not

speak to the persons, but to the case. Will you honour wealth, which is

the visible cause of all mischief? You see that men of that rank and

order are usually persecutors and blasphemers. He speaketh of rich men

in general, not such as used to frequent the church and synagogue; for

otherwise you mistake the apostle,s argument if you think the words

directed to the persons rather than the order. His argument runneth

thus: Will you prefer men for wealth in the church, when you see that

none are so mischievous, and such public enemies to the church, as

those that are wealthy? To prove that wealth is no sufficient ground of

Christian respect, he urgeth the usual abuse of it.

But ye have despised the poor.--He showeth how contrary their practice

was to God,s dispensation: God hath put honour upon them, but ye

dishonour them, as the original word signifieth. The prophet expresseth

such a like sin thus: Amos v. 11, `Ye have trodden the poor under

foot.,

Do not rich men.--Either he meaneth rich Pagans and Jews that had not

embraced Christianity, persecutions usually arising from men of that

sort and order, as the scribes, pharisees, and high priests: `The chief

men of the city were stirred up against Paul and Barnabas,, Acts xiii.

50; or else pseudo-Christians, who, being great and powerful, oppressed

their brethren, and used all manner of violence towards them. Or,

rather, in general, any sort of rich men.

Oppress you.--The word is katadunasteuousi, abuse their power against

you, or usurp a power over you which was never given them. In which

sense Solomon saith, Prov. xxii. 7, `The rich ruleth over the poor, and

the borrower is servant to the lender,, Ruleth, that is, arrogateth a

power, though not invested with the honour of magistracy.

And draw you before the judgment-seats?--If it be understood of the

unconverted Jews, the meaning is, they helped forward the persecution,

and implieth the same with that, Mat. x. 17, `They shall deliver you up

to councils., Or, if of rich men in the general, to which I rather

incline, it noteth the violent practices which they used to the poor,

dragging them, as they used to do with their debtors: `He plucked him

by the throat,, Mat. xviii. 28. And the prophet Isaiah expresseth the

same cruelty by `smiting with the fist of wickedness,, Isa. lviii. 4. A

great liberty the creditor had over the debtor among the Jews, and that

our apostle intimateth in the word helkousi, `they draw you;, and when

he addeth `before judgment-seats,, he aggravateth this wickedness that

was now grown customary among them; which was not only violent usage of

the poor, but oppressing them under a form of law: either wearing them

out by vexatious suits, or defrauding them presently of their right,

through the favour which they obtained by their power and greatness, a

practice common among all nations, but especially among the Jews, and

therefore is it everywhere noted in the scriptures. See Ps. x. 9, 10.

The notes are these:--

Obs. 1. From that despised the poor. That known and apparent guilt must

be roundly charged. Nathan said to David, 2 Sam. xii. 7, `Thou art the

man., When the practice is notorious, a faint accusation doth no good.

The prophet striketh David on the breast; this is thy sin. When a city

is on fire, will a man come coldly and say, Yonder is a great fire, I

pray God it doth no harm? No; he will cry, Fire, fire; you are undone

if you do not quench it. So when the practice is open and clearly

sinful, it is not good to come with a contemplative lecture and lame

homily, but to fall to the case directly. Ye have despised the poor.

Sirs, this is your sin, and if you do not reform it, this will be you

ruin. It is good to be a little warm when the sin is common and the

danger imminent.

Obs. 2. From that but you. He opposeth their practice to God,s

dispensation; that despising the poor is a sin, not only against the

word and written will of God, but his mind and intent in his works and

dispensations. It is a kind of gigantomachy, a resisting of God. (1.)

It is against the mind of God in their creation: Prov. xxii. 2, `The

rich and the poor meet together, the Lord is the maker of them both;,

that is, they meet in this, that they have but one maker. There is

another meeting, Job iii. 15; they meet in the grave, they meet in

their death, and in their maker. Now God never made a creature for

contempt. These considerations should restrain it. They were made as we

were, and they die as we do. The poor man is called our `own flesh,,

Isa. lviii. 7; Adam,s child, as we are. (2.) It is against God,s

providence,--his common providence, who hath constituted this order in

the world: Prov. xvii. 5, `Whoso reproacheth the poor despiseth his

maker;, that is, contemneth the wise dispensation of God, who would

have the world to consist of hills and valleys, and the poor

intermingled with the rich; therefore Christ saith, Mat. xxvi. 11, The

poor you have always present with you., It is one of the settled

constitutions and laws of providence, and it is necessary for the uses

and services of the world; this preserveth order. There are many

offices and functions which human societies cannot want, and therefore

some men,s spirits are fitted for handicrafts, and hard manual labours,

to which men of a higher spirit and delicate breeding will not

condescend. (3.) It is also against God,s special providence, by which

many times the greatest gifts are bestowed upon them that are poor and

despicable in the world; their wit being sharpened by necessity, they

may have the clearer use of reason. Naaman,s servant saw more than his

master, 2 Kings v. 13; and Solomon telleth of `a poor man that

delivered the city,,, Eccles. ix. 15. Nay, God many times putteth that

singular honour of being heirs of salvation upon them. The poor are

rich in faith in the context; and then injury must needs redound to

him, for they are his friends and children; and friends have all things

common, both courtesies and injuries.

Obs. 3. Rich men are usually persecutors or oppressors. Their

wickedness hath the advantage of an occasion. And usually when a

disposition and an occasion meet together, then sin is drawn forth and

discovered. Many have will, but have no power. The world would be a

common stage to act all manner of villanies upon, were it not for such

restraints of providence. Therefore Solomon maketh an oppressing poor

men to be a kind of wonder and prodigy. Besides, riches exalt the mind,

and efferate it. They have had little experience of misery, and so have

little pity. God,s motives to Israel were these: Do good to strangers,

for thou wert a stranger; and do good to the poor, for thy father was a

poor Syrian. Such reasonings are frequent in scripture. But now, when

men live altogether at ease, their hearts are not meekened with a sense

of the accidents and inconveniences of the common life. And therefore,

having power in their hands, they use it, as beasts do their strength,

in acts of violence. The prophet often complaineth, Amos vi., of `the

excellency of Jacob,, and `the oppression that was in her palaces.,

Again, wealth often endeth in pride, and pride breaketh all common and

moral restraints; and so men make their will a law, and think as if the

rest of the world were made to serve their pleasures. And besides, the

world filleth their hearts with a ravenous desire to have more of the

world, how unjustly soever it be purchased and gotten. You see the

reason why they are oppressors and they are persecutors, because

commonly the meanest are most forward in religion. The spirit of the

world and the spirit of Christ are at enmity. The gospel putteth men

upon the same level, which persons elevated and exalted cannot endure.

Besides, they are afraid that the things of Christ will bring some

disturbance to their worldly concernments and possessions. The Jewish

rulers were afraid of division among the people, and the coming in of

the Romans. The Gadarenes were afraid of their hogs. Many such reasons

might be given. Well, then, rich men should be more careful to avoid

the sins that seem to cleave to their rank and order. It is very hard,

but `with God all things are possible., Wealth is called `the mammon of

unrighteousness,, Luke xvi. 9. because it is usually the instrument and

incentive of it. That of Jerome is harsh, but too often true--Omnis

dives aut iniquus est, aut iniqui haeres--that every rich man is either

an oppressor himself, or the heir of one. Certainly it is but almost

impossible to be rich and righteous. There are many evils incident to

your state. Moral evils, such as heathens discerned, as pride: `Charge

them that they be not high-minded,, 1 Tim. vi. 17. Boasting, with some

contempt of others: Jer. ix. 23, `Let not the rich man glory in his

riches;, so injustice: Prov. xxii. 7, `The rich ruleth over the poor;,

that is, by force and violence: the word may be read, `domineereth.,

Then luxury and profuseness. Men abuse the fatness of their portion,

and lay it out upon their lusts. Dives `fared deliciously every day.,

But there are also spiritual evils, which are worse, because they lie

more closely and undiscerned. These are--(1.) Forgetting of God, when

he hath remembered them most. Men that live at ease have little or no

sense of duty. Agur prayeth, `Give me not riches, lest I be full, and

deny thee,, Prov. xxx. 9. And (2.) creature-confidence. Hence those

frequent cautions: 1 Tim. vi. 17, `Trust not in uncertain riches;, and

Ps. lxii. 10, `If riches increase, set not your hearts upon them.,

Usually the creatures rival God; and when we enjoy them in abundance,

it is hard to keep off the heart from trust in them. (3.) Worldliness.

We are tainted by the objects with which we usually converse; and the

more men have, the more sparing for God,s uses and their own. Solomon

speaketh of `riches kept by the owners to their hurt,, Eccles. v. 13.

And there is an expression in the book of Job, chap. xx. 22, `In the

fulness of his sufficiency, he shall be in straits., There is no

greater argument of God,s curse than to have an estate and not to enjoy

it. So (4.) security: Luke xii. 19, `Soul, take thine ease, thou hast

goods laid up for many years., These are evils that cleave to wealth,

like rust to money. I have but named them, because I would not digress

into illustrations.

Ver. 7. Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by which ye are called?

He proceedeth in reckoning up the abuses of riches. Who are the enemies

of God and of religion, the scorners of the worthy name of Christians,

but the rich?

Do not they blaspheme.--Some interpret it of the carnal rich men that

professed religion, as if, by the scandal of their practices, they had

brought an odium and ill report upon Christianity itself. So that `they

blaspheme,, in their sense, is, `they cause to blaspheme., They think

it is an Hebraism, kal for hiphil. The whole stream of interpreters run

this way. They urge for it those parallel places: Rom. ii. 24, `Through

you is the name of God blasphemed among the Gentiles;, and 2 Peter ii.

2, by them is `the way of truth evil spoken of;, that is, by their

means. And that in the 1st epistle to Timothy, chap. vi. 1, Let

servants be obedient, `that the name of God and his doctrine be not

blasphemed;, and Titus ii. 5, The wives should be discreet and chaste,

`that the word of God be not blasphemed., Certainly religion is never

more dishonoured than by the lives of carnal professors. But this is

the great mistake of this context, to apply what is here spoken to rich

Christians. The apostle only giveth an observation of the manners of

the rich men of that age; they were usually such as were bitter enemies

to Christianity; and thereupon inferreth that wealth was not a valuable

consideration in the church to prefer men to places of rule and honour,

or to further their cause whenever it came into debate.

That worthy name, kalon, `honourable;, as before, ver. 3.--kalos, `in a

good place,, is, in the original, honourably.

By which ye are called.--In the original, to epiklethen eph' humas,

`which is called upon you;, and some interpret that thus, `which you

call upon., It is made a description of Christians: 1 Cor. i. 2, `All

that call upon the name of Christ;, and 2 Tim. ii. 18, `Let him that

nameth the name of Christ., Or else thus: Which is called upon over

you; that is, in baptism, Mat. xxviii. 19, and Acts ii. 38. Or rather,

as we translate, `by which ye are called;, for that is the proper

import of that phrase, `called upon you., It is applied to wives, that

are called after the name of the husband: Isa. iv. 1, `Let thy name be

called upon us;, or to children, as Gen. xlviii. 16, `Let my name be

called on them, and the name of my fathers,, &c.; and so it implieth

the name of Christ, which is put upon his people, who sustain these

relations to him of spouse and children.

The notes are these:-

Obs. 1. That wicked rich men, above all others, are most prone to

blasphemy. They `set their hearts as the heart of God,, Ezek. xxviii.

5, 6. Riches beget pride, and pride endeth in atheism. Besides, they,

enjoying a most liberal use of the creature, are apt to talk unseemly.

When their hearts are warmed and inflamed with wine and mirth, they

cannot contain, but must needs disgorge their malice upon the ways and

servants of Christ. The merry and full-fed Babylonians must have a

Hebrew song, Ps. cxxxvii. And it is no feast with many unless John the

Baptist,s head be brought in a charger. Religion, or religious persons,

must be served in to feed their mirth and sportiveness.

Obs. 2. They that love Christ will hate blasphemers. When he would work

them into a disesteem of these ungodly wretches, he saith, `Do they not

blaspheme that worthy name?, Moses burned with a holy zeal when he

heard that one had blasphemed God, Lev. xxiv. 13, 14. And David saith,

Ps. cxxxix. 20-22, `They speak against thee wickedly; thine enemies

take thy name in vain. Do not I hate them that hate thee? I hate them

with a perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies,, Love is tender of

the least wrong done to the thing beloved. More especially will it

sparkle and burn with a fiery zeal when such high contempt is cast upon

it as blasphemy putteth upon Christ. Those Gallios of our time, that

can so tamely, and without any indignation, hear the worthy name of

Christ profaned with execrable blasphemies, show how little love they

have to him. David counted them his enemies that spoke wickedly against

his God; but such are their darlings.

Obs. 3. That Christ,s name is a worthy name. Christianity will never be

a disgrace to you; you may be a disgrace to Christianity. `I am not

ashamed,, saith the apostle Paul, `of the gospel of Christ., Rom. i.

16. Many are ashamed to own their profession in carnal company, as if

there could be any disgrace in being Christ,s servant. Oh! it is an

honour to you. And as Christianity is an honour to you, so should you

be an honour to it, that you may not stain a worthy name: `Adorn the

gospel,, Titus ii. 10. The herd of wicked men they are ignota capita,

persons unknown and unobserved; they may sin, and sin again, yet the

world taketh no notice of it. But how doth it furnish the triumphs of

the uncircumcised to see men of a worthy name overtaken in an offence?

The Hams of the world will laugh to see a Noah drunk. Spots and stains

in white are soon discerned.

Obs. 4. The people of Christ are named and called after Christ,s name;

Christians, from Christ. The apostle saith, Eph. iii. 15, `From him the

whole family, both in heaven and earth, is named., The name was first

given them at Antioch, Acts xi. 26. They were called `disciples,

before, but, to distinguish themselves from false brethren, they named

themselves `Christians., They were called `Nazarites, and `Galileans,

by their enemies; and about this time there was a sect of that name,

half Jews and half Christians. Now the very name presseth us to care

and holiness. Remember what Christ did: you are called after his name:

2 Tim. ii. 19, `Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart

from iniquity: pas o onoma'zon, he that counteth it his honour to use

the name of Christ in invocation. Alexander the Great said to one of

his captains, that was also called Alexander, Recordare nominis

Alexandri--see you do nothing unworthy the name of Alexander. So, see

you do nothing unworthy the name of Christ. And, as another said,

speaking of something unbeseeming, I could do it, if I were not

Themistocles; so, I could do it, if I were not a Christian. Or, as

Nehemiah, `Should such a man as I flee?, Shall I, that am named by the

name of Christ, do this? Again, this name is an argument which you may

use to God in prayer for grace and mercy; his name is upon you, that

endeareth you to his bowels. God,s promises are made to such, `If the

people that are called by my name,, &c., 2 Chron. vii. 14. And so there

is a notable promise, Deut. xxviii. 10, `And all the people of the

earth shall see that thou art called by the name of God, and they shall

be afraid of thee., So you shall see the church pleading this, Jer.

xiv. 9, `Yet thou, O Lord, art in the midst of us, and we are called by

thy name; leave us not., So may you go to God: Lord, it is thus with

us, but `we are called by thy name.,

Ver. 8. If ye fulfil the royal law, according to the scriptures, Thou

shall love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well.

Now he comes to discover the ground upon which they did thus

preposterously dispense their respects. It was not charity, as they did

pretend, but having men,s persons in admiration, because of advantage.

For this verse is a prolepsis, or a prevention of an excuse foreseen,

which might be framed thus: That they were not to be blamed for being

too humble, and giving respect there, where it was least due; and that

they did it out of relation to the common good, and a necessary

observance of those ranks and degrees which God hath constituted among

men. The apostle supposeth this objection, and answereth it partly by

concession: if you do it in obedience to the second table (the tenor of

which the apostle expresseth by that general rule `Thou shalt love thy

neighbour as thyself,), then, such respect, rightly regulated, and

`according to the scriptures,, is but a duty; partly by way of

conviction: your inordinate respect of the rich, with contempt of the

poor, is such a flattery and partiality which the law doth openly

condemn. The poor, and those whom we may help and relieve, being in the

law, or scripture-notion, as much, yea, rather more, the neighbour than

the rich.

If ye fulfil, teleite.--If ye do squarely and roundly come up to the

obedience of the law, that part of it which is the rule of outward

respects. The word properly signifies, `if ye perfectly accomplish.,

Sincerity is a kind of perfection. The Papists, among other places,

bring this for one to show that a just man may fulfil the law of God.

In this place it only implies a sincere respect to the whole duty of

the law.

The royal law.--So he calleth it, either because God is the King of

kings, and Jesus Christ the King of saints, Rev. xv. 3; and so the law,

either in God,s hands or Christ,s hands, is a royal law, the least

deflection from which is rebellion. You would not easily break kings,

laws. God,s laws are royal laws because of the dignity of the author of

them. The Syriac interpreter favoureth this sense, for he translateth

it `the law of God;, or they may be called so from their own worth:

that which is excellent, we call it royal; or else because of its great

power upon the conscience. Men,s laws are but properly ministerial and

explicatory; God,s is royal and absolute. Or `the royal law,, to show

the plainness and perspicuity of it, like `a royal way;, or, as we

express it, `the king,s highway., So it is said, Num. xxi. 22, `We will

only go by the king,s way., Suitable to which expression, `the royal

law `may imply the highway and road of duty. Or, lastly, a royal law,

to note the ingenuity of its precepts. The command of God, that is to

guide you in dispensing your respects, doth not oblige you to this

servility; the duty of it is more royal and ingenuous.

According to the scriptures; that is, as the tenor of it is often set

down in the word. The form here specified is often repeated, Lev. xix.

18. The Septuagint, in the translation of that place, have the same

words with our apostle. It is often repeated by our Lord, see Mat.

xxii. 39; and often by the apostles, see Rom. xiii. 9; Gal. v. 14. The

full import of this rule we shall anon open.

Ye do well.--The same form is used, Phil. iv. 14, and implieth that

then they were not blameworthy, and might justly be absolved and

acquitted from the guilt charged in the context. And by the way we may

hence gather, that the apostle doth not simply forbid a respect to the

rich, but a respect sordid and invested with the circumstances of the

context.

Out of this verse observe:--

Obs. 1. That the vilest wickedness will have a fair covert and

pretence. Sin loves to walk under a disguise; the native face of it is

ugly and odious. Therefore Satan in policy, and our hearts deceived by

ignorance and self-love, seek to mask and hide it, that we may spare

ourselves, which should press us to the greater heed. Never seek a

cover of duty for a vile practice, and to excuse checks of conscience

by some pretence from the law. It is Satan,s cunning some times to

dress up sins in the form and appearance of duty, and at other times to

represent duty in the garb of sin: as Christ,s healing on the Sabbath

day. Be the more suspicious, especially in a matter wherein your

private advantage is concerned, lest base compliance be reputed a

necessary submission, and unjust gain be counted godliness. Examine the

nature of the practice by the rule, Is the royal law appliable to such

servility? And examine your own hearts. Is my aim right as well as my

action? It is not enough to do what the law requires, but it must be

done in that manner which the law requireth. Matter of duty may be

turned into sin, where the respect and aim is carnal.

Obs. 2. That coming to the law is the best way to discover

self-deceits. If it be according to the law (saith the apostle), it is

well. Paul died by the coming of the commandment, Rom. vii. 9; that is,

in conviction upon his heart; saw himself in a dead and lost estate. So

Rom. iii. 20, `By the law is the knowledge of sin;, and therefore we

should often talk with the commandment, consult with it in all

practices.

Obs. 3. That the Lord,s law is a royal law. (1.) It hath a kingly

author. The solemn motive to obedience is, `I am the Lord., Marcion

blasphemed in saying the law came from an evil God. Many now speak so

contemptuously of it as if they had a Marcionite,s spirit. The same

Lord Jesus that gave the gospel gave also the law. Therefore it is so

often said, Acts vii., that the law was `given by an angel;, that is,

the angel of the covenant. So Heb. xii. 25 to end; the apostle proves

that it was the voice of the Lord Jesus that shook Mount Sinai. It is a

known rule in divinity that the Father never appeared in any shape, and

therefore that all those apparitions in the Old Testament were of the

second person. (2.) It requires noble work, fit for kings; service most

proportioned to the dignity of a man,s spirit. Service is an honour,

and duty a privilege: Hosea viii. 12, `The great things, (it is in the

vulgar honorabilia legis, the honourable things) `of my law., It is

said of Israel that no nation was so high in honour above all nations,

because they had God,s statutes, which was `their wisdom,, Deut. vii.

The brightest part of God,s glory is his holiness; and therefore it is

said, `Glorious in holiness;, and it is our dignity to be holy. That

must needs be a royal law that maketh all those kings that fulfil it.

(3.) There is royal wages; no less than all of you to be made kings and

princes unto God: `Enter into the kingdom prepared for you;, and,

`henceforth is laid up for me a crown,, 2 Tim. iv. 8. This is the

entertainment that ye shall have from God hereafter, to be all crowned

kings and princes. Oh! then, give the law this honour in your thoughts.

Naturally men adore strictness. How great is the excellency of God,s

statutes! Check yourselves, that you can no more come under the power

of them. In the ways of sin you have a bad master, worse work, and the

worst wages. There is a bad master: `His lusts will ye do,, John viii.

44; they are Satan,s lusts, he is the author of them. There is bad

work; sin is the greatest bondage and thraldom, 2 Peter ii. 18, the

heart naturally riseth against it. Then there is bad wages: Rom. vi.,

`The wages of sin is death., Well, then, press these disproportions,

and say, `What evil have I found in God?, Jer. ii. 5. Hath God or sin

been a land of darkness to me? I have served him these eighty years

(said Polycarp), kai` othk edi'kese me`, and he never did me harm.

Reason with yourselves: Will you sin against a royal Lord, such royal

work, such a royal reward?

Obs. 4. That the rule that God hath left us is laid down in the

scriptures; there is the signification of his will, and from thence

must it be sought: they are `able to make the man of God perfect.,

Obs. 5. The scriptures require we should love our neighbour as

ourselves. Paul saith, Gal. v. 14, `All the law is fulfilled in one

word: love thy neighbour as thyself., All the law, that is, all that

part of the law which concerns our duty towards others; or all the law,

by worshipping God, in discharging our duty towards man, and so turning

both tables into one. And Christ saith, Mat. vii. 12, `This is the law,

and the prophets,--that is, the sum of the whole word, and that

standard of equity which is erected therein--that `whatsoever ye would

that men should do to you, do ye even so to them:, for which saying

Severus reverenced Christ and Christianity. But must a man \love his

neighbour with the same proportion of care and respect that he doth

himself? The special love of a man to his wife is expressed by this,

Eph. v. 28, `So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies;, and

the Hebrew expression is the same in all other places: `Let him love

his neighbour as his own body., And must he now love every one with

those singular respects and proportions of affection that he beareth to

himself and his wife?

I answer--The strictness of the precept should not amaze us. Christ

raiseth it one peg higher: John xiii. 34, `I have given you a

commandment, that as I have loved you, so ye should love one another.,

There is another manner of pattern: Christ,s love was intense, and the

measure of it beyond the conceit of our thoughts: Yet as I love, so

must ye love one another.

But for the opening of this matter, I shall first show you, Who is your

neighbour; secondly. What kind of love is required to him.

First, Who is your neighbour?--a question necessary to be propounded.

It was propounded to Christ himself: Luke x. 29, `Who is my neighbour?,

The solution may be gathered out of Christ,s answer. First, In the

general, every man to whom I may be helpful; and the term neighbour is

used because our charity is most exercised and drawn out to those that

are near us, the objects that are about us. But it must not be confined

there: for Christ proves that a stranger may be a neighbour, Luke x.

36. All people that have the face of a man are called `our flesh,, Isa.

lviii. 7, and `one blood,, Acts xvii. 26--`one blood,, cousins at a

remoter distance. Any man is a neighbour in regard of the nearness of

our first original, and as he is capable of the same glory and

blessedness which we expect; and so a stranger, an enemy, may be a

neighbour by the gospel rules, and an object of such love as we bear

unto ourselves, we being bound to desire his good, by virtue of his

manhood, as we would our own. Secondly, There are more especial

neighbours, who dwell about us, and are more frequent with us, whose

necessities must provoke us to more acts and expressions of love; and

as they are more or less near unto us, so are we to proportion our love

to them: those that dwell with us before strangers. Thus the Hebrews

preferred the men of their own nation before the Grecians `in the daily

ministration,, Acts vi. And then our kindred, and those of our family,

before a common neighbour; as the apostle saith, 1 Tim. v. 8, `If any

man provideth not for his own, he hath denied the faith, and is worse

than an infidel., He speaks upon the case of showing pity at home. And

then our children are in the next rank before them; and the wife of the

bosom before them all: and accordingly must all acts of bounty and

provision be dispensed. Thirdly, There are spiritual neighbours, and

they are those who are begotten by the same Spirit to the same hopes,

who are to have a special preferment in our affection; I mean, in that

kind of affection which is proper to Christianity: and for all outward

acts of bounty and love, they are to have the pre-eminence, our

children and families only excepted, which, by the law of nature, in

this case are to be looked upon as a part of ourselves: Gal. vi. 10,

`As we have opportunity, let us do good to all men; especially to the

house hold of faith., In short, in the love of bounty, the poor and

necessitous man is the special neighbour; in the love of delight, the

godly man is to have the preferment: `My delights are to the excellent

of the earth,, Ps. xvi. 2. Which also is Bernard,s determination,

Meliori major affectus, indigentiori major effectus, tribuendus

est--the best must have most of our affection, the poorest most of our

bounty: Luke xiv. 12-14, `When thou makest a feast, call not thy rich

neighbours,, &c. He doth not condemn honest courtesies, but reproveth

the Pharisees, error, who thought by these things to satisfy the

commandment; just as these did here in the text, who would seem to make

that an act of charity which was but an act of covetousness, and called

that love which was base servility and compliance: and we still see

that many esteem that Christian communion which is indeed but a carnal

visit, and pretend courtesy to excuse charity.

Secondly, What kind of love is required in this expression, we are to

love them as ourselves? I answer--The expression showeth the manner of

our love, not the measure of it; a parity and likeness for kind, not

for proportion. It cannot be understood in the same degree, partly

because in some cases a man is bound to love his neighbour more than

himself; as 1 John iii. 16, `We ought to lay down our lives for the

brethren,, my single life to save^the whole community. And so we ought

to help on one another,s spiritual good with the loss of our temporal:

we may expose ourselves to uncertain danger to hinder another,s certain

danger. The apostle Paul, in a glorious excess of charity, could prefer

the common good of the salvation of all the Jews before the particular

salvation of his own soul: Rom. ix. 3, `I could wish that myself were

accursed from Christ, for my brethren and kinsmen according to the

flesh;, and Moses, for the general safety of Israel, could wish himself

to be `blotted out of God,s book,, Exod. xxxii. Cases may happen

wherein a public good may be more considerable, and better in itself,

than my particular happiness; and then in self-denial I am bound to

love others better than myself. And partly because, on the other hand,

in ordinary cases it is impossible I should be as strongly moved, or as

industriously active, in another man,s case as I would in my own;

therefore, as I said, the rule intendeth the kind of affection, and the

way of it; that is, with what mind and in what course I should pursue

the good of others--with the same heart and in the same way I would

mine own; and chiefly aimeth at the prevention of a double evil usual

among men--self-love and injury: self-love, when men out of the privacy

and narrowness of their spirits, only `mind their own things;, and

injury, when men care not how they deal with others. First, It

preventeth self-love by pressing us--(1.) To mind the good of others: 1

Cor. x. 24, `Let no man seek his own, but each man another,s wealth,,

their comfort and contentment, by all offices of humanity suitable and

convenient to their necessities; especially to promote their spiritual

good, labouring to procure it, praying for them, though they be

enemies, as David fasted for his enemies, Ps. xxxv. But alas! this love

is quite decayed in these last ages of the world. ^They are mightily

infamed in the scriptures for self-seeking, 2 Tim. iii. 2. One said,

[174] The world was once destroyed, propter ardorem cupidinis, with

water for the heat of lust; and it will be again destroyed, propter

teporem charitatis, with fire for the coldness of love. These duties

are quite out of date and use. (2.) To mind their good really, as

truly, though not as much. The apostle saith, `Let love be without

dissimulation;, and St John speaketh often of `loving in truth., Though

we are not every way as earnest, yet we must be as real in promoting

their good as our own, without any self-end and reflections upon our

own advantage and profit. Secondly, It preventeth injury, by directing

us to deal with others as we would have them to deal with ourselves;

wishing them no more hurt than we would wish our own souls: I mean,

when we are in our right reason, and self-love is regular; hiding their

defects and infirmities as you would your own; pardoning their offences

as you desire God should do yours; and in all contracts and acts of

converse putting your souls in their stead. Would I be thus dealt with?

If I had my own choice, would not I be otherwise used? In all our

commerce it is good to make frequent appeals to our consciences: Would

I have this measure measured unto my own soul?

And thus I have opened the great rule of all commerce, `Love thy

neighbour as thyself;, whose intent is, as I said, partly to prevent

self-love, by showing we must do others good as well as ourselves; and

partly to prevent injury, that we may do others no more evil than we do

ourselves.

Ver. 9. But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are

convinced of the laic as transgressors.

Here is the second part of the apostle,s answer. In the former part

there was the concession, `Ye do well,, if you give this respect in

obedience to the law: but here is the correction; you give it contrary

to the direction of the law, and so it is not a duty, but a sin.

But if ye have respect to persons; that is, if, in distributing the

honours and censures of the church, you judge altogether according to

men,s outward quality and condition, as before was cleared--

Ye commit sin; that is, it is not a duty, as you pretend, but a sin;

and, whatever you think, the law, which is the rule of Christ,s

process, will find you guilty.

And are convinced of the law.--This may be understood, either

generally, that, whatever their pretences were, yet the law would find

them out, and distinguish their unjust partiality from a necessary

respect; or else, more especially, it may be understood of the law

which they urged,; Love thy neighbour as thyself;, which required an

equal respect to the neighbour, however distinguished, whether rich or

poor; or else the apostle intendeth the law against respect of persons:

Lev. xix. 15, `Thou shalt do no unrighteousness in judgment; thou shalt

not respect the person of the poor, nor the person of the mighty; but

in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour., To which place I

suppose the apostle alludeth, because it is so fair for his purpose,

and because in that context the general of love to the neighbour is

repeated, see ver. 18; and in that the Septuagint have the very same

words which the apostle useth in ver. 8.

As transgressors.--Os, the word in the original for as, implieth

reality, [175] not only similitude and likeness; that is, that you are

indeed transgressors. I do the rather note it for the opening of a like

expression in a matter important and weighty; it is in John i. 14, `We

saw his glory, as the glory of the only-begotten Son of God;, that is,

not like the glory of the Son of God, but that he was indeed so.

Little is to be observed out of this verse, because the matter of it is

handled in the context. Only note:--

Obs. 1. That the word and rule discovereth wickedness when our blind

consciences do not. Conscience hath but a weak light, and that light is

partial: `Favour thyself, is the language of corrupt nature; and,

therefore, that we may not be injurious to our own quiet, deluded

conscience is apt to mistake every pretence for duty, and the outward

work of every duty for the power and life of it; therefore the apostle

saith of the heathens, that had but a little light, that they only

minded e'rgon no'mou, `the work of the law., Rom. ii. 14; that is, the

external matter of the commandment. Nay, those that have more light are

every way as unfaithful in the use of it. Paul rested contented with

his pharisaism and outward righteousness, till, by a serious

application of the rule, he found that to be a merit of death which he

had formerly reckoned upon as a plea for life. That I suppose he

intendeth when he sayeth, `I was alive without the law, but the

commandment coming, I died., Rom. vii. 9. Well, then, we see we have

need to attend upon the word, and consult with the law, not the crooked

rule of our own consciences.

Obs. 2. It is but a crafty pretence when one part of the law is pleaded

to excuse obedience to another; for when we pick and choose, we do not

fulfil God,s will, but our own. [176] These pretended submissive

respect to the rich, as due by the law, but forgot those other precepts

that established a duty to the poor. Conscience must be satisfied with

something; therefore men usually please themselves in so much of

obedience as is least contrary to their interests and inclinations, and

have not an entire uniform respect to the whole law. It is as if a

servant should think himself dutiful when he goeth to a feast or a fair

when his master biddeth him; when, in the meantime, he declineth

errands of less trouble, but of more service: whereas in such matters

he doth not obey his master,s will, but his own inclination. So in

commands easy and compliant with our own humours and designs, we do not

so much serve God as our own interests; and there is more of design

than of duty and religion in such actions; and, therefore, they lose

their reward with God. As to instance in a matter suitable to the

context, God hath required that persons should be hospitable and

harborous. Now men of a social nature will soon hear in that ear, and

think themselves liberal and bountiful because they spend much in

festivity and entertainment, or in feasting with their rich neighbours;

whereas little or nothing is done out of a well-tempered charity, and

in refreshing the poor members of Christ. Now this is no more accepted

of God than the offering of a dog,s head in sacrifice; because all this

is but a lust fed and served under a pretence of religion--joviality

under the disguise of Christian charity and bounty; and, therefore the

apostle maketh entertainments to he hut `sowing to the flesh,, Gal. vi.

8; for I suppose the drift of that context is to distinguish between

what is spent in charity and luxury: and in the process of the last day

(described Mat. xxv.), Christ doth not ask what thou hast done to the

rich, but to his poor members--to the hungry, the naked, &c. Well,

then, beware of such a partial, disproportionate obedience. Hypocrites

use to divide between the tables--between duty to God and duty to man;

and in the respects due to man they are swayed more by their own

humours and interests than the true motives of obedience; and,

therefore, though they usually exceed in their duty and submission to

the rich, yet they neglect if not contemn the poor, either in their

suffrages and elections to ecclesiastical honours and offices, or in

acts of judicature, or in duties of private charity, in visits and

entertainments; which respect of persons our apostle justly disproveth,

taxing it for a transgression, and not a duty.

Ver. 10. For whosoever shall keep the whole laiv, and yet offend in one

point, is guilty of all.

The connection between this verse and the former is this: They had

pleaded that their respect of the rich was but a necessary civility,

and a duty of the law; or, at least, that it was but a small offence,

such as might be excused by their innocent intention, and obedience in

other things, which was an opinion rife in those days; and that some

[177] make to the occasion of this sentence, that the apostle might

disprove that conceit which was then so common, that obedience in some

things did make amends for their neglect and disobedience in other

things. That the conceit was common appeareth by several passages of

Christ and the apostles. Our Saviour chargeth it often upon the

Pharisees. Ben Maimon, in his treatise of repentance, hath such a

passage as this is: `Every one,, saith he, `hath his merits and his

sins., He whose merits are equal to [178] his sins, he is tzadoc, the

righteous man; he whose sins are greater than his merits, he is

rashang, the wicked man; but where the sins and the merits are equal,

he is the middle man, partly happy, and partly miserable., This was the

sum of the Jewish doctrine in the more corrupt times; and some think

the apostle might meet with this error in this verse, by showing that

the least breach rendered a man obnoxious to the danger of the

violation of the whole law. Rather, I suppose, it lieth thus: They

satisfied themselves with half duty, using over-much observance to the

rich, and to the poor nothing at all. He had before said, ei no'mon

teleite basi'likon, `If ye fulfil, or perfect, the royal law., Now,

they minded that part of it that was advantageous to them; it was not

full or perfect obedience to cut off so much of duty as was less

profitable: therefore the law convinced them `as transgressors., The

royal law saith, `Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;, and man is

not to make such exceptions as please him best, to defalcate and cut

off such a considerable part of duty at his own pleasure. God saith,

`thy neighbour;, and I must not say, `my rich neighbour only., There

must be an even and adequate care to comply with the whole will of God,

or else it is not obedience, but you are in the danger of

transgressors. This hint maketh much for the opening of the verse, a

place in itself difficult. Augustine [179] consulted with Jerome about

the sense of it in a long epistle; and, indeed, at the first view, the

sentence seemeth harsh and rough. I shall first open the phrases,

remove false inferences from it, and then establish the true notes and

observations, that this scripture may have its due and proper force

upon the conscience.

Whosoever shall keep the whole law.--He speaketh upon supposition.

Suppose a man should be exact in all other points of the law, which yet

is impossible, we may suppose things that never shall be. Or else he

speaketh according to their pretences and presumptions. They supposed

they were not to be taxed or convinced as transgressors in any other

matter: grant it, saith the apostle; or else he speaketh of the whole

of this commandment, `Thou shalt love thy neighbour,, &c. Suppose your

duty to rich men, and where it may make for your advantage, be whole

and entire.

Yet if he offend in one point.--Willingly, constantly, and with

allowance from conscience; with thought of merit and excuse, because of

his obedience in other matters.

He is guilty of all.--Liable to the same punishment, standeth upon the

same terms of hope and acceptance with God, as if he had done nothing.

A man may violate totam legem though not totum legis; sin against the

dignity and authority of the whole law, though he doth not actually

break every part of it. Ay! but you will say, as the apostles, Mat.

xix., `Who then can be saved?, Here is a terrible sentence that will

much discourage God,s little ones, who are conscious to themselves of

their daily failings. I answer--That which the apostle aimeth at is the

discovery of hypocrites, not the discouragement of saints. As

Zuinglius, when he had flashed the thunder and lightning of God in the

face of sinners, he was wont to come in with this proviso, Bone

Christiane, haec nihil ad te--poor Christian, this is not spoken to

thee. So this is not spoken to discourage God,s children, however it

may be of use to them to make them more humble, cautious, and watchful,

as lions will tremble when dogs are beaten. To clear the place, before

I come to lay down the notes, I shall, according to promise, remove the

false inferences. (1.) You cannot conclude hence that all sins are

equal. They are all damning, not all alike damning. Some guilt may be

more heinous, but all is deadly. And that is it which James asserteth:

he saith, `he is guilty of all,, but not equally guilty. The apostle

would infer an equality of care and respect to the whole law, but not

an equality of sin. All that can be collected is this, that one

allowed, wilful, deliberate breach and violation forfeiteth our

righteousness, and maketh us become obnoxious to the curse of the whole

law, and the sinner shall no less die than if he had broken all by an

actual transgression. So that, although all allowed sins deserve death,

yet there is a difference still remaining in the several degrees of

guilt and the curse. (2.) You cannot hence conclude that total

rebellion is simply, and in itself, better than formal profession.

Christ loved the man for the good things that were in him from his

youth, and telleth him, `Thou art not far from the kingdom of God., We

read of greater sins, and more intolerable judgment. Good moral

heathens may have a cooler hell. (3.) You cannot apply it to them whose

care of obedience is universal, though the success be not answerable:

Ps. cxix. 6, `Then shall I not be ashamed when I have respect to all

thy commandments;, not when I have observed, but when I have respect.

Gracious hearts look to all, when they cannot accomplish all; and upon

every known defect and failing they humble themselves, and seek mercy.

It doth not exclude them, for then it would exclude all. But when men

allow and please themselves in a partial obedience, without fore-care,

present-striving, and after-grief, they come under the terror of this

sentence. God will dispense with none that can dispense with themselves

in any known failing. (4.) You must not urge this sentence to the

exclusion of the comforts of the gospel, and the hopes that we have by

the grace of God in Christ: for this sentence in itself is legal, the

very rigour of the law, and such sayings brook the exceptions of

repentance and free grace: for the rigour of the law can only take

place on those that are under the bond of it, and are not freed by

Christ. That this is the voice of the law is plain, because it

consenteth with that sum and tenor of it which is laid down Deut.

xxvii. 26, `Cursed is every one that continueth not in all the words of

this law to do them., If they failed but in a circumstance, in a

ceremony, they were under the power of the curse. So the apostle urgeth

it. Gal. iii. 10, `As many as are under the works of the law, are under

the curse; for cursed is he that continueth not in all things to do

them., Now Christ hath redeemed all those that have interest in him

from this curse, by being (as the apostle saith there, ver. 13) `made a

curse for us;, so that there is a remedy in Christ, of which we are

possessed by faith and repentance. And let it not seem strange to any

that I say the sentence is legal, for many of that nature are here and

there intermixed and scattered throughout the gospel, because they are

of excellent use and service for gospel ends and purposes: as to

convince hypocrites, whose obedience is always partial; to drive men to

the grace revealed in the gospel; and for the guidance and rule of

Christians, that they may know the whole will of God. For though we are

freed from the rigour of the law, yet we ought to look to the whole

rule, and, as much as in us lieth, to strive, me` ptai'ein en eni`, not

to offend in one point and tittle, not to rest in their imperfections,

but to strive against them. Christ hath again revived this strictness:

Mat. v. 19, `Whosoever shall break one of these commandments, and teach

men to do so, shall be least in the kingdom of God;, that is, shall not

be owned for a gospel minister. Christ is chary of his least saints and

least commandments. Though there be a pardon, of course, for

infirmities and failings, yet Christ hath not abated any thing of the

strictness of the law. The Pharisees thought that some commandments

were little and arbitrary; and therefore the lawyer came to Christ:

Mat. xxii. 36, `Master, which is the great commandment in the law?, It

is true, some duties are more excellent; but the question was

propounded according the mind of the Pharisees, who accounted outward

devotionary acts most singular, and their own traditions weighty

things; now he cometh to see if Christ liked the distribution. (5.) You

must not urge this sentence to pervert the order of the commandments;

as if a man, in committing theft, committed adultery; and in committing

adultery, he committed murder. It is notable the apostle doth not say,

`He transgresseth all,, but `he is guilty of all., The precepts are not

to be taken disjunctim, but conjunctim and completiv�; not severally,

but altogether, as they make one entire law and rule of righteousness,

the contempt reflecting upon the whole law when it is wilfully violated

in one part; as he that wrongeth one member, wrongeth the whole man or

body of which it is a part. The text being vindicated, I shall sum up

the whole verse into one observation, which is:--

Obs. That voluntary and allowed neglects of any part of the law make us

guilty of the violation of the whole law. Many reasons might be urged

to mollify the seeming asperity and rigour of the point; as partly

because the contempt of the same authority is manifested in the breach

of one as well as of all: all the commands are equal in regard of God;

they are all ratified by the same authority, which man contemneth when

he maketh his own will the measure of obedience; and partly because the

same curse is deserved, which, when neglects are voluntary, taketh

place; partly because the law is but one copulation, like a chain which

is dissolved by the loosening of one link; partly because all sin

proceedeth from the same corruption: the least sin is contrary to love,

as well as the least drop of water to fire; [180] partly because

amongst men it is counted equal: one condition not observed forfeiteth

the whole lease; and partly because one sincere duty hath much promised

to it, and therefore one sin hath its proportionable guilt. True love

is called a `fulfilling of the whole law., Rom. xiii. 8. And, in God,s

account, he that sincerely repenteth of one sin, repenteth of all. And

so, on the contrary, one allowed sin is virtually a violation of the

whole law; and, therefore, when some went to gather manna on the

Sabbath day, God said, Exod. xvi. 28, `How long will ye refuse to keep

my commandments and my laws?, implying that in the breach of that one

they had broken all.

There are many uses of this note: because they are of profit and

concernment to you, in the right application of this place, I shall

give them you in their order.

1. It showeth how tender we should be of every command: wilful

violation amounteth to a total neglect; therefore, as wisdom adviseth,

Prov. vii. 2, `Keep my law as the apple of thine eye., The least dust

offendeth the eye; and so the law is a tender thing, and soon wronged.

Lest you forfeit all your righteousness at once, it is good to be

careful.

2. That partial obedience is an argument of insincerity. When we

neglect duties that either thwart carnal desires or prejudice carnal

concernments, we do not please God, but ourselves. We are to walk `in

all God,s statutes,, Luke i. 6. David fulfilled pa'nta ta` thele'mata,

`all the wills of God,, Acts xiii. 22.

3. That it is a vain deceit to excuse defects of one duty by care of

another. Sometimes men ante-date, sometimes they post-date, an

indulgence. They ante-date it when they sin upon a presumption they

shall make amends by repentance, or that their future good deeds shall

be a sufficient expiation or satisfaction. They post-date it when, from

duties already done, they take liberty or an occasion to sin the more

freely: Ezek. xxxiii. 13, `If he trust to his righteousness, and commit

iniquity,, that is, if, upon that occasion of righteousness so done,

called, or thought to be so in his apprehension, he shall adventure

upon sin, the doom is, `he shall die the death., We see many men,s

hearts grow loose and vain after duties, and they are the more

presumptuous and careless out of a vain conceit that supererogating in

some things will excuse obedience in others.

4. That upon any particular failing we ought to renew our peace with

God. I have done that now which will make me guilty of the whole law;

therefore, soul, run to thy advocate: 1 John ii. 1, `If any man sin, we

have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous., Oh! go

to Christ that he may sue out your pardon; your hearts are not right

with God if you do not use this course: after daily transgressions sue

out a daily pardon. The children of God are like fountains; when mud is

stirred up they do not leave till they can get themselves clear again.

Particular sins must have particular applications of grace, for in

themselves, in their own merit, they leave you under a curse. It is

good to deprecate it, as David doth, Ps. vi. 1, `O Lord, rebuke me not

in thine anger,, &c.

5. That we must not only regard the work of duty, but all the

circumstances of it; and so proportionably, not only the acts of sin,

but the vicious motions and inclinations of it. One point is dangerous.

The Pharisees were for external duties, and the avoiding of gross sins,

but securely allowed themselves in sins more hidden, which yet are of a

dangerous consequence. Malice is murder; and thereupon John saith, 1

John iii. 15, `No murderer hath, eternal life., And lust is adultery,

Mat. v. 28; a look, a glance, a thought, a desire, is in itself

damnable, and brooketh only the exception of the divine grace.

6. That former profession will do no good in case there be a total

revolt afterward. A little poison in a cup, and one leak in a ship, may

ruin all. A man may ride right for a long time, but one turn in the end

of the journey may bring him quite out of the way. Gideon had seventy

sons, and but one bastard, and yet that bastard destroyed all the rest,

Judges viii. It is said, Eccles. ix. 18, `One sinner destroyeth much

good., Once a sinner, all is lost; the ancients expound it that way. So

Ezek. xxxiii. 13, `All his righteousness shall be forgotten;, that is,

all will be to no purpose. As the sins of one that repenteth are

carried into a land of darkness, so are their duties who apostatise.

7. That the smallness of sin is a poor excuse; it is an aggravation

rather than an excuse: it is the more sad, that we should stand with

God for a trifle. Luke xvi. 21, he would not give a crumb, and this

wonderfully displeased God; he did not receive a drop. God,s judgments

have been most remarkable when the occasion was least. Adam was cast

out of paradise for an apple; so gathering of sticks on the Sabbath

day, looking into the ark, &c. God,s command bindeth in lesser things

as well as greater; though the object be different, the command is

still the same: `I tasted but a little honey (saith Jonathan), and I

must die,, 1 Sam. xiv. 43. It will be sad to you to go to hell for a

small matter. One of the prophet,s aggravations is, that they `sold the

righteous for a pair of shoes,, Amos ii. 6. Would you contest with God

for a small thing and of little consequence? As it is imprudence, so it

is unkindness.

Ver. 11. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not

kill. Now if thou commit adultery, yet if thou do not kill, thou art

become a transgressor of the law.

Here is a proof of the intent of the former sentence, that we are not

to look to the matter of the command, how it complieth with our desires

and interests, but to the authority of the lawgiver. He giveth an

instance in the sixth and seventh commandments. God, that hath said

one, hath said both; they are precepts of the same law and law giver;

and therefore, in the violation of one of these laws the authority of

the law is violated.

He that said, Do not commit adultery; that is, that threatened adultery

with death, Deut. xxii. 22, threatened also murder with death, Lev.

xxiv. 17, and Deut. xix. 13; and the apostle useth that phrase `He that

said,, as alluding to the preface of the law: Exod. xx. 1, `God spake

all these words, saying., He instanceth in such sins as are not only

digested into the sum of the moral law, but are more directly against

the light of nature, that so his argument might be the more strong and

sensible; which is to be noted, lest we should think that only a

uniformity of obedience is required to those precepts that forbid sins

openly gross and heinous.

Out of these words observe:--

Obs. 1. That we must not so much dispute the matter of the command, as

look to the will of the lawgiver. He proveth that the whole law had an

equal obligation upon the conscience, because he that said the one said

the other. God,s will is motive enough to obedience, 1 Peter ii. 15; 1

Thes. iv. 3; v. 18. Every sin is an affront to God,s sovereignty, as if

his will were not reason enough; and to his wisdom, as if he did not

know what were good for men; and to his justice, as if the ways of God

were unequal. When your hearts stick at any duty, shame yourselves with

these considerations: It is a trial of sincerity; then duty is well

done when it is done intuitu voluntatis, with a bare sight of God,s

will. And it is a motive to universal obedience; [181] this duty is

required as well as other duties, and enjoined by the same will.

Obs. 2. Duties and sins are of several kinds, according to the several

laws of God. Man hath several affections; every one must have a special

law: he hath several essential parts; God giveth laws to both: he is

disposed to several providences, which needeth a distinct rule; he is

under several relations and obligations to God, which call for duties

of a different nature and respect. Well, then, be not contented, with

Herod, to `hear many things,, gladly to practise somewhat. He that

calleth you to pray calleth you to hear, to redeem time for meditation

and other holy purposes. All commands are equally commanded, and must

be equally observed. And be not secure, though you be not guilty of

such sins as are reproved in others. Other diseases are mortal besides

the plague: though you are not for the farm, you may be for the

merchandise: though thou art not a thief or whore, yet thou mayest be

covetous and worldly. There is, as Hippocrates said, di'ple mani'a, a

double madness--a sober madness as well as a trying. [182] You may be

dead in sins, though not dissolute; and though the life may be gravely

ordered, yet the heart may be averse from God. The Pharisee could say,

I am no adulterer, but he could not say, I am not proud, I am not

self-confident.

Ver. 12. So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the

law of liberty.

Out of the whole discourse he inferreth a seasonable exhortation, that

they would order their speeches and actions so as to endure the test

and trial of the law, especially in the matter of impartial respects,

because commanded by an impartial law. The reason of it lieth thus:

Those that would be judged by the law should not omit the least part of

it. But you desire to be judged by the moral law, evangelised or made a

`law of liberty;, in which term he hinteth the reinforcement of the

duties of the law of Moses in the gospel, which doth as exactly require

a care in our speeches and actions as the law; for though believers be

freed from the terror of the law, yet not from the obedience of it;

yea, if they continue in any known and allowed neglects, they lose

their privilege, and are not judged by a law of liberty, but fall under

the utmost rigour and severity of the sentence forementioned.

So speak ye, and so do.--He joineth the matter hinted in the close of

the former chapter concerning speech, ver. 27, and the matter of the

present chapter, concerning impartial respects, together; and saith,

`so speak,, as relating to those directions; `so do,, as relating to

the present case; and the rather, because not only actions but speeches

fall under the judgment of God and the law.

As they that shall be judged.--Some read, `as those that will judge,,

as applying it to the direct context; and they make out the sense

thus:--In the Old Testament, differences of persons were not so

expressly forbidden; but now, as differences of nation, so of relation,

are taken away by the law of liberty: bond and free are all one in

Christ, Gal. iii. 28; and therefore you are to judge without any

respect of persons. But this seemeth more argute than solid. It is

better to keep our own reading, `as those that shall be judged;, that

is, either in conscience here, or rather at the tribunal of God

hereafter.

By the law of liberty.--The same expression is used in the 25th verse

of the former chapter. But what is the force of it here? The lowest

reason may be, because their observance of rich men was servile, and

the law commanded nobler and freer respects, more separate from base

aims and self-advantage; or else in this expression the apostle may

anticipate an objection which might be framed against the rigour of the

former sentence; they might pretend they had an exemption by Christ.

The apostle granteth there was a liberty, but not a license; for still

there is a law, though to the elect a law of liberty; but, saith he,

see that your interest be good. To wicked men it is still a bondage,

and a hard yoke. Therefore, walk so that you may not be judged in a

legal way, for then the least failing maketh you obnoxious to the

curse; which rigour, if you would not undergo, see that you walk so

that you may give evidence that you are come under the banner of love

and the privileges of the gospel. And then, when you come to be judged,

you will be judged upon gospel terms; other wise there is no liberty or

freedom for any that allow themselves in the least breach or voluntary

neglect, nothing to be expected but judgment without mercy.

From this verse I observe:--

Obs. 1. That the law in the hands of Christ is a law of liberty.

1. It is a `law:, 1 Cor. ix. 21, `I am not a'nomos, without the law,

but e'nnomos, under the law to Christ., There is a yoke, though not an

insupportable burden. Though there be not rigour, yet there is a rule

still. It is directive: `He hath showed thee, man, what is good,, Micah

vi. 8. The acceptable will of God is discovered in the law of ten

words, and the moral part of the scripture is but a commentary upon it.

And it is also imperative. It is not arbitrary to us whether we will

obey or no. Laws are obliging. The will of the creator being signified

to us in the law, we are under the commanding power of it. Things moral

and just are perpetually obliging: Rom. vii. 12, `The law is holy, and

the commandment holy, just, and good., It is holy, it discovereth true

strictness. It is just or suitable to those common notices of right and

equity which are impressed upon the creature; and it is good, that is,

profitable, useful for man. All which things infer a perpetual

obligation; and if the law were not obliging, there could be no sin;

for where there is no obligation, there is no transgression: 1 John

iii. 4, `Whosoever committeth sin, transgresseth the law; for sin is

the transgression of the law., Now natural conscience would soon be

offended at that doctrine that should make murder, incest, or adultery

no sins; and therefore it is but the vain conceit of profane men in

these times to think that the gospel freeth us from the obligation of

the law because it freeth us from the curse of it, for then all duty

would be will-worship, and sin but a fond conceit.

2. It is a `law of liberty;, for there is a great deal of freedom

purchased by Christ.

[1.] We are freed from the law, as a covenant of works. We are not

absolutely bound to such rigour and exactness as that required. Life

and glory is not offered upon such strict terms. We ought to aim at

exactness of obedience, but not to despair if we can not reach it. We

are so far to eye perfect obedience, as if it were still the matter of

our justification, as to be humbled for defects. A gracious heart

cannot offend a good God without grief. Sin is still damning in its own

nature, still a violation of a righteous law, still an affront to God.

Nay, there are new arguments of humiliation, as sinning against God,s

love and kindness, the forfeiting of our actual fruition of the

comforts of the covenant, though not our right in it, &c. And as to be

humbled for our defects, so to be as earnest in our endeavours. You

have more reason to be strict, because you have more help. Lex jubet,

gratia juvat--we have more advantages, and therefore we should have

more care of duty: Phil. iii. 11, `I press on, that if it be possible I

may attain the resurrection from the dead;, that is, the holiness of

that state. A Christian,s actions are much below his aims. They have no

grace that can be content with a little grace. So that you see we ought

to look to the law,s utmost, though we be not judged by the law,s

rigour. Failings not allowed are pardoned, and weaknesses passed by;

the obedience required of us being not that of servants, but children:

Mal. iii. 17, `I will spare them, as a man spareth his only son.,

[2.] We are freed from the curse and condemnation. The law may condemn

the actions, it cannot condemn the person. It judgeth actions according

to their quality, but it hath no power over the person. So we are said

to be `dead to the law,, Gal. ii. 19, and the law to us, Gal. iv. 6,

and therefore the apostle saith, oude`n kata'krima, `There is not one

condemnation to them that are in Christ., Rom. viii. 1. The curse may

be proposed to a believer, but it cannot take hold of a believer. Not

only colts, but horses already broken, need a bridle.

[3.] We are freed from the curse and irritation of the law: Rom. vii.,

`Sin took occasion from the commandment., Carnal hearts grow worse for

a restraint, as waters swell and rage when the course is stopped. The

very prohibition is an occasional provocation; but to a gracious heart

it is motive enough to a duty, because God willeth it.

[4.] We are freed from bondage and terrors. By natural men duties are

done servilely, and out of slavish principles: `We have not received

the spirit of bondage again unto fear., Rom. viii. 15. The great

principle in the Old Testament, when the dispensation was more legal,

was fear. Therefore it is said, `The fear of God is the beginning of

wisdom,, Prov. ix.; and `the whole duty of man is to fear God, and keep

his commandments,, Eccles. xii. 13. Fear is represented as the great

principle of duty and worship in the Old Testament, as suitable to that

dispensation. But in the New we read that `love constraineth,, 2 Cor.

v. 14; that love `keepeth the commandments,, 1 John v. 2, &c. To the

old world God more discovered his will, to us his grace; and therefore

our great constraint is to arise from love and sweetness.

Use. It showeth us the happiness of those which are in Christ: the law

to a believer is a law of liberty; to another it is the law of bondage

and death. We may `serve him without fear,, Luke i. 57, that is,

without slavish fear. Beasts are urged with goads, and things without

life haled with cart-ropes; but Christians are led by sanctified

affections, motives of grace, and considerations of gratitude. Oh! look

to yourselves, then, whether you be in Christ or no. How sweet is this,

when we are `free for righteousness,, and do not complain of the

commandment, but of sin, and the transgression is looked upon as a

bondage, rather than duty! The same apostle that groaned under the body

of death, delighted in the law of the Lord in the inward man, Rom. vii.

God,s restraints are not a bondage, but our own corruptions. And again,

how sweet is this, when the command giveth us a warrant, and love a

motive, and we can come before God as children, not as hirelings!

Obs. 2. That we shall be judged by the law at the last day; see Rom.

ii. 12, `As many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law.,

The apostle,s drift is to prove that all men out of Christ are under a

condemnation, whether they had a law promulged or a law inbred; a law

written in tables of stone, as the Jews; or in tables of the heart, as

the Gentiles. All are judged according to the declarations of his will

that God hath made to them: they that have gospel by gospel, or `the

law of faith,, Rom. iii. 31, `The words that I have spoken, shall judge

them at the last day,, John xii. 48; they that have only the law of

nature, by the law natural; they that had the law written, by the law

of tables; believers, by the law of liberty,--Christ,s obedience shall

be put upon their score. However their actions are brought to be

scanned by a law and rule, their faith shall be judged and approved by

their works, which, though they be not the causes of glory, yet they

are the evidences: as motion is not the cause of life, but the effect

and token of it. That works are brought into judgment appeareth by that

scheme, Mat. xxv. 35. So Rev. xx. 12, `The books were opened, and every

man was judged according to his works., The judge of the world will

show that he doth rightly. The works of the wicked are produced as the

merit of their ruin; the works of the godly, as evidences of glory: and

therefore the apostle, when he speaketh of the process of God with the

godly and wicked, he noteth the reward and the recompense of the godly

in a different term and phrase: Rom. vi. 23, `The wages of sin is

death, but the gift of God is eternal life., The works of the wicked

are produced to show the equity of their wages; the works of the godly,

to declare their interest in his gift. Well, then, if the law be the

rule of judgment, then let it be so now. If your confidence will not

stand before the word, it will not stand before Christ at his

appearing. We might anticipate and prevent the sentence of that day if

we would go to the law and to the testimony. This is usual in

experience, that persons the more ignorant, the more presuming; and men

that contemn and neglect the means of grace have highest hopes. The

reason is, because they cherish a confidence which the word would soon

confute; and therefore, out of a secret consciousness of their own

guilt, shun that way of trial: `They come not to the light, lest their

deeds should be reproved,, John iii. 20. Oh! if you dare not stand

before the word now, as it is opened by a minister, what will you do

when it is opened by Christ? Therefore when the word reproveth, regard

it with all reverence and fear: This word judgeth me now, and it will

judge me at the last day. Many fret at the light; as the Ethiopians

once a year solemnly curse the sun. Oh! but how will they gnash the

teeth when this word shall be brought against them at the coming of

Christ in the clouds!

Again, if we shall be judged according to the measure of light and

knowledge that we have of the law, it presseth us to bring forth fruits

answerable to the dispensation of God. It is sad to put the finger in

nature,s eye, much more to grow black and wanzy in the sunshine of the

gospel. As God looketh to the rule, so to our proportions and measures

of light: `If I had not spoken to them, they had had no sin,, saith

Christ; that is, no such sin, not that kind of sin, not so much sin.

Gentiles shall answer for their knowledge, and we according to our

proportions. In sins of knowledge there is more of sin; for according

to the sense that we have of the law forbidding, so is sin increased,

and there is more of malice; therefore apostates, who have most

knowledge of the truth, are (as Arnobius saith) Maximi osores sui

ordinis--the greatest enemies to their own order and profession; and

suitable the prophet Hosea v. 2, `The revolters are profound to make

slaughter., Certainly there is more unkindness to God when we sin

against a direct sight and intuition of his will: and therefore David

aggravateth his adultery, because it was committed after God had made

him `to know wisdom in the inward part,, Ps. li. 6; which certainly is

the intent of the Hebrew text there, though we read somewhat otherwise

in our translation. It is sad that after the law is written upon the

heart, it should be transgressed; in such acts there is a kind of

violence offered to the principles and suggestions of our own bosom.

Obs. 3. It is a great help to our Christian course to think of the day

of judgment. They best prepare themselves to the spiritual battle that

always hear the sound of that day,s trump. Do not think it is against

the liberty of the gospel to think of these severe accounts, or a talk

only for novices; it is useful for the children of God. Though they are

delivered from the rigour of that day, yet they ought still to reflect

upon it with reverence. I confess there are some servile reflections

which beget nothing but torment and bondage in the spirit; these will

not become the children of God. But still a holy awe and reverence is

necessary; you will find it of special use to quicken you to Christian

care and watchfulness. There are evangelical reflections which serve to

make the spirit strict, but not servile. It is a fondness in them that

think this argument is wholly legal. The apostle Paul maketh the

doctrine of judgment to come to be a part of the gospel, Rom. ii. 13:

`God will judge the secrets of all men according to my gospel,, that

is, according as I have taught in the dispensation of the gospel. And,

indeed, it is a branch of the most glorious part of the doctrine of the

gospel; Christ,s judging being the highest and most imperial act of his

kingly office. The truth is, it is of excellent use to invite wicked

men to repentance, and therefore Paul chose this argument at Athens,

Acts xvii. 31, `He hath commanded all men to repent, because he hath

appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in righteousness.,

Three reasons may be given why he useth that motive to them at first.

One is intimated in the text, because it is a forcible and pressing

motive to repentance; and the other two may be easily conjectured, or

collected out of the context. As, secondly, to prevent their plea, that

if they had been in a wrong way, they had found it a happy way; no

judgment or plague had lighted upon them. The apostle anticipateth this

objection by telling them, `at those days of ignorance God winked,, but

now taketh notice; and if they did not repent now, however they escaped

here, they should be sure to meet with judgment to come. And, thirdly,

because the heathens themselves had some kind of dread and expectation

of such a day, conscience being but the counterpart of this doctrine;

and, therefore, when Paul spake of `judgment to come, Felix trembled,,

though an heathen, Acts xxiv. 25. The philosophers had some dreams of a

severe day of accounts, as appeareth by Plato,s Gorgias, many passages

in Tully, &c. And possibly herein the light of nature might be much

helped by tradition; so that, for the first and inviting motive, it

serveth excellently. Nay, the people of God, that are already brought

into Christ, find a great deal of sweet use and profit by exercising

their thoughts in it. The strictness of it serveth to scare them out of

their own righteousness. Nothing but Christ,s righteousness will serve

for Christ,s judgment: `That I maybe found in him,, &c., Phil. iii. 9.

When wrath cometh thus solemnly to make inquisition for sinners, it is

comfortable to be `hidden in the cleft of the rock,, to be `found in

him., So also it is useful to make them more strict and watchful; that

they may keep faith and grace in a constant exercise, and so be fit to

meet the Lord when he cometh, with joy and boldness. The preacher, when

he had propounded the whole duty of man, he enforceth it upon this

motive, `For God shall bring every work to judgment,, Eccles. xii. 13,

14. And again, more faithful in their callings. Whatever things are

omitted at the day of judgment, our carriage in our callings is chiefly

noted and produced, it being that particular sphere to which we are

limited and confined for serving the great ends of our creation. And as

all callings are respected, so especially those high callings wherein

there is some peculiar and special ministration to God, or some charge

and employment for the public good. Paul himself, though a chosen

vessel, a man of strong affections to Christ, yet thought need

sometimes to use the spur; and though he professed that he chiefly

acted out of the constraints of love, yet he also took the advantage of

fear, `Knowing the terror of the Lord in that day, we persuade men,, 2

Cor. v. 11, implying that a reflection upon the severity and strictness

of the day of judgment was a great enforcement to urge him to

faithfulness in the ministry; and having found the use of it in his own

spirit, he presseth Timothy by the same motive: 2 Tim. iv. 1,2, `I

charge thee, before Jesus Christ, who shall judge quick and dead, be

instant; preach the word in season, out of season., It is a most

vehement persuasive to diligence, when we consider that we must give an

account of our work. So also to make them thankful. There cannot be a

greater argument of praise than when we consider our deliverance from

wrath, when wrath is drawn out to the height, that we can look Christ

in the face with comfort, 1 John ii. 28; and we may begin our triumph

when others are overwhelmed with terrors. So the apostle saith, 1 John

iv. 17, `Herein is love perfect, that we may have boldness at the day

of judgment;, that is, therein is the height and perfection of the

divine love discovered, that when others call upon mountains to cover

them, we may lift up our heads with comfort, and may call the world,s

judge our friend and father.

Lastly, To awaken their souls to an earnestness of desire and

expectation. The good servant expecteth his master,s coming, Mat. xxiv.

45, and `the bride saith, Come,, Rev. xxii. The day of judgment is the

day of Christ,s royalty and your espousals: here we are betrothed, not

married. When Christ went out of the world, there were mutual and

interchangeable pledges of love and affection. Nobis dedit arrhabonem

Spiritus; � nobis accepit arrhabonem carnis. [183] He left us the

pledge of his Spirit, as Elijah ascending, left his mantle; he took

from us the pledge of our flesh and nature; therefore certainly all

that have interest in Christ must needs `love the day of his

appearing,, 2 Tim. iv. 8.

Use. Well, then, often exercise your thoughts in this matter. Think of

the judge, of his majesty, on the glory of his appearance; when the

graves are opened, rocks are rent, and Christ,s unspeakable glory shall

break forth like lightning through the heavens; when he shall come

riding on the clouds, environed with flames of fire, attended with all

the host of the elect angels, and the great shout and trump shall

summon all before the royal throne of Christ,s judgment. Consider,

also, his purity and holiness. When God discovered himself in a

particular judgment, they said, 1 Sam. vi. 20, `Who can stand before

this holy God?, But when Christ cometh to judge all the world, `with a

garment white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool,, Dan.

vii. 9, how will guilty spotted creatures appear in his presence?

Christ,s throne is `a white throne,, Rev. xx. 11, and black sinners can

not stand before it. None have confidence in that day but either such

as are of an unspotted innocency, as the angels, or those that are

washed in Christ,s blood, as the saints. Consider his strict justice:

nothing so small and inconsiderable but, if it be sinful, God hateth

it. Idle and light words weigh heavy in God,s balance, Mat. xii. 36.

Nothing so hidden and secret but is then opened; deadness, irreverence,

unsavoriness in holy duties, the least failing or defect in

circumstance, manner, or end. A man should never think of the severity

of that day but he should cry out, `If thou, Lord, shouldst mark

iniquities, who shall stand?, Ps. cxxx. 3. Stand, that is, rectus m

curia, be able to make a bold defence in that day. Those sins which,

through the commonness and easiness of error, seem to challenge a

pardon of course, and wherein we are most indulgent to ourselves, as

the follies and excesses committed through the heat of youth, and so in

man,s account, who hath but a drop of indignation against sin, are

venial, shall be then produced: Eccles. xi. 9, `Know that for all these

things God will bring thee to judgment., Oh! think of these things to

an evangelical purpose, that ye may trust in nothing but Christ,s

righteousness against Christ,s judgment.

Obs. 4. From that so speak, and so do: that not only our actions, but

our speeches, in which we are less deliberate, come under the

judicatory of God and the word: Mat. xii. 36, `But I say unto you, that

every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account

thereof in the day of judgment; for by thy words shalt thou be

justified, by thy words condemned., Usually we forget ourselves in our

speeches, and make light account of them; ay! but for idle words, not

only evil, but idle, we shall be judged in the last day. Evil words

show a wicked heart, and idle words a vain mind. There is a quick

intercourse between the heart and the tongue; and whatever aboundeth in

the heart cometh uppermost, and findeth vent in the speech. Therefore

let wicked men beware lest `their own tongue fall upon them,, Ps. lxiv.

8. Better have a whole mountain than one evil tongue to fall upon us;

this will crush you to pieces in the day of wrath. Well, then, it shows

how fond their excuse is who hope they are not so bad as they make

themselves in their words. Alas! this is one of the nearest and

clearest discoveries of what is in thy heart; thy tongue should be thy

glory, Ps. ix., and it is thy shame. Evil words have a cursed

influence; that sa'pros lo'gos, `rotten communication,, Col. iv. 6,

passeth through others like lightning, and setteth them all on fire.

Behold a great deceit in good things: men think their talking should

excuse their walking; in bad they hope their hearts are good, though

their communications be vile and base. A stinking breath argueth

corrupt lungs; such putrid and rank speeches come from a foul heart.

Christ asked his disciples, `What manner of communications they had?,

Luke xxiv. 17. Xenophon and Plato gave rules that men,s speeches at

meals, and such like meetings, should be written, that they might be

more serious. Oh! consider, God writeth them. What a shameful story

will be brought out against you at the day of judgment, when all your

rotten and unsavoury speeches shall be numbered and reckoned up to you!

It is observable, when Paul, Rom. iii. 13, 14, maketh an anatomy of a

natural man, he standeth more on the organs of speech than all the

other members: `Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues

have they used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; their

mouth is full of cursing and bitterness,, &c. The inward dunghill

reeketh, and sendeth forth its stench most this way.

Ver. 13. For he shall have judgment without mercy that showed no mercy;

and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

He applieth the former direction to the matter: `So speak, and so do,,

as those that would not come under the rigour of the covenant of works;

for if you allow yourselves in any sin, or do anything against any part

of the royal law, you can expect nothing but `judgment without mercy.,

But to be cruel to your brethren with allowance and indulgence is a sin

that will put you into that capacity; not only as it is an allowed

transgression of the law, but a special sin, that in equity seemeth to

require such a judgment; it being most meet that they should find no

mercy that would show none.

For he shall have judgment without mercy.--In which expression he

intimateth the effect of the covenant of works, which is judgment

without any mixture and temper of mercy, the law abating nothing to the

transgressor; as also to imply the retaliation of God: hard men justly

meet with hard dealing and recompense.

That showed no mercy.--As if he had said, Mercy is not for those that

only honour rich men, but them that are full of bowels and bounty to

the poor; for by `showing no mercy, he either intendeth shutting up the

bowels against the necessities of the poor, or using them with

contumely, injury, and reproach. They were so far from giving due

respect, that they were guilty of undue disrespect; a practice which

certainly will leave us ashamed at the day of judgment, when the Lord

shall slight our persons, and leave us to our own just horrors and

discouragements.

And mercy rejoiceth over judgment.--The word is katakauchatai,

boasteth, lifteth up the head; as a man will when anything is

accomplished with glory and success. This latter clause hath been

tortured and vexed with diversity of expositions: it were fruitless to

number up all to you: they may be referred to two general heads. Some

take mercy here for God,s mercy; others for man,s mercy. They that

apply it to God either expound it thus: They have a severe judgment;

and if it be not so with all, it is merely the mercy of God which hath

rejoiced and triumphed over his justice. So Fulgentius among the

fathers. But this is too forced. Others, as Gregory, &c., carry it,

with more probability, thus: Though unmerciful men be severely handled,

yet, in the behalf of others, mercy rejoiceth over judgment; that is,

in the conflict and contest between attributes about sinners, mercy

getteth the victory and upperhand, and so rejoiceth, as men when they

divide the spoil. Piscator maketh out this sense yet more subtilely,

taking kai`, which we translate and, for though or yet, as it is often

in scripture; and then the sense is, Though mercy itself would fain

rejoice over judgment, acts of pity and kindness being exercised with

more of God,s delight, yet at the sight of unmercifulness the bowels of

it shrink up and retire. I should incline this way, but that the

apostle speaketh here of that mercy which man showeth to man: for there

seemeth to be a thesis and an antithesis, a position and an opposition,

in the verse. In the position the apostle asserteth that the unmerciful

shall find no mercy; in the opposition, that mercy findeth the judgment

not only tempered, but overcome; that is, he that showeth mercy is not

in danger of damnation, for God will not condemn those that imitate his

own goodness; and therefore he may rejoice over his fears, as one that

hath escaped. Now the orthodox, that go this way of applying it to

man,s mercy, do not make this disposition a cause of our acceptance

with God, but an evidence; mercy showed to men being an assured pledge

of that mercy which he shall obtain with God. I confess all this Is

rational; but look to the phrase of the text, and you will find some

inconvenience in this opinion; for it will be a speech of a most harsh

sound and construction to say that our mercy should rejoice against

God,s judgment; for then man would seem to have `somewhat wherewith to

glory before God,, which is contrary to David, who denieth any work of

ours to be justifiable in his sight, Ps. cxliii. 2, or to be able to

hold up the head or neck against his judgment; contrary to Christ, who

forbiddeth this rejoicing against the divine judgment, though we be

conscious to ourselves of performing our duty, Luke xvii. 10; and

contrary to Paul, who saith there is no glorying before God, Rom. iv.

2. All the rejoicing we have against God,s justice is in the victory of

his mercy; therefore I believe these two senses may be well compounded

and modified each by the other, thus: It is the mercy of God that

rejoiceth over his justice, and it is mercy in man that giveth us to

rejoice in the mercy of God; and therefore the wisdom of the apostle is

to be observed in framing the speech so that it might be indifferently

compliant with both these senses. Yea, upon a more accurate and

intimate consideration of the words, I find that the opposition in the

apostle,s speech doth not lie so much between unmercifulness and mercy,

as between judgment without mercy and judgment overcome by mercy.

Therefore, upon the issue of the whole debate, I should judge that the

apostle,s speech is elliptical, and more must be understood than is

expressed; mercy in God being expressed as the rise of our triumph, and

mercy in man being understood as the evidence of it: and the sum is,

that the merciful man may glory as one that hath received mercy, for

the mercy of God rejoicing over the justice of God in his behalf; he

may rejoice over Satan, sin, death, hell, and his own conscience. In

the court of heaven the mercy of God rejoiceth; in the court of

conscience, the mercy of man: the one noteth a victory over the divine

justice, the other a victory over our own fears.

The observations are these:--

Obs. 1. The condition of men under the covenant of works is very

miserable. They meet with justice without any temper of mercy. The word

speaketh no comfort to them. Either exact duty or extreme misery are

the terms of that covenant. `Do and live,, and `do and die,, is the

only voice you shall hear whilst you hold by that tenure. God asked of

Adam, `What hast thou done?, not, Hast thou repented? So in the

prophet, Ezek. xviii., `The soul that sinneth shall die., The least

breach is fatal. To man fallen the duty of that covenant is impossible,

the penalty of it is intolerable. Fore-going sins cannot be expiated by

subsequent duties. Paying of new debts doth not quit the old score.

Will you hope in God,s mercy? One attribute is not exercised to the

prejudice and wrong of another. In that covenant God intendeth to

glorify justice, and you are engaged to a righteous law, and both law

and justice must have satisfaction. As the word speaketh no comfort, so

providence yieldeth none. All God,s dispensations are judicial: Ezek.

vii. 5, `An evil, and an only evil., Their crosses are altogether

curses. There is nothing befalleth them that are under the covenant of

grace, but there is some good in it; something to invite hope, or to

allay sorrow: `In wrath God remembereth mercy,, Hab. iii. 2. The rod is

not turned into a serpent, and therefore comforteth, Ps. xxiii. 5.

Whereas to these every comfort is salted with a curse; and in their

discomforts there is nothing but a face and an appearance of wrath. But

the worst of the covenant of works is hereafter. When he dealeth with

his people all in mercy, he will deal with them all in judgment: Rev.

xiv. 10, `A cup of wrath unmixed;, that is, simple and bare ingredients

of wrath. Yet it is said, Ps. lxxv. 8, that `the cup of the Lord is

full mixed;, full mixed with all sorts of plagues, but unmixed, without

the least drop or temperament of mercy. Oh! how will ye do to suffer

those torments that are without ease and without end? Rev. xx. 7, `They

shall be cast into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, where

they shall be tormented for ever and ever., Nothing more painful to the

sense than fire; no fire more noisome or more scalding than brimstone;

and all this for ever and ever. There is an eternity of extremity; it

is without measure and without end , which is the hell of hell, that

after a thousand years are passed over, that worm dieth not, and that

fire is not quenched. The brick-hills and the furnace of Babel are but

shadows to it. There was a sad howling and yelling in Sodom when God

rained hell out of heaven. How did the poor scalded creatures run up

and down in that deluge of brimstone, and shriek and howl because of

their pains! Oh! but what weeping and gnashing will there be in hell,

when a `fiery stream shall go out from the throne of God,, Dan. vii.

10, and poor damned creatures shall wallow hither and thither, and have

`not a drop to cool their tongues!, Well, then, it should awaken those

that are under the covenant of works to come under the banner of grace.

Those that are condemned in one court have liberty of appeal to

another; and when `ye are dead,, and lost to the first law, you may be;

alive to God,, Gal. ii. 19. Let `the avenger of blood, make you fly to

`the city of refuge., But you will say, Who are now under the covenant

of works? There is a vulgar prejudice abroad which supposeth that the

first covenant was repealed and disannulled upon the fall, and that God

now dealeth with us upon new terms; as if the covenant of grace did

wholly extrude and shut out the former contract, wherein they think

Adam only was concerned. But this is a gross mistake, because it was

made not only with Adam, but with all his seed. And every natural man,

whilst natural, whilst merely a son of Adam, is obliged to the tenor of

it. The form of the law runneth universally, `Cursed is every one

that,, &c., Gal, iii. 10; which rule brooketh no exception but that of

free grace and interest in Christ. And therefore every child, even

those born in the church, are obnoxious to the curse and penalty of it:

`Children of wrath, even as others,, Eph. ii. 3; and therefore are

natural men described by this term, `Those that are under the law,,

Gal. iv. 5; that is, under the bond and curse of the law of works. If

the law of works had been repealed and laid aside presently upon Adam,s

fall, Christ had not come under the bond and curse of it as our

substitute and surety, for he was to take our debt upon him, to submit

to the duty and penalty of our engagement; therefore it is said, in the

place last quoted, he was `made under the law, to redeem them that were

under the law., So also Gal. iii. 13, `He was made a curse for us;,

that is, in our room and place. And, again, the law is not repealed,

because it is an unchangeable rule, according to which God proceedeth,

mi'a kerai'a: `Not a pick of the law shall pass away,, Mat. v. 18, till

all be fulfilled, either by the creature, or upon the creature, by us,

or by our surety. It is the covenant of works that condemneth all the

sons of Adam. The rigour of it brought Christ from heaven to fulfil it

for believers. Either we must have Christ to fulfil it, or for the

breach of it we must perish for ever. And therefore our apostle saith,

that at the day of judgment God proceedeth with all men according to

the two covenants; some are `judged by the law of liberty,, and some

`have judgment without mercy., The two covenants have two principal

confederate parties that contracted for them and their heirs--Adam and

Christ; therefore, as long as thou art Adam,s heir, thou hast Adam,s

engagement upon thee. The covenant of works was made with Adam and his

seed, who were all natural men. The covenant of grace with Christ and

his seed, who are believers, Isa. liii. 10. God will own no interest in

them that claim by Adam. As Abraham was to reckon his seed by Isaac,

not by Ishmael, `la Isaac shall thy seed be called;, so God,s children

are reckoned by Christ. Others, that have but a common interest,

cherish a vain hope: `God that made them will not save them,, Isa.

xxvii. 11.

But you will say, how shall we more distinctly know what is our claim

and tenure? I answer--;

1. It is a shrewd presumption that you are under the old bond, if you

cannot discern how your copy and tenure is changed. The heirs of

promise are described to be those that `fly for refuge to the hope that

is before them,, Heb. vi. 18. God,s children are usually frighted out

of themselves by some avenger of blood; and do the more earnestly come

under the holy bond of the new oath, and fly to Christ, by considering

the misery of their standing in Adam. The apostle supposed that wrath

made inquisition for him, and therefore crieth out, `Oh! that I might

be found in him,, Phil. iii. 9. They that presume that they had ever

faith and a good heart towards God, grossly mistake. That justiciary

said, `All these I kept from my youth,, Mat. xix. 20.

2. Much may be discerned from the present state and frame of your

hearts. If they carry a proportion with the covenant of works, it is to

be feared you hold by that title and copy. As (1.) When the spirit is

legal. There is a suitable spirit both to law and gospel. A servile

spirit is the spirit of the law, a free spirit is the spirit of the

gospel. It is the character of men under works: Heb. ii. 15, `All their

lifetime they are subject to bondage., Religion is careful, but a

foolish scrupulosity and servile awe argue bondage. See Rom. viii. 15,

and 2 Tim. i. 7. (2.) When we seek `a righteousness of our own., Rom.

x. 3, and settle our life and peace upon a foundation of our own works.

The covenant of works is natural to us. Common people hope to be saved

by their works and good meaning, and by their good prayers to be

accepted with God. `What shall we do?, is the language of every

convinced man. And the Jews said, John vi. 28, `What are the works of

God?, We would fain engage the divine grace by our own works. But this

disposition reigneth most in such as either--;(1st.) Plead their works,

as those in the prophet that `delighted to draw nigh to God;, [184]

that is, to expostulate and contend with him about their works, for so

it followeth in the next verse: Isa. lviii. 2, 3, `Wherefore have we

fasted?, So the Pharisee, Luke xviii. 11. And hypocrites are brought in

by Christ pleading their works, as noting the secret ground of their

confidence: Mat. vii. 21, `We have prophesied in thy name, cast out

devils., The saints of God own no such thing: Mat. xxv. 37, `When saw

we thee an hungered, naked?, &c. They wonder Christ should remember

such sorry things. As they perform duties with more care, so they

overlook them with more self-denial; whereas others build upon their

great gifts, employment in the ministry, urge every petty thing as an

engagement upon God. (2d.) When they take more liberty to sin, hoping

to make amends by their duties. Conviction would not let them prosecute

their sins so freely, if they did not make fair promises of

reformation. It is usual with men to carry on a sin the more securely

out of a presumption of a former or after duty. Sir Edwin Sands

observeth that the Italians are emboldened to sin, that they may have

somewhat to confess. And Solomon speaketh of `sacrifice with an evil

mind,, Prov. xxi. 27. And Balaam built seven altars, and offered seven

rams, &c., Num. xxi., out of a vain hope to ingratiate God, that he

might curse the people. And the prophet speaketh of committing iniquity

out of a trust in righteousness, Ezek. xxxiii. 13.

3. You may collect much from the unsuitableness of your hearts to the

state of grace. As (1.) If you live under the reign of any sin, when it

is constant and allowed, that rule holdeth good: James ii. 10, `He that

is guilty of one, is guilty of all., Then the devil hath an interest in

you, not Christ. Habituated dispositions, good or bad, show who is your

father. It is notable that of Rom. vi. 14, `Sin shall not have dominion

over you; for you are not under the law, but under grace., An interest

in grace cannot consist with a known sin. (2.) If you abuse grace; for

then you make grace an enemy, and then justice will take up the quarrel

of abused mercy. Usually men please themselves in this, if they be

right in doctrine, but do not take notice of that taint that is

insensibly conveyed into their manners. Oh! consider, when out of a

pretence of gospel you grow neglectful of duty, less circumspect and

wary in your ways, more secure, slighting the threatenings of the word,

you offend grace so much that it turneth you over to justice. There are

Antinomists in life as well as doctrine. Good Christians are angry that

others make that an occasion to lust which is to themselves a ground of

hope: `They turn the grace of our God,, &c., Jude 4. Therefore that man

that maketh it fuel for sin hath a naked apprehension of it, not a sure

interest.

Obs. 2. Unmerciful men find no mercy. (1.) It is a sin most un suitable

to grace. Kindness maketh us pity misery: `Thou wast a stranger, be

kind to strangers., He that was forgiven, and plucked his

fellow-servant by the throat, had his pardon retrieved, Mat. xviii. We

pray, `Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass

against us,, Mat. vi. God,s love to us melteth the soul, and affecteth

us not only with contrition towards God, but compassion to our

brethren. At Zurich, when the gospel was first preached, they gave

liberty to their captives and prisoners, out of a sense of their own

deliverance by Christ. (2.) It is unlike to God; he giveth and

forgiveth. How will you look God in the face, if you should be so

contrary to him? Dissimilitude and disproportion is the ground of

dislike. It is a disposition that will check your prayers; beware of

it. Unmercifulness is twofold--when we neither give nor forgive. It

notes--(1st.) A defect in giving, or shutting up the bowels. They ask,

and your hearts are as flint or steel. We are faulty when we do not

what we should do, as when we do what we should not do. Covetousness

and violence will weigh alike heavy in God,s balance; and you may be as

cruel in neglect as injury. (2d.) In denying pardon to those that have

wronged us. They have done you hurt, but you must be like your heavenly

Father. No man can do thee so much hurt as thou hast done God. Sin is

more opposite to his nature than wrong can be to your interests. Would

you have God as slack in giving, as backward to forgive? What would you

say if God should deal thus with you, either for grace or pardon?

Certainly bounteous and piteous hearts pray with most confidence.

Obs. 3. God usually retaliates and dealeth with men according to the

manner and way of their wickedness. The sin and suffering oft meet in

some remarkable circumstance: Babylon hath blood for blood. Jacob

cometh as the elder to Isaac, and Leah cometh as the younger to Jacob:

he that denied a crumb, wanted a drop, Luke xvi.: Asa, that set the

prophet in the stocks, had a disease in his feet. Well, then, when it

is so, know the sin by the judgment, and silence murmuring.

Adoni-bezek, a heathen, observed, `As I have done, God hath done to

me,, Judges i. And it showeth you what reason you have to pray that God

would not deal with you according to your iniquities, your manner of

dealing either with him or men; and walk with the greater awe and

strictness. Would I have God to deal thus with me? Would I have the

recompenses of the Lord to be after this rate?

Obs. 4. God exerciseth acts of mercy with delight; his mercy rejoiceth

over justice. So in the prophet, `Mercy pleaseth him,, Micah vii. 18;

so in another prophet, `I will rejoice over them, to do them good,,

Jer. xxxii. 41. God is infinitely just as well as merciful, only he

delighteth in gracious dispensations and discoveries of himself to the

creature: this should encourage you in your approaches to God. Mercy is

as acceptable to God as to you. In 2 Sam. xiv. 1, when `Joab perceived

the king,s heart was to Absalom,, he setteth the woman of Tekoah to

make request for him. The King,s heart is set upon mercy, your requests

gratify his own bowels; and again, if `mercy hath rejoiced over

judgment,, so should you too: go and triumph over death, hell, devil,

damnation, and make your boast of mercy all the day long: 1 Cor. xv.

55, `O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory?, You

have another triumph: Rom. viii. 33, `Who shall lay anything to our

charge?, And though the devil be the accuser of the brethren, yet

because mercy hath rejoiced over judgment, therefore we may rejoice

over Satan, and go to heaven singing.

Obs. 5. Mercy in us is a sign of our interest in God,s mercy: Mat. v.

7, `Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy., They shall

obtain: God will deal kindly with them, but it is mercy which they

obtain, not a just reward; so Prov. xi. 25, `The liberal soul shall be

made fat: `the widow of Sarepta,s barrel had no bottom. I shall show

you what this mercy is. It is manifested--(1.) In pitying miseries.

Jesus had compassion on the multitude, Mat. xv. 32; so should we. It is

not mercy unless it ariseth from a motion in the bowels: `If thou shalt

draw out thy soul to the hungry,, Isa. lviii. 10. Heart and hand must

go together: bounty beginneth in pity. (2.) In relieving wants by

counsel or contribution: it is not enough to say, `Be clothed,, James

ii. 16. (3.) In forgiving injuries and offences, Mat. xviii. 22, `until

seventy times seven;, that is, toties quoties--it is an allusion to

Peter,s number, `Must I forgive seven times? 7 Yea, saith Christ,

`seventy times seven:, an uncertain number for a certain. God

`multiplieth pardon,, Isa. lv. 7, and so should we. As Tully said of

Caesar, Nihil oblivisci soles nisi injurias--that he forgot nothing but

injuries; so should you. Secondly, I shall show you when it is a pledge

of mercy. (1.) When it is done as duty, and according to the manner God

hath required: `To distribute forget not, for with such sacrifice God

is well pleased,, Alms must be sacrifice, given to men for God,s sake;

not merely done as a commendable act, but in conscience of the rule.

(2.) The grounds must be warrantable. The right spring of mercy is from

sense of God,s mercy; it is a thank-offering, not a sin-offering.

Ver. 14. What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith,

and hath no works? Can faith save him?

Here is the second exhortation against boasting of an idle faith, and

it suiteth with the last argument urged in behalf of the former mat

ter. He had spoken of a law of liberty; now, lest this expression

should justify the misprision of some false hypocrites, who thought

they might live as they list, so as they did profess faith in Christ,

he disproveth the vanity of this conceit by divers arguments.

What doth it profit, my brethren; that is, how will it further the ends

of a profession or a religion? So the apostle, when he confuteth

another such presumptuous persuasion, saith oude`n eimi', `I am

nothing,, 1 Cor. xiii. 2; that is, of no esteem with God, upon the

supposition that his gifts were without charity.

If a man say he hath faith.--Say, that is, boast of it to others, or

pride himself in the conceit of it. It is notable that the apostle doth

not say `if any hath faith,, but `if any man say he hath faith., Faith,

where it is indeed, is of use and profit to salvation; and he that hath

faith is sure of salvation, but not always he that saith he hath faith.

In this whole discourse the apostle,s intent is to show, not what

justifieth, but who is justified; not what faith doth, but what faith

is. And the drift of the context is not to show that faith without

works doth not justify, but that a persuasion or assent without works

is not faith; and the justification he speaketh of is not so much of

the person as of the faith.

And hath no works; that is, if there be no fruits and issues of

holiness from it. It is the folly of the Papists to restrain it to acts

of charity. There are other products of faith; it being a grace that

hath a universal influence into all the offices of the holy life.

Can faith save him? that is, a pretence of faith, for otherwise faith

saveth; that is, in that way of concurrence in which any act of the

creatures can be said to save. So Paul, Eph. ii. 8, Te chariti este'

sesosmenoi dia tes pisteos, `Ye are saved by grace through faith, not

by works., And therefore certainly our apostle meaneth a pretence of

faith, otherwise there would be a direct contradiction, and it may be

collected out of all the whole discourse. The two next verses show he

meaneth such a faith as is in the tongue and lips, such a faith as is

alone and by itself; ver. 17, such a faith as the devils may have; ver.

19, such a faith as is dead; that is, no more can be accounted faith

than a dead man can be accounted a man.

The notes out of this verse are these:--

Obs. 1. That pretended graces are fruitless and unprofitable. For mal

graces, as well as formal duties, bring in nothing to the spirit^ for

the present no grace, no comfort, and can beget no hope of glory for

the future. Pretences of the truth are a disadvantage, for they argue a

conviction of the truth, and yet a refusal of it. It is a kind of

practical blasphemy to veil an impure life under a profession of faith;

for we do as it were tack on and fasten the errors and excesses of our

lives upon religion: therefore it is said, Rev. ii. 9, `I know the

blasphemy of them that say they are Jews and are not., There is less

dishonour brought to God by open opposition, then by profession used as

a cover and excuse for profaneness. And in the Gospel it is determined

in that parable, Mat. xxi. 28, 29, that that son was less culpable that

said `I will not,, than the other that said `I will,, and did not. All

this is spoken to illustrate that passage, `What doth it profit if a

man say he hath faith?,

Obs. 2. Pretences of faith are easy and usual. Men are apt to say they

have faith; when they see the vanity of works, and cannot stand before

God by that claim, they pretend to faith. In so free a discovery of the

gospel, men are apt to declaim against resting in works, but it is as

dangerous to rest in a false faith.

Obs. 3. From that and hath no works. He proveth it is but a saying they

have faith if there be not works and fruits of it. The note is that

where there is true faith there will be works. There are three things

that will incline the soul to duty--a forcible principle, a mighty aid,

a high aim; all these are where faith is. The forcible principle is

God,s love, the mighty aid is God,s Spirit, the high aim is God,s

glory. (1.) For the principle, where there is faith there will be love:

affection followeth persuasion; and where there is love there will be

work; therefore do we often read of `the labour of love,, Heb. vi. 10;

1 Thes. i. 3; and `faith worketh by love., Faith, which is an

apprehension of God,s love to us, begetteth a return of love to God,

and then maketh use of so sweet an affection to carry out all its acts

and services of thankfulness: it first begetteth love, and then maketh

use of it. (2.) There is a mighty aid received from the quickening

Spirit. Help engageth to action; man,s great excuse is want of power.

Faith planteth into Christ, and so receiveth an influence from him. He

liveth in us by his Spirit, and we live in him by faith, and therefore

we must needs `bring forth much fruit,, John xv. 4. It is observable

that in the 17th and 26th verses, that the apostle calleth a workless

faith a dead or lifeless faith, void of the life and quickening of the

Spirit. Where there is life there will be acting. Operation followeth

being. Hypocrites are said to be `twice dead, plucked up by the roots,,

Jude 12. Twice dead, dead in their natural condition and dead after

their profession, and then plucked up; that is, plainly discovered to

be those that never had any vital influence from Christ. (3.) Where

there is faith there will be aims to glorify God. Faith that receiveth

grace returneth glory: 1 Peter ii. 12, `Glorify God in the day of

visitation., When God visiteth their souls in mercy, they will be

devising how they may do him glory; for faith is ingenuous, it cannot

think of taking without giving: and when it apprehendeth mercy it

contriveth what shall be rendered unto the Lord. Well, then, try your

faith; it is not a naked assent or an inactive apprehension; there will

be effects, some works, which you may know to be good if they be done

in Christ; chori` emou, `without me, or out of me, ye can do nothing,

John xv. 5--by Christ, `I can do all things through Christ that

strengthened me,, Phil. iv. 13, that is, by the actual influence of his

grace; and for Christ, that is, for his sake and glory; emoi` to` zen

Christo's, Phil, i. 21. Paul,s whole life, his to` zen, was consecrated

to Christ for the uses and purposes of his glory. In short, they that

work in Christ, as united to him by faith, work by Christ, by the

continual supply of his grace, and for Christ, with an aim at his

glory.

Obs. 4. From that can faith save him? that is, will you come before God

with these hopes for salvation? We should cherish no other confidence

than such as will abide the day of the Lord, and hold out to salvation.

Will this be a plea, then, when all mankind is either to be damned or

saved, to say you made profession? 1 John ii. 28. The solemnity of

Christ,s coming is the circumstance that is often used for detecting

ungrounded hopes; as Luke xxi. 36, `Watch and pray, that you may be

able to stand before the Son of man;, that is, without shame and

remorse at his coming. So 1 John iv. 17, `That we may have boldness at

the day of judgment., Men consider what will serve for the present

purposes, what will quiet the heart, that they may follow their

business or pleasures with the less regret. Oh! but consider what will

serve you for salvation; what will serve turn at the day of death or

the day of judgment. No plea is sufficient but what may be urged before

the throne of the Lamb. Well, then, urge this upon your souls, Will

this faith save me--interest me in Christ, so as I may have boldness at

the day of judgment? As Christ asked Peter thrice, `Lovest thou me?, so

put the question again and again unto your souls, Can I look Christ in

the face with these hopes? Sincere graces are called ta echomena tes

soterias, Heb. vi. 9, `Things that accompany salvation., This is the

issue and result of all self-inquiries, Is it a saving grace? Nothing

should satisfy me but what can save me.

Ver. 15-16. If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily

bread, and one of you say to them, Depart in peace, be you warmed, be

you filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things that are

needful to the body, what doth it profit?

If a brother or a sister.--The apostle compareth faith and charity, and

showeth that pretences of faith avail no more than pretences of

charity. By brother or sister he meaneth Christians, united together by

the bond of the same profession, terms oft used in that sense in this

epistle.

Be naked; that is, ill-clothed; so nakedness is often taken: so 1 Cor.

iv. 11, `We suffer hunger, we are naked;, that is, destitute of

necessary apparel. So Job xxii. 6, `Thou hast stripped the naked of

their clothing;, that is, the ill-clothed are brought to worse poverty

by thy extortion. So when men have not a decent garment, or be coming

their state, 1 Sam. xix. 24. Saul prophesied naked; that is, without

the vestment of a prophet.

And destitute of daily bread; that is, not only of moderate supplies,

but such as are extremely necessary. They have not from hand to mouth,

or wherewith to sustain life for a day. Christ calleth it, a'rton

epiou'sion, `present bread,, Mat. vi. 11. Under these two notions of

nakedness and hunger, he comprehendeth all the necessities of the human

life, for these are the things utterly necessary. Therefore Christ

saith, `Take no thought what ye shall eat, or wherewith ye shall be

clothed,, Mat. vi. 31;, And if we have food and raiment, let us be

therewith content,, 1 Tim. vi. 8. And Jacob promiseth worship if God

would give him `bread to eat, and raiment to put on,, Gen. xxviii. 20.

Till the world grew to a height of luxury, this was enough. [185] The

bill of provisions was very short, `food and raiment.,

And one of you say to them; that is, that hath ability otherwise to do

them good; for else good wishes are not to be despised; and some can

only give a cheap alms, prayers, and counsel.

Depart in peace.--A solemn form of salutation, [186] which is as much

as, `I wish you well., See Mark v. 34; Luke vii. 50, and Luke viii. 48.

Be you warmed, or be you filled.--After the general form, he cometh to

instance in good wishes, suitable to the double necessity

forementioned: `Be warmed,, that is, be clothed; it is opposed to

`naked., So Job xxxi. 20, `The poor were warmed with the fleece of my

sheep., The Septuagint have it, etharma'nthesan apo` koura`s a'mnon

mou, `Be filled;, that is, I wish you food to sustain your hunger.

Notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the

body; that is, when you are able; otherwise a hearty wish is of use and

acceptance. So `a cup of cold water, is welcome, Mat. x. 42; and it is

not reason that `other men should be eased and we burdened,, 2 Cor.

viii. 13. His chief aim was to shame the rich, that thought .to satisfy

their duty by a few cheap words and charitable wishes; which offence

was as common as pretence of faith, as appeareth 1 John iii. 18, `Let

us not love in word and in tongue, but in deed and in truth.,

What doth it profit? that is, the poor; the belly is not filled with

words, or the back clothed with wishes. This is but like that mad

person that thought to pay his debts with the noise of money, and

instead of opening his purse, shaked it. The poor will not thank you

for good wishes, neither will God for saying you have faith.

The points are these:--

Obs. 1. That an excellent way to discover our deceitful dealing with

God is to put the case in a sensible instance, or to parallel it with

our own dealings one with another. You will not count words liberality,

neither will God count pretences faith: this is the reason of parables;

matters between God and us are stated by instances of like matters

between man and man. The judgment hath best view of things when they

are carried in a third person, and is not so blinded and perverted as

in our own case. David could determine, 2 Sam. xii., `The man that doth

this shall die the death., If the case had been represented in a

downright reproof, no doubt he would have been more favourable. Again,

by this means they are made more plain and sensible; for heavenly

things, being represented in an earthly form, come clothed with our own

notions. We can see the sun better in a basin than in the firmament,

and interpret heaven,s language when it speaketh to us in the dialect

of earth. Well, then, use this art, put the case in a temporal matter:

Mal. i. 8, `Offer it now to the governor; will he be pleased with thee?

or will he accept thy person?, Would men account this fair dealing, to

come with a gift so sickly and imperfect? So sometimes suppose the case

your own: would I be thus dealt withal? Thus Christ made the Pharisees

to give judgment against themselves, Mat. xxi. Those that despised,

abused, persecuted the messengers, killed the son, saith Christ to

them, `What will the Lord of the vineyard do with them?, They answer,

ver. 40, 41, `He will miserably destroy them, and let out his vineyard

to other men., So will God do to you, saith Christ, ver. 43. And thus

God appealeth to the Jews upon a parable, Isa. v. 3, `Judge between me

and my people., We shall soon see the irrationality of our inferences

in divine matters when we put the case in terms proper to human

affairs; as when `grace is turned into wantonness,, how absurd and

illogical is the consequence, when we infer carelessness of duty out of

the abundance of grace? It is as if you should say, My master is good,

therefore I will offend him and displease him. Thus you may do in many

cases, especially when the word giveth you the hint of a metaphor; only

take heed you do not reason thus in the matter of believing and

expecting mercy from God, lest you straiten free grace, which is not

dispensed `after the manner of man,, 2 Sam. vii. 19. God will accept a

returning prostitute, which man will not, Jer. iii. 1. Otherwise it

will be of special use to shame us with neglect, to open a gap to

conviction, to shame us with the absurdity and irrationality of our

inferences in matters of religion.

Obs. 2. From that if a brother or a sister. God,s own people may be

destitute of necessary outward supports: Heb. xi. 37, they `of whom the

world was not worthy,, `wandered about, destitute, afflicted,

tormented., It is true David saith, Ps. xxxvii. 25, `I have been young,

and now am old, yet never saw I the righteous forsaken, or their seed

begging bread;, but either he speaketh merely upon his own experience,

or asserteth that they were not forsaken though begging bread; or else

he speaks of the shameful trade of begging, which among the Jews was a

token of God,s curse; as Ps. lix. 15, `Let them wander up and down for

meat, and grudge if they be not satisfied., So, `let them be

vagabonds,, Ps. cix. 10. Certainly the Jews had more of the carnal and

outward blessing of the covenant than believers under the gospel, it

being more suitable to their dispensation.

Obs. 3. Bare words will not discharge or satisfy duty. Good words are

good in themselves, and do become a Christian mouth, but they must not

be rested in. Some cannot go so far in profession as good words,

religious conference, and holy discourse. Words argue that you have a

knowledge of duty; and bare words, that you want a heart for it.

Obs. 4. More particularly observe, that a few charitable words are not

enough. Some men,s words are fierce and cruel, others `love in word and

in tongue,, 1 John iii. 20; but this is not enough. Words are cheap,

compliments cost nothing; and will you serve God with that which

costeth nothing? Words are but a cold kind of pity; the belly is not

filled with words, but meat; [187] nor is the back clothed with good

wishes. Words are but a derision; you mock the poor when you bid them

`be warmed, be filled,, and do not minister to their necessities. Nay,

it is a kind of mocking of God: Gal. vi. 7, `Be not deceived, God is

not mocked., He speaketh of such as would fain be accounted liberal and

charitable, but it was only in words and excuses.

Ver. 17. Even so faith, if it have not works, is dead, being alone.

Here he cometh to accommodate the instance and similitude, and showeth

that a naked profession of faith is no better than a verbal charity;

God looketh upon it as dead, cold, and useless.

Even so faith.--He speaketh according to their presumption: you call it

faith; and, according to appearance it hath some likeness to faith, but

it is dead in itself.

If it have not works.--He doth not only intend acts of charity, but all

other fruits and operations of faith.

Is dead.--The apostle speaketh in allusion to a corpse or a dead plant,

which hath only an outward similitude and likeness to those which are

living; it is dead in regard of root, and dead in regard of fruits; it

is void of the life of Christ, and it is void of good fruits. Operation

or motion is an argument and effect of life.

Being alone.--In the original kath' eaute`n, it is dead by itself, or

dead in itself; that is, how great soever it be, it is all dead. We

translate it `being alone,, as noting the emptiness, barrenness, and

nakedness of such profession or general assents; and so it suiteth with

that known maxim among the Protestants, Sola fides justificat, sed non

fides quae est sola, that faith alone justifieth, but not that faith

which is alone; not a naked assent or bare profession: which

interpretation is suitable enough to the context.

Obs. That false faith is a dead faith. It cannot act, no more than a

dead body can arise and walk; it is dead, because it doth not unite us

to Christ. True faith planteth us into Christ, and so receiveth virtue

and life from him: `I live by faith in the Son of God,, Gal. ii. 20. It

is dead, because it doth not discover itself in any motions or

operations of life. You may know there is life by the beating of the

pulses: a living faith will be active, and bewray itself in some

gracious effects; there will be liveliness in holy duties: `dead works,

do not become `the living God,, Heb. ix. 14. There will be some what

more than morality in duties of conversation; yea, there will be life

in death itself. Faith is the life of our lives, the soul that

animateth the whole body of obedience. Faith is not always alike

lively, but where it is true, it is always living. We read of `a lively

faith,, and `a lively hope,, 1 Peter i. 3, and then we have a greater

feeling of the motions of the spiritual life: at other times it is only

living, and then if you be not sensible of life, you will be sensible

of deadness: sense is the lowest token of life; you will be complaining

and groaning under corruptions. Well, then, hereby you may try your

faith; doth it receive life from Christ? Doth it act? If Christ be in

you, he would live in you. Never think of living with Christ, unless

you live in Christ: and there is none liveth in Christ but he `bringeth

forth much fruit,, John xv. 5.

Ver. 18. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me

thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works.

The apostle amplifieth the present argument against an empty, solitary

faith, by supposing a dialogue between a believer, that can manifest

his faith by his works, and a boasting hypocrite, that can produce no

such effect and experience. So that the dispute doth not lie so much,

between faith and works, as between faith pretended and faith

discovered by works; for the apostle doth not introduce them speaking

thus, Thou standest upon thy faith, and I upon my works; but `Show me

thy faith without works, and I will,, &c., that is, Show me a warrant

for thy faith, and I will soon prove mine own.

Yea, a man may say; that is, some true believer may come and plead thus

with a boasting hypocrite.

Thou hast faith.--Let it be as thou sayest, but that is all thou hast;

a naked profession of faith, or at best, but some historical assent;

for the apostle granteth that, ver. 19, yea, not only to them, but to

the devils.

And I have works.--He doth not mean without faith; that is contrary to

an expression in the text, `I will show thee my faith by my works.,

Works without faith are as a building without a foundation, but acts of

nature lustred with common graces. Thou boastest with thy tongue of

faith; I shall not boast, but produce works, which are but a real

apology and commendation. Christ produceth no other testimony but his

works, Mat. xi. 4, 5. Our works do best `praise us in the gates.,

Show me thy faith without thy works.--This clause is diversely read in

the original. Some, as OEcumenius, read only deixon te`n pi'stin sou,

`Show me thy faith,, and I will soon warrant mine. Most copies read ek

ton e'rgon, that is, prove thy works, since they are such inseparable

fruits of faith, where are they? But the most approved copies have

chori`s e'rgon, `without thy works;, and the meaning is, Thou wantest

the truest testimony and discovery of faith. Now, show me such a faith,

that is, make it good by any warrant from the principles and maxims of

our religion.

And I will show thee my faith by my works; that is, soon evidence it to

the world, or soon evince it to be true faith out of the word.

The notes are these:--

Obs. 1. A great means to convince hypocrites is to show how grace

worketh in true Christians. The apostle instituteth a dialogue between

both; thus Christ compareth the two builders, Mat. vii. 24, &c., and

the wise virgins and the foolish, Mat. xxv. This awakeneth emulation;

it showeth that the austerities of Christianity are possible. Others

can go higher than your forms. Take this course, Do we live as they

do--as they that, through faith and patience, inherit the promises?

06s. 2. From that show me thy faith without works, &c.--In all our

hopes and conceits of grace we should always look to the warrant we

have for them. Can I show or prove this to be faith or love by any

rational grounds or scripture arguments? If Christians would look to

the warrant of their hopes, they might discern more of the guile of

their spirit. Presumption is a rash trust, without the sight of an

actual or clear ground. He that `built on the sand,, built hand over

head, not considering whether the foundation were sufficient to support

the structure. But he that built on the rock, did not only consider

whether it would bear up such a stress, but was clearly resolved in his

mind of the strength and sufficiency of the foundation. It is good to

believe, `as the scripture saith,, John vii. 38, to cherish no

persuasion without an actual sight of a clear and distinct warrant,

that we may be able to `show our faith,, upon all cavils and

challenges, that is, evince it to be good.

Obs. 3. Works are an evidence of true faith. Graces are not dead,

useless habits; they will have some effects and operations when they

are weakest and in their infancy. It is said of Paul, as soon as he was

regenerate, `Behold, he prayeth., New-born children will cry at least

before they are able to go. This is the evidence by which we must

judge, and this is the evidence by which Christ will judge. (1.) The

evidence by which we must judge. It is the drift of many scriptures to

lay down evidences taken from sanctification and the holy life; they

were written to this very purpose; as more especially Ps. cxix. and the

first epistle of John; see 1 John v. 13. Yea, conclusions are drawn to

our hands. It is said, `Hereby we may know,, &c. See 1 John iii. 14,

and 1 John iii. 19. In many places promises are given out, with

descriptions annexed, taken from the meekness, piety, good works of the

saints, as Ps. i. 1, 2; Ps. xxxii. 1-9; Rom. viii. 1. Good works are

the most sensible discovery; all causes are known by their effects. The

apples, leaves, and blossoms are evident when the life and sap is not

seen. (2.) This is the evidence according to which Christ proceedeth at

the day of judgment: Rev. xx. 12, They were `judged according to their

works., So Mat. vii. 23, `Depart from me, ye that work iniquity., They

made profession, but their works were naught. So Mat. xxv. 41, 42.

Use. You may make use of this note to judge yourselves and to judge

others. (1.) Yourselves: when the causes are hidden, the effects are

sensible; therefore you may try graces by their fruits and operations.

Works are not a ground of confidence, but an evidence; not the

foundations of faith, but the encouragements of assurance. [188]

Comfort may be increased by the sight of good works, but it is not

built upon them; they are seeds of hope, not props of confidence; sweet

evidences of election, not causes; happy presages and beginnings of

glory; in short, they can manifest an interest, but not merit it. We

have `peace with God, by the righteousness of Christ, and `peace of

conscience,, by the fruits of righteousness in ourselves; but more of

this anon. (2.) Others may be judged by their works: where there is

knowledge, and a good life, it is not Christian to suspect the^ heart.

The devil said, when he had nothing to object against Job,s life, `Doth

Job serve God for nought?, If men be knowing, and profess, and be

fruitful in good works, it is an injury to say they are only civil,

moral men. Profession may be counterfeited, but when it is honoured

with works, you must leave the heart to God, James i. 27. To be

`undefiled,, and `visit the fatherless and widows,, that is `true

religion;, that is the great note and discovery of it. Empty profession

may have more of a party in it, than of power; but profession honoured

with works is charity,s rule to judge by.

Ver. 19. Thou believest there is one God, thou dost well; the devils

also believe, and tremble.

This instance showeth what faith he disputeth against, namely, such as

consisteth in bare speculation and knowledge; which can no more save a

man than looking on the sun can translate a man into the sphere and orb

of it.

Thou believest; that is, assentest to this truth: the lowest act of

faith is invested with the name of believing.

There is one God.--He instanceth in this proposition, though he doth

limit the matter only to this, partly because this was the first

article of the creed, the primitive truth in religion, `that there is

one God,, by it intending also assent to other articles of religion;

partly be cause this was the critical difference between them and the

pagans, and the shibboleth of the Christian profession as to heathens.

Thou dost well.--It is an approbation of such assent so far as it is

good, and not rested in; though it be not saving, yet so far as it is

historical it is good good in its kind, as a common work and

preparation; for so it is required: `Hear, O Israel, our God is one

Lord,, Deut. vi. 4. And so in another article of religion it is said, 1

John iv. 2, `He that believeth Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of

God;, that is, so far forth of God.

The devils also believe; that is, assent to this truth, and other

truths revealed in the word.

And tremble, phri'ssousi.--The word signifieth extreme fear and horror

of spirit; it cometh from phri`x, a word that implieth that noise which

is caused by the commotion of the sea. Now, this clause is added, `they

tremble,, not to imply, as some suppose, that they do more than assent,

as having an experience of some work upon their affections, but to

disprove this kind of faith, and to show that it is not saving; they

have an assent which causeth horror and torment, but they have not a

faith which causeth confidence and peace, the proper fruit of that

faith which is justifying, Rom. v. 1; Eph. iii. 12.

Obs. 1. Bare assent to the articles of religion doth not infer true

faith. True faith uniteth to Christ, it is conversant about his person;

it is not only assensus axiomati, an assent to a gospel-maxim or

proposition; you are not justified by that, but by being one with

Christ. It was the mistake of the former age to make the promise rather

than the person of Christ to be the formal object of faith; the promise

is the warrant, Christ the object: therefore the work of faith is

terminated on him in the expressions of scripture. We read of coming to

him, receiving him, &c.; we cannot close with Christ without a promise,

and we must not close with a promise without Christ: in short, there is

not only assent in faith, but consent; not only an assent to the truth

of the word, but a consent to take Christ; there must be an act that is

directly and formally conversant about the person of Christ. Well,

then, do not mistake a, naked illumination, or some general

acknowledgment of the articles of religion for faith. A man may be

right in opinion and judgment, but of vile affections; and a carnal

Christian is in as great danger as a pagan, or idolater, or heretic;

for though his judgment be sound, yet his manners are heterodox and

heretical. True believing is not an act of the understanding only, but

a work of `all the heart,, Acts viii. 37. I confess some expressions of

scripture seem to lay much upon assent, as 1 John iv. 2, and v. 1; 1

Cor. xii. 3; Mat. xvi. 17; but these places do either show that

assents, where they are serious, and upon full conviction, come from

some special revelation; or else, if they propound them as evidences of

grace, we must distinguish times: the greatest difficulty lay then upon

assent, rather than affiance. The truths of God suffering under so many

prejudices, the gospel was a novel doctrine, contrary to the ordinary

and received principles of reason, persecuted in the world, no friend

to natural and carnal affections, and therefore apt to be suspected.

The wind that bloweth on our backs, blew in their faces; and that which

draweth on many to assent to the gospel was their discouragement.

Consent and long prescription of time, the countenance and favour of

the world, do beget a veneration and reverence to religion; and

therefore assent now is nothing so much as it was then, especially when

it is trivial and arreptitious, rather than deliberate; for this is

only the fruit of human testimony, and needeth not supernatural grace.

Therefore do not please yourselves in naked assents; these cost

nothing, and are worth nothing. There is `a form of knowledge., Rom.

ii. 20, as well as `a form of godliness,, 2 Tim. iii. 5. `A form of

knowledge `is nothing but an idea or module of truth in the brains,

when there is no power or virtue to change and transform the heart.

Obs. 2. From that thou doest well. It is good to own the least

appearance of good in men. So far it is well, saith the apostle. To

commend that which is good is the ready way to mend the rest. This is a

sweet art of drawing on men further and further: so far as it is good,

own it: 1 Cor. xi. 2, with 17, `In this I praise you,, saith Paul; and

again, `In this I praise you not., Jesus loved the young man for his

moral excellency, Mark x. 21. It was a hopeful step. It is good to take

off the scandal of being severe censurers, not to be always blaming. It

reproveth them that blast the early bud dings of grace, and discourage

men as soon as they look toward religion by their severe rigour; like

the dragon that watched to `destroy the man-child as soon as he was

born,, Rev. xii. 4. The infant and young workings of grace should be

dandled upon the lap of commendation, or, like weak things, fostered

with much gentleness and care.

Obs. 3. The devils assent to the articles of Christian religion. It

cometh to pass partly through the subtlety of their natures they are

intellectual essences; partly through experience of providences, sight

of miracles. They are sensible of the power of God in rescuing men from

their paws; so that they are forced to acknowledge there is a God, and

to consent to many truths in the scriptures. There are many articles

acknowledged at once in Mat. viii. 29, `Jesus, thou Son of God, art

thou come to torment us before our time?, They acknowledge God, Christ

the Son of God, not in an ordinary adoptive way; for it is. Luke iv.,

`That thou art the Holy One of God;, then a day of judgment, which will

occasion more torment to themselves and other sinners. And so you shall

see Paul adjured the devil `by the name of Christ,, Acts xvi. 18. And

the devils answer the sons of Sceva, `Paul I know, and Jesus I know;

but who are ye?, Acts xix. 15. They acknowledged that Jesus as the

master, Paul as the servant and messenger, had mightily shaken their

power and kingdom. So it is said, Phil. ii. 10, `Things under the

earth;, that is, the devils who are turned into hell, which is

represented as a subterranean place, do `bow the knee, to Christ. Well,

then, never rest in the devils, faith. Can the devils be justified or

be saved? They believe there is a God, that there is a Christ, that

Christ died for sinners. A Christian is to exceed and go beyond devils;

nay, beyond other men, beyond pagans; nay, beyond hypocrites in the

church; nay, be yond himself; he must `forget the things that are

behind,, &c. Is it not a notable check to atheistical thoughts, Should

I be worse than devils? David said, `I was as a beast before thee,, Ps.

lxxiii. 23; and Agur, Prov. xxx. 2, `Surely I am more brutish than any

man, and have not the understanding of a man., Whilst we go about to

ungod God, we do but unman ourselves; nay, worse, an atheist is not

only a beast, but a devil. Christ called Judas `devil,, John vi. 70.

Nay, worse than devils: the devils are under the dread of this truth;

we are stupid, insensible of providence, careless of judgments, when

`the devils believe and tremble., The Lord might well expostulate thus,

`Fear ye not me, O foolish people, that have no understanding?, Jer. v.

21,22.

Obs. 4. Horror is the effect of the devils, knowledge: the more they

know of God the greater trembling is there impressed upon them. They

were terrified at a miracle, or any glorious discovery of Christ,s

power on earth: `Art thou come to torment us before our time?, Well,

then, hence you may collect--(1.) Light that yieldeth us no comfort is

but darkness. The devils have knowledge left, but no comfort, therefore

said to be `held under chains of darkness,, Jude 6. The more they think

of God the more they tremble. It is miserable to have only light enough

to awaken conscience, and knowledge enough to be self-condemned, to

know God, but not to enjoy him. The devils cannot choose but abominate

their own thoughts of the Deity. Oh! rest not, then, till you have

gotten such a knowledge of God as yieldeth comfort: Ps. xxxvi. 9, `In

thy light shall we see light;, there is light in this light, all other

light is darkness. (2.) All knowledge of God out of Christ is

uncomfortable: that is the reason why the devils tremble; they cannot

know God as a father, but as a judge; not as a friend, but as an enemy.

Faith looking upon God as a father and as a friend, yieldeth peace to

the soul, Rom. v. 1; and `fear is cast out, for fear hath torment in

it,, 1 John iv. 18. This is the misery of devils and damned men and

natural men, that they cannot think of God without horror; whereas this

is the great solace and comfort of the saints, that there is a God: Ps.

civ. 34. `My meditation of him shall be sweet;, and Cant. i. 3, `Thy

name is as an ointment poured out,, full of fragrancy and refreshing.

Salt waters being strained through the earth become sweet. God,s

attributes, which are in themselves terrible and dreadful to a sinner,

being derived to us through Christ, yield comfort and sweetness. The

children of God can long for the day when Christ,s appearance will be

most terrible: `Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly.,

Ver. 20. But wilt thou know, vain man, that faith without works is

dead?

Here he reinforceth the dispute against a carnal professor; the

disputation is not about the cause of justification, but what we should

think of an empty faith.

But wilt thou know; that is, wilt thou rightly understand and consider

of the matter, or hearken to what can be said against thy faith? The

like form of speech is used Rom. xiii. 3, `Wilt thou then not be afraid

of the power?, that is, be taught how not to fear it.

O vain man, anthrope kene, O empty man; a metaphor taken from an empty

vessel. It is the parallel word to raka, which is forbidden Mat. v. 22.

The Septuagint render rikim by a'ndras ke'nous, Judges xi. 3. You will

say. Was it lawful for the apostle to use such words of contempt and

disgrace? I answer--(1.) Christ doth not forbid the word, but the word

used in anger. You shall see fool, another term there forbidden, is

elsewhere used by Christ himself: Mat. xxiii. 17, `O ye fools and

blind;, and Luke xxiv. 25, `ye fools, and slow of heart to believe.,

And so Paul, Gal. iii. 1, `O ye foolish Galatians., There is a

difference between necessary corrections and contemptuous speeches or

reproofs. (2.) The apostle doth not direct this to any one person, but

to such an order or sort of men; [189] such speeches to private persons

savour of private anger: but being directed to such a sort of men, do

but note the just detestation of a public reproof.

That faith without works is dead.--Mark, he doth not say, `faith is

dead without works,, but `faith without works is dead: `there is a

difference in these predications; as if he said, faith is dead without

works, it would have argued that works are the cause that gave life to

faith, whereas they are effects that argue life in faith. As, for

instance, `a man without motion is dead, is proper, but a `man is dead

without motion, is a predication far different. Briefly, in this

dispute the apostle proceedeth upon the supposition of several maxims.

As (1.) That the way to know graces is by their effects and operations,

as causes are known by their necessary effects. (2.) That works are an

effect of faith; `faith without works is dead,, and works are dead

without faith. So that works that are gracious are a proper, perpetual,

and inseparable effect of faith; they are such effects as do not give

life to faith, but declare it; as apples do not give life to the tree,

but show it forth.

The notes are these:--

Obs. 1. From that wilt thou know? Presumers are either ignorant or

inconsiderate. False and mistaken faith is usually a brat of darkness;

either men do not understand what faith is, or do not consider what

they do. Ignorance and incogitancy maketh such unwarrantable conceits

to escape without censure.

Obs. 2. From that O vain or empty man. Temporaries are but vain men;

like empty vessels, full of wind, and make the greatest sound; they are

full of windy presumptions and boasting professions. (1.) Full of wind,

they have a little airy knowledge, such as puffeth up: 2 Peter i. 8,

`Barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus

Christ., There is knowledge, but it is a barren and unfruitful

knowledge; they are void and destitute of any solid grace. (2.) Of a

great sound and noise; can talk of grace, boast of knowledge, glory in

their faith. Usually presumers are of a slight, frothy spirit, that are

all for tongue and an empty profession. A vain faith and a vain man are

oft suited and matched.

Obs. 3. Hypocrites must be roused with some asperity and sharpness. So

the apostle, `O vain man;, so Christ, `O ye foolish and blind;, so John

the Baptist, `O ye generation of vipers,, Mat. iii. 7. Hypocrites are

usually inconsiderate, and of a sleepy conscience, so that we must not

whisper, but cry aloud. An open sinner hath a constant torment and

bondage upon his spirit, which is soon felt and soon awakened; but a

hypocrite is able to make defences and replies. We must, by the warrant

of those great examples, deal with him more roughly; mildness doth but

soothe him in his error.

Obs. 4. That an empty barren faith is a dead faith. I noted this

before; let me touch on it again. It is a dead faith--(1.) Because it

may stand with a natural state, in which we are `dead in trespasses and

sins., (2.) It is dead, because it receiveth not the quickening

influences of the Spirit. (3.) It is dead, because it wanteth the

effect of life, which is operation; all life is the beginning of

operation, tendeth to operation, and is increased by operation; so

faith is dead, like a root of a tree in the ground, when it cannot

produce the ordinary effects and fruits of faith. (4.) It is dead,

because unavailable to eternal life, of no more use and service to you

than a dead thing. Oh! pluck it off; who would suffer a dead plant in

his garden? `Why cumbereth it the ground?, Luke xiii. 7.

, Ver. 21. Was not Abraham our father justified by works, lolien he

offered Isaac upon the altar?

Here he propoundeth the demonstration that might convince the vain man,

which is taken from the example of Abraham; the believers of the Old

and New Testament being all justified the same way.

Was not Abraham our father.--He instanceth in Abraham, because lie was

the prime example and idea of justification, and because many were apt

to plead that instance urged by Paul, Rom. iv. 1-4, &c., and because he

was a man of special reverence and esteem among the Jews. And he

calleth him `our father,, because he was so to those to whom he wrote,

to the twelve dispersed tribes, and because he is to all the faithful,

who are described to be those that `walk in the steps of our father

Abraham., Rom. iv. 12. And indeed this is the solemn name and title

that is given to Abraham in the scriptures, `Abraham our father., See

John viii. 53; Acts vii. 2; Rom. iv. 1.

Justified by works; that is, declared to be just by his works before

God and the world. But you will say, is not this contrary to scripture?

It is said, Rom. iii. 20, `By the works of the law no man is

justified;, and particularly it is said of Abraham, that he was `not

justified by works., Rom. iv. 2. How shall we reconcile this

difference? I shall not enter upon the main question till I come to the

24th verse; only, for the clearing of the present doubt, give me leave

to return some thing by way of answer. Some distinguish of

justification, it is either in foro divino or humano, in heaven or

before men, and that is again either in our own consciences or in the

sight of others: in the two latter senses they grant that works do

justify; though not before God, yet in the court of conscience and

before the world. The distinction is not altogether without warrant of

scripture, for, Rom. iii. 20, `By the deeds of the law shall no flesh

be justified in his sight., Mark that, in his sight, implying there is

another justification before men, which may take in works. So also Rom.

iv. 2, that `Abraham had not whereof to glory before God., That last

clause implieth he could avouch his sincerity, as Job also did, before

men, Job xxxi. Well, then, according to this opinion, these two places

may be thus reconciled: Paul speaketh of the use and office of faith in

foro divino, before God, and James speaketh of the effects and

qualities of faith by which it is justified before men. And thus the

business may be fairly accommodated; but that I believe there is

somewhat more in it, because he speaketh of some special justification

that Abraham received upon his offering of Isaac; and you shall find

that from God he then received a justification of his faith, though

thirty years before that he had received a justification of his person.

When he was an idolater and ungodly, Joshua xiv. 2, Rom. v. 4, then God

called him out of grace, Gen. xii. 3, and justified him. It is said,

`He believed, and it was counted to him for righteousness,, Gen. xv. 6.

He was justified by imputation, and absolved from guilt and sin, so as

it could not lie upon him to damnation. But now, when he offered Isaac,

his faith was justified to be true and right, for that command was for

the trial of it; therefore upon his obedience God did two

things--renewed the promise of Christ to him, Gen. xxii. 16, 17, and

gave him a testimony and declaration of his sincerity, ver. 12, `Now I

know that thou fearest God,, saith Christ to him, who is there called

the `Angel of the Lord., I conceive, as works are signs in foro lmmano,

to men, by which they may judge of the quality of faith, so in foro

divino, before God, God judging `according to our works,, as it is

distinctly said, Rev. xx. 12. God will evince the faith of his saints

to be right by producing their works, and will discover the ungrounded

hopes of others by their works also, for great and small are all judged

according to that rule. And not only hereafter, but now also doth God

judge according to works; that is, look upon them as testimonies and

declarations of faith. `Now I know that thou fearest God;, that is, now

I have an experience; upon which experience Abraham was justified and

the promise renewed. I conceive our apostle alludeth to that

experience, for he speaketh as in a known case, `Was not Abraham

justified by works?; that is, upon this did not he receive a testimony

and declaration from God that he was justified? And suitable to this

the author of the Book of Maccabees saith, 1 Mac. ii. 52, `Was not

Abraham found faithful in temptation? and it was imputed to him for

righteousness., Found faithful is a phrase equivalent to that which

James useth, `was justified., Therefore Paul and James may be thus

reconciled: Paul speaketh of the justifying of a sinner from the curse

of his natural condition, the occupations 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 with God. God giveth us the comfort of our former

justification by such experiences and fruits of faith, for in them we

are found faithful; that is, before God and man approved to have a

right faith. And to this purpose Diodat excellently glosseth, that

justification in Paul is opposite to the condemnation of a sinner in

general, and justification in James is opposite to the condemnation of

a hypocrite in particular. In Paul,s sense a sinner is absolved, in

James,s sense a believer is approved; and so most sweetly, and for

aught I can see, without exception the apostles are agreed. For the

Popish exceptions I shall handle them, ver. 24.

When he offered Isaac upon the altar.--Mark, though Abraham never

actually offered him, but only in purpose and vow, yet it is said `he

offered., So Heb. xi. 17, `By faith Abraham offered Isaac,, &c.; he

purposed it, and if God had continued the command, would actually have

done it. [190] God counteth that to be done which is about to be done,

and taketh notice of what is in the heart, though it be not brought to

practice and actual accomplishment.

Obs. 1. Those that would have Abraham,s privileges must look to it that

they have Abraham,s faith. You claim kin of him as believers. How was

it with Abraham? Two things are notable in his faith--(1.) He received

the promises with all humility: Gen. xvii. 3, `And Abraham fell on his

face,, as mightily abashed and abased in himself, to see God deal thus

with him. (2.) He improved them, with much fidelity, being upright

before God, and walking in all relations for his glory. Two instances

there are of his obediences, upon which the Holy Ghost hath set a

special mark and note--one was leaving his father,s house, Gen. xii. 1,

wherein he denied himself in his possessions; the other was the

sacrificing of his son, Gen. xxii. 1, wherein he denied himself in his

hopes. Oh! `look to the rock from whence you were hewn, the hole of the

pit out of which you were digged, to Abraham your father,, Isa. li. 1,

2. Do you receive mercies so humbly, improve them so thankfully? Who

would not stick at those commands wherewith Abraham was exercised and

tried? God calleth every believer more or less to deny something that

is near and dear to him.

Obs. 2. Believers must see that they honour and justify their faith by

works. Never content yourselves with an empty profession. Profession

showeth to what party we addict ourselves, but holiness showeth we

addict ourselves to God. Disagreeing parties may accord in the same

guilt and practices: `What do you more?, Mat. v. 47. Christianity may

be professed out of faction by them that have a pagan heart, under a

Christian name. All natural men, however they differ in interest, agree

in one common rebellion against God. But the chief thing which I would

urge, is to press them that profess themselves to be justified by grace

to make good their interest in grace, to look to the evidence of works.

Libertines press men absolutely to believe that they are justified from

all eternity; and to lull them asleep in a complete security, make it a

sin to doubt of or question their faith, whether it be right or no.

Saltmarsh saith, That we are no more to question faith than to question

the promise, and that Christ and his apostles did not press men to ask

the question whether they did believe or no, and that Christ,s commands

to believe are not to be disputed, but obeyed,, &c. [191] Vain

allegation! There is a difference between questioning the command and

questioning our obedience. Though we are not to dispute against the

duty, yet we are to examine whether we perform it. The apostle speaketh

directly to this purpose: `Examine yourselves, whether you be in the

faith,, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. There is no other way to undeceive the soul,

and to discover false conceptions from true graces. How sad was it for

the foolish virgins, that never doubted of their faith till it was too

late! It is the vulgar mistake to think that the excellency of faith

lieth in the security and strength of persuasion; and that whoever can

make full account that Christ died for him, or that he shall go to

heaven, doth believe; whereas the difference between faith and

presumption doth not lie in the security of persuasion, but in the

ground of it, Mat. vii., latter end. The two buildings there might be

raised in equal height and comeliness; the difference was in the

foundation. A hypocrite may have as fair and as full a confidence as a

believer, but it is not as well built and raised; and, if the scripture

shall give sentence, he is not most happy that hath least trouble, but

he that hath least cause; therefore you had need look to your faith and

confidence, that it may be justified, justified by your works. This is

a sensible evidence, and most in sight. I confess, by some it is

decried as litigious, by others as legal. Some think that because there

are so many shifts, and circuits, and wiles in the heart of man, it is

an uncertain, if not an impossible way of trial. I confess, if in trial

we were only to go by the light of our conscience and reason, the

objection would seem to have weight in it. Who can discover the

`foldings of the belly,, Prov. xx. 27, without God,s own candle? The

main certainty lieth in the Spirit,s witness, without which the witness

of water is silent, 1 John v. 8. Graces shine not without this light.

God,s own interpreter must `show a man his righteousness,, Job xxxiii.,

otherwise there will be many shifts in the heart, and we shall still be

in the dark. Under the law every thing was to be established `in the

mouth of two or three witnesses,, Deut. xvii. 6. So here are two

witnesses, the Spirit with our spirits, the Spirit with our renewed

consciences, Rom. viii. 16. It is the Holy Ghost that giveth light,

whereby we may discern the truth of grace, imprinteth the feeling and

comfort, and by satisfying the soul begetteth a serenity and calmness

within us. Therefore the apostle pitcheth the main certainty upon the

Spirit,s evidence: Rom. ix. 2, `I lie not, my conscience bearing me

witness in the Holy Ghost;, that is, my conscience is assured by the

Holy Ghost that I do not err or lie. Others cry it up for legal, as by

pressing men to look to works as an evidence, we went about to

establish their confidence in their own righteousness, or a merit in

themselves. Certainly it is one thing to judge by our graces, another

thing to rest or put our trust in them. There is a great deal of

difference between declaring and deserving. Works as fruits may declare

our justified estate. There is a difference between `peace with God,

and `peace of conscience., Peace and amity with God we have merely by

grace and free justification, that eire'ne pro`s Theo`n, Rom. v. 1; but

in the court of conscience there must be some evidence and

manifestation. A broken man hath peace in court as soon as the surety

hath paid his debt, but hath the comfort of it within himself when it

is signified to him by letter or otherwise. Free justification is the

ground of our comfort, but works the evidence that intimate it to us.

However, we had need be cautious. An undue use of marks will keep the

soul full of doubts; and we want the comfort that we seek when we do

not bottom and found it upon Christ, according to his free promises.

Above all things a Christian should be most delicate and tender in

founding his hopes. God is impatient of a copartner in the creature,s

trust; he will not give that glory to another; and if you do, he will

declare his anger by leaving you to a constant uncertainty and

dissatisfaction. Always when we think to warm ourselves by our own

sparkles, we lie down in sorrow. Because the business is of great

concernment, I shall give you a few directions, how you may reflect

upon your graces, or works, as evidences of your estate.

1. You must be loyal to Christ. Many seek all their happiness in the

gracious dispositions of their own souls, and so neglect Christ. [192]

This were to prize the love token before the lovely person. To rectify

it, it is good to go to work this way:--(1.) Let there be a thorough

going out of yourselves; be sure to keep the heart right in point of

righteousness; and in founding your hopes, see that you do not neglect

`the corner stone., Paul reckoneth up all his natural privileges, moral

excellencies, nay, his own righteousness, what he did as a Pharisee,

what as a Christian. `If any might have confidence in the flesh,, Paul

might; but he renounceth all; nay, counts it `loss,, i.e., dangerous

allurements to hypocrisy and self-confidence, Phil. iii. It is good to

have such actual and fresh thoughts in ourselves when we proceed to

trial, that our souls may be rather carried to than diverted and taken

off from Christ. Usually assurance is given in after a solemn and

direct exercise of faith: Eph. i. 13, `After ye believed, ye were

sealed by the Spirit of promise;; where the apostle showeth the order

of the Spirit,s sealing, after believing or going to Christ, and the

quality under which the Spirit sealeth, as a Spirit of promise;

implying, that when the thoughts have been newly and freshly exercised

in the consideration of our own unworthiness and God,s free grace and

promises, then are we fittest to receive the witness and certioration

of the Spirit. (2.) In the very view and comfort of your graces still

keep the heart upon Christ. See what would become of you were it not

for free grace. God could find matter of condemnation against you, not

only in the worst sins, but in the best duties; the most regenerate man

durst not adventure his soul upon the heavenliest thought that ever he

conceived. When Nehemiah had performed a zealous action he subjoineth,

Neh. xiii. 22, `Remember me, my God, concerning this also, and spare me

according to the greatness of thy mercy;, intimating, that therein God

might find enough to ruin him. So Paul, 1 Cor. iv. 4, `I know nothing

by myself, yet am I not hereby justified:, he knew no unfaithfulness in

his ministry, yet this would not make him righteous before God. So

that, in the presence of the greatest evidences, you should see free

grace is the surest refuge; as Jehoshaphat, when he had all the

strength of Judah, who are numbered to be five hundred thousand, yet

goeth to God, as if there were no presence of means: 2 Chron. xx. 12,

`We have no might; our eyes are unto thee., So in the fairest train of

graces you should still keep Christ in the eye of faith, and let the

soul stay upon him; or, as in a pair of compasses, one part is fixed in

the centre whilst the other foot wandereth about in the circumference,

so must the soul stay on Christ, be fixed on him, whilst we search

after evidences and additional comforts. (3.) After the issue and close

of all, you must the more earnestly renew your addresses to Christ, and

exercise faith with the more advantage and cheerfulness. You have much

more encouragement to close with him when you survey his bounty to your

souls, and consider those emanations of grace by which you are enabled

to good works. So 1 John v. 13, `These things have I written to you

that believe, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that

you may believe on him., His meaning is, that upon assurance they might

renew the act of faith with the more cheerfulness; as Thomas, when he

felt Christ,s wounds, had the greater reason to believe, John xx. 27;

non nova, sed aucta fide, as Estius glosseth, by a renewed and

increased faith. So when you have had a feeling and sense of Christ,s

bounty to you, and by good works have cleared up your interest in

eternal life, you have the greatest reason to cast yourselves again

upon Christ by faith and confidence; for, as the apostle saith, `The

righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith., Rom. i. 17. The

whole business of our justification before God is carried on by a

continual act of faith, from one act and degree to another. In short,

whatever comfort we seek in our works and graces, Christ must still

`lie as a bundle of myrrh between our breasts,, Cant. i. 12; be kept

close and near the heart, always in the eye of faith and the arms of

love.

2. You must go to work evangelically, and with a spirit suiting the

gospel. Consider and understand your evidences and graces not in a

legal perfection, but as `sprinkled with the blood of the covenant., If

you should look for love, fear, faith, hope, in that perfection which

the law requireth, the heart will still be kept unsettled; your

business is to look to the truth rather than the measure. Usually men

bring their graces rather to the balance than to the touchstone, and

weigh them when they should try them, as if the quantity and measure

were more considerable than the essence and nature. It is good to own

grace, though mingled with much weakness: the children of God have

pleaded the truth of their graces, when conscious to themselves of many

failings: Cant. i. 5, `I am black, but comely., There is grace, though

under the veil and cloud of much weakness; so Cant. v. 2, `I sleep, but

my heart waketh:, the spouse hath a double aspect, to what was evil and

what was good; so he in the Gospel could with confidence plead his

faith, though humbled with sad relics and remains of un belief: `Lord,

I believe; help my unbelief,, Mark ix. 24. We must not bear false

witness against others, much less against ourselves; and, therefore,

own a little good, though in the midst of much evil.

3. You must go to work prudently, understanding the nature of marks,

and the time to use them; everything is beautiful in its season. There

are times of desertion, when graces are not visible. In darkness we can

neither see black nor white. In times of great dejection and

discouragement the work of a Christian is not to try, but believe: `Let

him stay himself on the name of God,, Isa. l. 10. It is most seasonable

to encourage the soul to acts of faith, and to reflect upon the

absolute promises, rather than conditional. The absolute promises were

intended by God as attractives and encouragements to such distressed

souls. There is a time when the soul is apt to slumber, and to be

surprised with a careless security; then it is good to awaken it by a

serious trial. To a loose, carnal spirit, an absolute promise is as

poison; to a dejected spirit, as cheering wine. When the soul lieth

under fear and sense of guilt, it is unable to judge, therefore

examination doth but increase the trouble. But again, when the heart is

drowsy and careless, trial is most in season; and it is best to reflect

upon the conditional promises, that we may look after the

qualifications expressed in them ere we take comfort. When David was

under hatches, he laboured to maintain faith, and outbrave

discouragements: Ps. iii. 2, the enemies said, `Now there is no help

for him in his God., He hath fallen scandalously, and that psalm was

penned upon occasion of Absalom,s rebellion, which was ordered by way

of correction of David,s sin; and this made them vaunt, Now God is his

enemy. Now David doth not mention the sin, but awakeneth his trust; in

the very face of the temptation he maintaineth his confidence: `But

thou art my shield, my glory, and the lifter up of my head,, &c., ver.

3. And elsewhere he professeth that this was his general practice: Ps.

lvi. 3, `At what time I am afraid, I will put my trust in thee., In

times of discouragement, and when terror was likely to grow upon his

spirit, he would look after arguments and supports of trust and

dependence. So, on the contrary, when the heart groweth rusty and

secure, it is good to use Nazianzen,s policy, when his heart began to

be corrupted with ease and pleasure, [193] Tois Threnois sungi'gnomai,

saith he, I use to read the Lamentations of Jeremiah, or to inure his

mind to matter sad and lamentable. In all spiritual cases it is good to

deal prudently, lest we put ourselves into the hands of our enemies,

and further the devices of Satan.

4. Your great care must be to be humbly thankful; thankful, be cause

all is from God. It is a vain spirit that is proud of what is borrowed,

or glorieth because he is more in debt than others: 1 Cor. iv. 7, `Who

made thee differ? and what hast thou which thou hast not received? 7

Whatever we find upon a search, it must not be ascribed to free-will,

but to free grace: `He giveth will and deed according to his pleasure,,

Phil. ii. 13. Free-will establisheth merit; free grace checketh it. The

sun is not beholden, because we borrow light from it, or the fountain

because we draw water. We may all say, as David, `Of thine own have we

given thee;, Lord, this is thy bounty. Then humble we must be, because

as every good work cometh from God,s Spirit, so it passeth through thy

heart, and there it is defiled; partus sequitur ventrem. Our good works

have more of the mother in them than the father; and so `our

righteousnesses, become `dung,, Phil. iii. 8, and `filthy rags,, Isa.

lxiv. 6. Thus, lest pride taint the spirit by the sight of our graces,

it is good to make distinct and actual reflections on God,s bounty and

our own vileness.

Obs. 3. From that when he offered Isaac. Isaac is counted offered,

because he was so in Abraham,s purpose. The note is, that serious

purposes of obedience are accepted for obedience. God hath given in

pardon upon a purpose of returning: Ps. xxxii. 5. `I said I would

confess, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin., Only remember they

must be such purposes as are like Abraham,s. (1.) Serious and resolved,

for he prepared himself to the performance; not vain purposes to betray

present duties, when men hope to do that to-morrow which they should do

to-day; these are vanishing and flitting motions which God taketh

notice of: Ps. xliv. 21, `God knoweth the secrets of the hearts,, and

that such delays are but modest denials, or rather deceitful offers, to

put off the clamour and importunity of conscience. Nothing more usual

than such purposes for the future to justify present neglects. God will

search it out: Abraham was ready. (2.) They must be such as end in

action, unless in the case of allowable hindrances. When is that?

(1st.) When we are hindered, as Abraham was, from heaven; he, by divine

command; we, by providence: 1 Kings viii. 18, `Whereas it was in thine

heart to build an house unto my name, thou didst well in that it was in

thine heart., When mere providence diverteth us from holy intentions,

God accepteth of the will. (2d.) By invincible weakness: Rom. vii. 18,

`To will is present with me; but to perform that which is good, I find

not., The apostle could not, katerga'zethai, come up to the rate of his

purposes; in such a case God looketh to what is in the heart. Well,

then--(1.) It serveth for comfort to the people of God, who, because

they do not perform duty as they would, are much discouraged. God

taketh no tice of the purpose, and judgeth of you, as physicians do of

their patients, not by their eating, but their appetite. Purposes and

desires are works of God,s own stirring up, the free native offering

and motions of grace. Practices may be overruled, but such earnest

purposes as make you do what you can are usually serious and genuine.

The children of God, that cannot justify their practices, plead the

inward motions and desires of their hearts: John xxi. 17, `Thou knowest

all things, and thou knowest that I love thee;, Neh. i. 11, `Desire to

fear thy name,, &c. (2.) It is for advice to us to be careful of our

purposes. Many would be more wicked, were they not bound up. [194] God

takes notice of what is in their hearts: Mat. v. 28, `He that looketh

upon a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her in his

heart., So also Seneca, Incesta est et sine stupro quae stuprum

cupit--the purpose maketh guilty, though the act be restrained. God

took notice of the king of Babylon,s purposes and intentions: Isa. x.

7, `It is in his heart to destroy, and cut off nations not a few.,

Motions and inclinations should be watched over. (3.) It showeth God,s

readiness to receive returning sinners; he met his son `while he was

yet a great way off,, Luke xv. As soon as the will layeth down the

weapons of defiance, and moveth towards God, the Lord runneth to

embrace and fall upon the neck of such a poor soul, that he may satisfy

it with some early comforts. So Isa. lxv. 24, `Before they call, I will

answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear,, Acts of grace do

anticipate and often prevent acts of duty. `Turn me,, saith Ephraim,

and then `a dear and pleasant son,, Jer. xxxi. 18, with ver. 20. As

soon as you set your faces towards God, he runneth towards you. (4.) It

showeth how we should entertain the purposes and promises of God; look

upon them in the promise with such a certainty as if they were actually

accomplished: Rev. xiv. 8, `Babylon is fallen, is fallen., God can read

duty in the purpose: we have much more cause to read accomplishment in

the promise. `Hath he said, and shall he not do it? hath he spoken, and

shall he not make it good?, Num. xxiii. 19. His will is not changeable

as ours, neither is his power restrained.

Obs. 4. From that offered Isaac upon the altar. He bringeth this as the

great argument of the truth of Abraham,s faith. It is not for faith to

produce every action, unless it produce such actions as Abraham,s. Such

as will engage you to self-denial are troublesome to the flesh. David

scorned such service as cost nothing. There where we must deny our own

reason, affections, interest, that is an action fit to try a believer.

Let us see what is observable in this action of Abraham, that we may go

and do likewise. (1.) Observe the greatness of the temptation. It was

to offer his own son, the son of his love, his only son, a son longed

for, and obtained when `his body was dead,, and `Sarah,s womb dead;,

nay, `the son of the promise., Had he been to contend only with natural

affection, it had been much--descensive love is always vehement; but

for love to Isaac there were special endearing reasons and arguments.

But Abraham was not only to conflict with natural affection, but

reason; not only with reason, but faith. He was, as it were, to execute

all his hopes; and all this was to be done by himself; with his own

hand he was at one stroke to cut off all his comforts; the execution of

such a sentence was as harsh and bitter to flesh and blood as to be his

own executioner. Oh! go and shame yourselves without, you that can so

little deny yourselves for God, that attempt duties only when they are

easy and obvious, never care to recover them out of the hands of

difficulty and inconvenience. Public duties, if well done, are usually

against carnal interests, private duties against carnal affections. Can

you give up all that is near and dear to you? Can you offer up your

Isaac? your ease and pleasure for private duties? your interests for

public? Every action is not a trial of faith, but such as engageth to

self-denial. (2.) Consider the readiness of his obedience. As Abraham

is the pattern of believing, so of obeying. He received the promises as

a figure of our faith; he offered up his son as a figure of our

obedience, Heb. xi. 17. (1st.) He obeyed readily and willingly: Gen.

xxii. 3, `Abraham rose early in the morning., In such a service some

would have delayed all the time they could, but he is up early. Usually

we straiten duty rather than straiten ourselves; we are not about that

work early. (2d.) Resolutely; he concealeth it from his wife, servants,

from Isaac himself, that so he might not be diverted from his pious

purpose. Oh! who is now so wise to order the circumstances of a duty

that he may not be hindered in it? (3d.) He denied carnal reason. In

difficult cases we seek to elude the command, dispute how we shall

shift it off, not how we shall obey it. If we had been put upon such a

trial, we would question the vision, or seek some other meaning;

perhaps offer the image of Isaac, or some youngling of the flock, and

call it Isaac; as now we often pervert a command by distinctions, and

invent shifts to cheat our souls into a neglect of duty; as the

heathens, when their gods called for phota, a man, they offered phota,

a candle; or as Hercules offered up a painted man instead of a living.

But Abraham doth not so, though he had a fair occasion, for he was

divided between believing the promise and obeying the command. God

tried him in his faith: his faith was to conflict with his natural

reason as well as his obedience with his natural affection. But `he

accounted that God was able to raise him from the dead,, Heb. xi. 19,

and he reconcileth the commandment with the promise. How easily could

we have slipped out at this door, and disobey, out of pretences and

reasons of religion. But Abraham offered Isaac.

Ver. 22. Seest thou how his faith wrought with his works, and by works

was faith made perfect?

Having alleged the instance, he now urgeth it by an apostrophe to the

boasting hypocrite, who nourished an impure life under the pretence of

faith.

Seest thou, blepeis.--He seeketh to awaken the secure carnalist by

urging this instance upon his conscience: `Seest thou?, that is, is it

not clear? or without an interrogation, `Thou seest.,

How his faith wrought with his works.--Many senses are given of this

phrase. The Papists urge it to prove that faith needeth the concurrence

of works in the matter of justification, as if works and faith were

joint causes; but then the apostle would have said, that works wrought

with his faith, and not faith with his works. Among the orthodox it is

expounded with some difference. That sense which I prefer is, that his

faith rested not in a naked, bare profession, but was operative; it had

efficacy and influence upon his works, co-working with all other

graces; it doth not only exert and put forth itself in acts of

believing, but also in working.

And by works was faith made perfect.--This clause also hath been vexed

into several senses. The Papists gather hence that in the work of

justification faith receiveth its worth, value, and perfection from

works--a conceit prejudicial to the freeness of God,s love, contrary to

the constant doctrine of the scriptures; for faith rather giveth a

value to works than works to faith, Rom. xiv. 23; Heb. xi. 4-6; and

works are so far from being chief, and the more perfect cause of

justification, that they are not respected there at all. This sense

being justly disproved, divers others are given. As (1.) `Made

perfect,, that is, say some, `made known and discovered;, [195] as

God,s strength is said to be `perfected in our weakness,, 2 Cor. xii.

9. None will be so mad as to say that our strength doth add anything to

the power of God, that is incapable of increase and decrease, and hath

no need to borrow aught from the weakness of man. It is `made perfect,,

because it hath the better advantage of discovery, and doth more

singularly put forth and show itself; so faith is made perfect, that

is, more fully known and apparent. And the reason of the expression

is--(1st.) Because excelling things, whiles kept private, suffer a kind

of imperfection; or (2d.) Because it is an argument faith is come to

some maturity and perfection of growth, not only living, but lively,

when it can produce its proper and necessary operations; this sense is

probable. But (2.) Others understand it thus: that faith or profession

is not full and complete till works be joined with it, faith and works

being the two essential parts which make up a believer; which

interpretation suiteth well enough with the scope of the apostle. (3.)

The exposition which I take to be most simple and suitable is, that

faith co-working with obedience is made perfect, that is, bettered and

improved; as the inward vigour of the spirits is increased by motion

and exercise: and so in short (as Dr Jackson explaineth it [196] ),

works do not perfect faith by communication and imputation [197] of

their perfection, to it, but by stirring, exercising, and intending the

natural vigour of it.

From this verse thus opened observe:--

Obs. 1. There is an influence of faith upon all a Christian,s actings,

Heb. xi. Faith is made the grand principle; acts are there spoken of,

which do more formally belong to other graces. But we say the general

won the day, though the private soldiers did worthily in the high

places of the field, because it was under his conduct and direction. So

because all other graces inarch, and are brought up in their order, to

fight under the conduct of faith, the honour of the day and duty is

devolved upon it. The influence of faith is great into all the offices

of the heavenly life. (1.) Because it hath the advantage of a sweet

principle: `It worketh by love,, Gal. v. 6. It represents the love of

God, and then maketh use of the sweetness of it by way of argument: it

urgeth by such melting entreaties, that the believer cannot say nay.

Paul intimateth the argument of faith, Gal. ii. 20, `I live by faith in

the Son of God, who loved, and gave himself for me., When the soul is

backward, faith saith, Christ loved you, and gave himself up for you.

He was not thus backward in the work of salvation; as the soldier said

to Augustus when he refused his petition--I did not serve you so at the

battle of Actium. (2.) It presents strong encouragements; it seeth

assistance in the power of God, acceptance in the grace of God, reward

in the bounty of God. When you are weakened with doubtings and

discouragements, faith saith, Do your endeavour, and God will accept

you. When Christ came to feast with his spouse he saith, Cant. v. 1, `I

will eat my honeycomb with my honey., Though it were mixed with wax,

and embased with weakness, Christ will accept it. When jealousy maketh

the heart faint, and the hands feeble, lest we should drive on heavily,

faith showeth the soul `an angel that standeth at the altar with sweet

incense,, Rev. viii. 3, 4. Duty 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. Again, are

you discouraged with weakness? faith will reply, Thou art weak, but God

will enable thee. It is an advantage, not a discouragement, to be weak

in ourselves, that we may be `strong in the Lord, and in the power of

his might,, Eph. vi. 10. When the bucket is empty, it can be the better

filled out of the ocean. Paul saith, 2 Cor. xii. 10, `When I am weak,

then am I strong., There is no heart so dead but God can quicken it,

and he is willing. It is said, 1 Chron. xv. 26, `God helped the

Levites,, when the work was bodily; and we are less apt to be

indisposed for bodily labour. God helped them by discharging their

lassitudes; so certainly he will much more give inward strength, more

love, joy, hope, which are the strength of the soul, Neh. viii. 10.

Again, if the heart be lazy and backward, or stick at ease and

pleasure, faith can present the glory of the reward, the pleasures at

God,s right hand, &c. (3.) It breaketh the force of opposite

propensions; if the world standeth in the way of duty, `faith

overcometh the world,, 1 John v. 4; partly by bringing Christ into the

combat, partly by spiritual replies and arguments. Reason telleth us we

must be for ourselves; faith telleth us we must be for God. Reason

saith, If I take this course, I shall undo myself; faith, by looking

within the veil, seeth it is the only way to save all, 2 Cor. iv.

15-17. Reason presenteth the treasures of Egypt, and faith the

recompense of reward. From hence are those bickerings and counterbuffs

which a believer feeleth sometimes within himself.

Well, then, out of all this we may infer--(1.) That we had need get

faith; there is as great a necessity of faith as of life; it is the

life of our lives and the soul of our souls; the primum mobile, the

first pin, that moveth all the wheels of obedience, like the blood and

spirits which run through the whole body. There is by the ordination of

God as great a necessity of faith as of Christ: what good will a deep

well do us without a bucket? He that hath a mind to work, would not be

without his tools; and who would be without faith that maketh

conscience of duty? (2.) Act it in all your works; no works are good

till faith work with them, they are not acceptable, nor half so kindly

Heb. xi. 4, `By faith Abel offered, plei'ona thusi'an (not only a

better sacrifice, as we render it, but) `more sacrifice,, as the word

will bear. Faith is the best support you can have; carnal ends make us

mangle duty, doubts weaken us in duty.

Obs. 2. That faith is bettered and made more perfect by acting. Neglect

of our graces is the ground of their decrease and decay; wells are the

sweeter for draining. [198] Christians get nothing by dead and useless

habits. Talents hid in a napkin gather rust; the noblest faculties are

embased when not improved in exercise. The apostle wisheth Timothy

anazopurein, to `excite and enliven his gifts,, 2 Tim. i. 6. It is an

allusion to the fire of the temple, which was always to be kept

burning. Well, then, be much in duty, draw out the acts of your graces;

many live, but are not lively; decays do insensibly make way for

deadness.

Ver. 23. And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed

God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness; and he was called the

friend of God.

To strengthen the former argument from the example of Abraham, he

produceth a testimony of scripture to prove that Abraham had true

faith, and that Abraham was truly justified.

And the scripture was fulfilled.--You will say, How can this be, since

that saying was spoken of Abraham long before? Compare Gen. xv. 6 with

Gen. xxii.; and the apostle Paul saith that scripture was fulfilled in

him `while he was yet in his uncircumcision., Rom. iv. 10, which was

before Isaac,s birth, certainly before his being offered. Luther [199]

upon this ground rejecteth this epistle with some incivility of

expression. The Papists seek to reconcile the matter thus: That though

faith were imputed to Abraham for righteousness before he offered

Isaac, yet our apostle would prove that faith was not enough to justify

him, but there needed also works; for, say they, his righteousness was

not complete and full till it was made perfect by the accession of

works. And the Socinians [200] pipe after the same tune and note, but

without ground and warrant; for Paul quoteth the very same words for

justification without works, Rom. iv. 2, 3, and proveth that he had

such a justification as made him completely happy and blessed, ver.

6-8. And if James should go about to superinduce the righteousness of

works, he would be directly contrary both to Moses and Paul. The words

of Moses can no way bear that sense, who plainly averreth faith to be

imputed to him for righteousness. Briefly, then, for opening the place,

you must note, that a scripture is said to be fulfilled in several

senses: sometimes when the main scope of the place is urged; at other

times when a like case falleth out, and so a scripture is quoted, and

said to be fulfilled, not by way of argument, but allusion; sensu

transumptivo, as divines [201] speak; and they give a note whereby the

allusive sense may be distinguished from that which is chief and

proper. When a text is quoted properly, it is said, `that it might be

fulfilled,, as noting the aim and scope of the place. When it is quoted

by allusion, or to suit it with a parallel instance, it is said, `then

it was fulfilled,, as implying that such a like case fell out. So here,

`Then was the scripture fulfilled;, that is, upon this instance and

experience of his faith it might be again said that faith was imputed

to him for righteousness; and we may rather own this exposition,

because this sacrifice of his son, Gen. xxii., was a greater

manifestation and discovery of his faith than that sacrifice mentioned

Gen. xv., when this honour was first put upon him. And things are said

to be fulfilled when they are most clearly manifested; as in that known

place of Acts xiii. 32, 33, where those words, `Thou art my Son; this

day have I begotten thee,, are said to be fulfilled at Christ,s

resurrection, because then he `showed himself to be the Son of God.,

Rom. i. 4. So here; this being the evident discovery of Abraham,s

faith, it appeared how truly it was said of him that `he believed, and

it was imputed to him for righteousness., By that action he declared he

had a true justifying faith, and therefore [202] the Lord saith after

this trial, `Now I know that thou fearest me,, Gen. xxii. 12. And I

suppose that he doth the rather use this expression to prevent an

objection that might be drawn from Genesis or the doctrine of Paul; as

also intimating that his doctrine tended not to press men to renounce

the righteousness of faith, but to get their interest therein cleared,

the testimony of Abraham,s righteousness being so every way compliant

with the doctrine proposed.

Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.--The

original meaning of that phrase, `it was counted to him for

righteousness,, is only to show that the thing was approved and

accepted by God: and so it is often used in the Old Testament; as

Phinehas, zeal is said to be `counted in him for righteousness:, Ps.

cvi. 30, 31, `He stood up and executed judgment; and that was counted

unto him for righteousness unto all generations for evermore., And

therefore in this phrase the scripture doth not declare what is the

matter of our justification, but only what value the Lord is pleased to

put upon acts of faith or obedience, when they are performed in the

face of difficulty and discouragement. It is true, it is quoted by the

apostle to prove the righteousness which is of faith, without that of

works: Rom. iv. 3, `What saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and

it was counted to him for righteousness., But I suppose the .apostle

doth not quote the rigour of the expression, as if he would infer that

faith is the matter of our righteousness, but only that the first

testimony and solemn approbation which Abraham had from God was because

of his faith. When scriptural expressions are rigorously urged, without

considering their first and constant use, no wonder that mistakes and

controversies do arise. For those great disputes about the matter of

justification, I would not intermeddle; let it suffice to note, that

the general current of Paul,s epistles [203] carrieth it for the

righteousness of Christ, which being imputed to us, maketh us just and

acceptable before God; and this righteousness we receive by faith. So

that faith justifieth 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; and so whether you

say it justifieth as an instrument, a sole-working instrument, or as an

ordinance, or relative action, required on our parts, all is to the

same issue and purpose: to contend about mere words and bare forms of

speech is to be too precise and critical.

And he was called the friend of God.--The apostle saith `he was

called;, that is, he was; as Isa. xlviii. 8, `Thou wast called a

transgressor from the womb;, that is, thou wast a transgressor. So in

the New Testament: 1 John iii. 1, `To be called the sons of God;, that

is, to be the sons of God. Or it alludeth to the solemn appellation

wherewith Abraham is invested in scripture; as Isa. xli. 8, `Thou

Israel are the seed of Abraham my friend., So 2 Chron. xx. 7, `Thou art

our God, and thou gavest this land to the seed of Abraham thy friend,,

[204] And this title was given to Abraham because of his frequent

communion with God--he had often visions; and because of his frequent

covenanting with God--a great condescension, such as the kings of the

earth use only to their equals and friends: and therefore, in the

places where this title is given to Abraham, there is some respect to

the covenant; and here it is said to be given to him upon that

testimony of his faith and obedience in offering Isaac, when the

covenant was solemnly renewed and confirmed to him by oath.

Obs. 1. Works ratify the Spirit,s witness. The apostle saith, `Then it

was fulfilled;, that is, seen that Abraham was a believer indeed,

according to the testimony of God. The Spirit assureth us sometimes by

expressions, speaking to us by some inward whisper and voice; sometimes

by impressions, implanting gracious dispositions, as it were writing

his mind to us. It is well when both are sensible, and with the witness

of the Spirit we have that of water, 1 John v. 8. To look after works

is the best way to prevent delusion. Here is no deceit, as in flashy

joys. Fanatic spirits are often deceived by sudden flashes of comfort.

Works, being a more sensible and constant pledge of the Spirit, beget a

more solid joy: 1 John iii. 29, `Hereby we know we are of the truth,

and shall assure our hearts before him;, that is, by real acts of love

and charity. The way of immediate revelation is more flitting and

inconstant; such actings of the Spirit being like those outward motions

that came upon Samson--`the Spirit came upon him at times;, and so upon

every withdrawment new scruples and doubts do arise. But the trial by

grace is most constant and durable, it being a continual real pledge of

God,s love to us. Flashes of comfort are only sweet and delightful

while felt; but it is said of grace, `the seed abideth in him,, 1 John

iii. 8, and `the anointing, en umin me'nei, abideth in you,, 1 John ii.

7. This is a standing glory, and the continual repast of the soul;

whereas those ravishings are like delicacies which God tendereth to his

people in the times of festivity and magnificence. Well, then,

learn--(1.) That good works are not a doubtful and litigious evidence.

Men of dark spirits and great fancy will be always raising scruples;

but the fault is in the persons, not the evidence. (2.) Learn to

approve yourselves to God with all good conscience in times of trial;

this will ratify and make good those imperfect whispers and mutterings

in your souls concerning your interest in Christ. Do as Abraham did:

upon a call he forsook his country; though he were childless, he

believed the promise of a numerous issue; when God tempted him, he

offered Isaac. When God trieth your faith or obedience with some

difficulty, then is the special time to gain assurance by being found

faithful.

Obs. 2. Believers are God,s friends. This was not Abraham,s title

alone, but the title of all the righteous. Thus Christ saith, John xi.

11, `Our friend Lazarus sleepeth., And more expressly, John xv. 15,

`Henceforth I call you not servants, but friends., Now they are friends

to God--(1.) Because they are perfectly reconciled to him in Christ: we

were enemies by nature; but God would not only pardon us, but receive

us into friendship, Col. i. 21. Absalom was pardoned, but he `could not

see the king,s face., In other breaches, when the wound is healed, the

scar remaineth; but now we are not only restored, and brought into an

estate of amity, but advanced to higher principles. God doth not only

spare converts, but delight in them. Periissemus nisi periissemus--we

had been lost if we had not been lost; the fall made way for the more

glorious restoration; as a broken bone, when it is well set, is

strongest in the crack. (2.) All dispensations and duties that pass

between them are passed in a friendly way: As (1st.) Communication of

goods. Plutarch,s reasoning is good: Ta` ton philon pa'na koina`,

friends have all things in common; but God is our friend, and therefore

we cannot want--a rare speech from a heathen. In the covenanted is

ours, and we are his, Jer. xxxi. 33, and xxxii. 38, 39; Zech. xiii. 9.

He maketh over himself to us, quantus quantus est, as great as he is;

and so by an entire resignation we are given up to him. The covenant is

like a conjugal contract, and may be illustrated by that of the

prophet, Hosea iii. 3, `Thou shalt be for me, and I will be for thee.,

God maketh over himself and all his power and mercy to us, so that no

dispensation cometh to us but in the way of a blessing; if it be so

common a mercy as rain, `the rain shall be a rain of blessing,, Ezek.

xxxiv. 26; so we give up ourselves to God, even to the lowest interest

and enjoyment: `Upon the horse-bells there shall be written, Holiness

to the Lord,, Zech. xiv. 20; all is consecrated. (2d.) Communication of

secrets. So our Lord urgeth this relation: John xv. 15, `Henceforth I

call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doth:

but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard I have

made known to you., Servants are only acquainted with what concerneth

their duty and work; [205] the master commandeth, but doth not tell

them the reason of the command. But now Christ had dealt more socially

and sweetly with the apostles; he had opened all the secrets of the

Father concerning his own resurrection, mission of the Holy Ghost, the

calling of Gentiles, last judgment, eternal life, &c. And so shall you

that lie in Christ,s bosom know his secrets: Gen. xviii. 17, `Shall I

hide from Abraham the thing which I do?, He will acquaint you with

everything that concerneth your salvation and peace. So, on the other

side, do believers open their secrets to God: Eph. iii. 12; Heb. x. 19,

they `come with boldness to the throne of grace;, the word is, meta`

parresi'as, with liberty of speech; or, as it more strictly signifieth,

liberty to speak all our mind. We may use some freedom with God, and

acquaint him with all our griefs, and all our fears, and all our wants,

and all our desires, as a friend would pour out his heart into the

bosom of another friend; as it is said, Exod. xxxiii. 11, `The Lord

spake to Moses face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend., (3d.)

Conformity and correspondency of will and affections. True friendship

is built upon likeness and consent of wills: [206] God and the soul

willeth the same thing--holiness as the means, and God,s glory as the

end: John xv. 14, `Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command

you;, to do otherwise is but false, glavering affection. It is the

commendation of Ephesus, Rev. ii. 6, `Thou hatest the deeds of the

Nicolaitans, which I also hate., No friendship like that where we love

and hate the same things, to hate what God hateth, and love what God

loveth. See Prov. viii. 13; so see Ps. cxxxix. 21. (4th.) By mutual

delight and complacency; they delight in God, and God in them: Isa.

lxii. 4, `The Lord delighteth in thee,, in their persons, their graces,

their duties; so do they delight in God, in their addresses to him, in

his fellowship and presence , they cannot brook any strangeness and

distance; they cannot let a day pass, or a duty pass, without some

communion and intercourse with God. It is said of the hypocrites, Job

xxvii. 10, that `they will not delight themselves in God., Formal

duties are a burden, `What a weariness is it,, Mal. i. 13, though it

were a sickly lamb. The prodigal thought it best to be out of the

father,s eye, best in a far country, Luke xv.; but it is their delight

to be with Christ; his work is sweet to them, his statutes their songs,

Ps. cxix. 54; duties come from them freely, as graces do from God; he

`rejoiceth over them to do them good;, and they can say, every one of

them, `How do I delight in thy law!, (5th.) By the special favour and

respect God beareth them. Others have but common mercies, they saving;

they have `hidden manna,, joys which others cannot conceive, Rev. ii.

17. Others are brought into the palace, Ps. xlv. 15, but they into the

chambers of the great King, Cant. i. 4; they have closet mercies, a

sweet fellowship with God in all their ways; others have the letter,

they the power; others have the work of an ordinance, they the comfort:

Cant. v. 1, `Eat, O friends,, &c. Well, then--(1.) Here is comfort to

the righteous, to those that have found any friend-like affection in

themselves towards God, any care to please him. God is your friend; you

were enemies, but you are made near through Christ. God delighteth in

your persons, in your prayers, in your graces, your outward welfare. It

is a great honour to be the king,s friend; you are favourites of

heaven! Oh! this is your comfort that delight in his presence, that

walk in his ways as much as you can, though not as much as you should.

(2.) Here is caution to you; your sins go nearest to God,s heart: `It

was my familiar friend,, Ps. lv. 12. It was sad to Christ to be

betrayed by his own disciples; it is a like grief to his Spirit when

his laws are made void by his own friends: 2 Sam. xvi. 17, `Is this thy

kindness to thy friend?, It was David,s aggravation: Ps. xli. 9, `Mine

own familiar friend, in whom I trusted., Unexpected injuries surprise

us with the more grief. Oh! walk carefully, watchfully!

Ver. 24. You see then how by works a man is justified, and not by faith

only.

You see then.--It is either a consectary out of the whole discourse, or

out of the particular example of Abraham; he alludeth to Paul,s manner

of reasoning: Rom. iii. 28, `Therefore we conclude that a man is

justified by faith without the deeds of the law;, and probably this

discourse is intended to correct the abuse of that doctrine.

How by works; that is, by the parts and offices of the holy life.

A man is justified; that is, acquitted from hypocrisy; for he is said

to be justified, in the phrase of our apostle, whose faith appeareth to

be good and right, or who is found just and righteous; as Christ is

said to be `manifested in the flesh, but justified in the Spirit,, 1

Tim. iii. 16; that is, approved to be God.

And not by faith only.--Not by a bare naked profession, or a dead vain

faith, such as consisteth in a mere assent or empty speculation, which

is so far from justifying that it is not properly faith.

The main work in the discussion of this verse is to reconcile James

with Paul. The conclusions seem directly opposite. See Rom. iii. 28;

Gal. ii. 16. Paul also bringeth the instance of Abraham against

justification by works. Much ado there hath been to reconcile this

seeming difference. Some upon this ground deny the authority of the

epistle; so Luther, and many of the Lutherans at first. Camerarius

[207] speaketh boldly and rashly, as if heat of contention had obtruded

the apostle upon the contrary extreme and error; but this is to cut the

knot, not to untie it. The apostles, acted by the same Spirit of truth,

could not deliver contrary assertions; and though men usually out of

the extreme hatred of one error embrace another, yet it cannot be

imagined, without blasphemy, of those who were guided by an infallible

assistance. They show more reverence to the scriptures who seek to

reconcile both places than to deny the authority of one. Many ways are

propounded; I shall briefly examine them, that with good advice and

evidence we may pitch upon the best.

1. The Papists [208] say that Paul speaketh of the first justification,

by which a man, if unjust, is made just; and that by works he

understandeth works done without faith and grace, by the sole power and

force of free-will. But James speaketh of the second justification,

whereby of just he is made more just; and by works he understandeth

such as are performed in faith, and by the help of divine grace. To

this I answer--;(1.) That it confoundeth justification with

sanctification. (2.) That the distinction is false, and hath no ground

in scripture. We can merit nothing after we are in a good estate, and

are saved by grace all our lives: Rom. i. 17, `the righteousness of God

is revealed from faith to faith, for the just shall live by faith., If

the righteousness whereby a sinner is justified be wholly absolved by

faith, there is no place for works at all. But the apostle saith,

throughout the whole life it is revealed from faith to faith; besides,

the apostle Paul excludeth all works, even those done by grace. It is

true, this error is less than that of the Pelagians, who said that by

natural abilities the law might be kept to justification. However, it

is not enough to ascribe justificatory works to the grace of God. So

did the Pharisee: Luke xviii. 11, 12, `God, I thank thee,, not myself.

Yet he went not away justified. It is ill to associate nature with

grace, and to make man a coadjutor in that in which God will have the

sole glory. (3.) It is little less than blasphemy to say, We are more

just by our own works than by the merits of Christ received by faith;

[209] for to that justification, whereby a man is made more just, they

admit works. (4.) The phrase of being more just suiteth not with the

scope of the apostle, who doth not show how our righteousness is

increased, but who hath an interest in it. Neither will the adversaries

grant that those against whom the apostle disputeth had a first and

real righteousness; and beside, it is contradicted by the example of

Rahab, who, according to their explication, cannot be said to be

justified in their second way of justification, and yet in our

apostle,s sense she is justified by works; and therefore the Popish

gloss will not remove the seeming contrariety between the apostles.

2. The Arminians and Socinians go another way to work; and that they

may deceive with the fairer pretence, seem to ascribe all to grace, and

to condemn the merit of all sorts of works, because poor, weak, and

imperfect; but they make new obedience the instrument of justification,

and say that the free grace of God is only seen in the acceptation of

our imperfect obedience. So doth Socinus [210] and others. [211] And

the way of reconciliation which they propose between the apostles is

this: Paulus cum negat nos ex operibus justificari, nomine operum

perfectam per totam vitam legis divinae observationem intelligit, nec

aliud quidquam dicere vult, nisi nos ex merito ipsorum operum nequaquam

justificari coram Deo, non autem ad nos coram ipso justificandos nulla

opera nostra requiri; sunt enim opera, id est obedientia quam Cliristo

praestamus, licet nec efficiens, nec meritoria, tamen causa sine qua

non justificationis coram Deo atque aeternae salutis. That Paul, when

he denieth justification by works, understandeth by works perfect

obedience, such as the law required; and James only new obedience,

which is the condition, without which we are not justified. So Socinus,

2 Synops. Justif., p. 17, and herein he is generally followed by the

men of his own school. [212] But to this I reply--(1.) That the apostle

Paul doth not only exclude the exact obedience of the law, but the

sincere obedience of the gospel, all kind of works from the business of

justification, as appeareth by the frequent disjunction or opposition

of faith and works throughout the scriptures. Take these for a

taste:--Eph. ii. 8, 9, `By grace ye are saved through faith, and that

not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man

should boast., So Rom. xi. 6, `If by grace, then it is no more of

works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it

is no more of grace; otherwise work is no more work., The two ways of

grace and works are incompatible. A mixed and patched way of works and

grace together will never be accepted of God. The new cloth sewed on

upon the old confidence makes the rent the worser. It was the error of

those against whom Paul dealeth in his epistles to rest half upon

Christ and half upon works; and therefore is he so zealous everywhere

in this dispute: Gal. v. 4, `Christ is become of none effect unto you,

whosoever are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace., For they

did go about to mix both the covenants, and so wholly destroyed their

own interest in that of grace. (2.) It is a matter of dangerous

consequence to set up works, under what pretence soever, as the matter

or condition of our justification before God. It robbeth God of his

glory, and weakeneth the comfort of the creature. God,s glory

suffereth, because, as far as we ascribe to ourselves, so much do we

take off from God. Now when we make our own obedience the matter or

condition of our righteousness, we glory in ourselves, contrary to

that, Rom. iv. 2, 3, and detract from free grace, by which alone we are

justified, Rom. iii. 24, and the creature suffereth loss of comfort

when his righteousness before God is built upon so frail a foundation

as his own obedience. The examples of the children of God, who were

always at a loss in themselves, show how dangerous it is to stand upon

our own bottom. Take a few places: Job ix. 2, 3, `How shall a man be

just with God? If he will contend with him, he can not answer him one

of a thousand., So ver. 20, `If I justify myself, my own mouth shall

condemn me. If I say, I am perfect; it shall also prove me perverse.,

So ver. 30, 31, `If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands

never so clean, yet thou shalt plunge me in a ditch; my own clothes

shall abhor me., So also David showeth that he was never able to enter

upon this plea, to justify himself by his own obedience, Ps. cxliii. 3,

and cxxx. 3. And in the New Testament abundantly do the saints disown

their obedience and righteousness, as not daring to trust it, yea,

their new obedience upon gospel terms: 1 Cor. iv. 4, `I know nothing by

myself, yet am I not hereby justified., He did what he was able, was

conscious to himself of no crime and unfaithfulness in his ministry and

dispensation, yet all this will not justify. So Phil. iii. 9, `Oh! that

I might be found in him, not having my own righteousness,, &c. He durst

not trust the inquiry and search of justice with any act or holiness of

his own.

Briefly to clear this point more fully, let me lay down a few

propositions.

(1.) Whosoever would be accepted with God must be righteous: Hab. i.

13, `Thou art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity., God cannot give a

sinner, as a sinner, a good look. (2.) Every righteousness will not

serve the turn: it must be such as will endure the pure eyes of his

glory. Hence those phrases, `justified in thy sight,, Ps. cxliii. 2;

Rom. iii. 20; and `glorying before God., Rom. iv. 2; so Gal. iii. 11 ,

&c. (3.) Such a righteousness can be found in no man. Our obedience is

a covering that is too short: Job xv. 14, `What is man, that he should

be clean? and he that is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?,

So 1 Sam. vi. 20, `Who can stand before this holy God?, The least

defect leaveth us to the challenge of the law and the plea of justice.

(4.) This righteousness is only to be had in Christ; there is no other

name given under him; [213] there indeed it is to be found; therefore

he is called, `The Lord our righteousness,, Jer. xxiii. 6, and he is

`made to us righteousness,, 1 Cor. i. 30. Therefore we are bidden `to

seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness,, Mat. vi. 33. We must

seek God,s righteousness if we would enter into God,s kingdom. (5.)

This righteousness is made ours by faith: ours it must be, as in the

first proposition, and ours it is only by faith: Rom. i. 17, `The

righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith., From first to

last the benefit of Christ,s righteousness is received by faith; it is

the fittest and most self-denying grace; it is the grace that beginneth

our union with Christ; and when we are made one with Christ, we are

possessed of his righteousness and merit, as our right, for our comfort

and use. So see Rom. iii. 22, and Phil. iii. 9, where the righteousness

of God by faith is opposed to `our own righteousness, which is of the

law;, which intimateth to us that this righteousness is of God, and

that it is made ours by faith. (6.) Those that receive the

righteousness of Christ are also sanctified by him. New obedience is an

inseparable companion of justification: 1 Cor. i. 30, `righteousness

and sanctification;, by virtue of the union we have both: 2 Cor. v. 17,

`Whosoever is in Christ is a new creature., So that obedience is not

the condition of justification, but the evidence; not the condition and

qualification of the new covenant, so much as of the covenanters. Faith

justifieth, and obedience approveth: [214] it must be in the same

subject, though it hath not a voice in the same court.

3. The orthodox, though they differ somewhat in words and phrases, yet

they agree in the same common sense, in reconciling James and Paul.

Thus, while some say Paul disputeth of the cause of justification, and

so excludeth works; James, of the effects of justification, and so

enforceth a presence of them; and others say Paul disputeth how we are

justified, and James how we shall evidence ourselves to be justified;

the one taketh justification for acquittance from sin, the other for

acquittance from hypocrisy; the one for the imputation of

righteousness, the other for the declaration of righteousness. Or as

others, Paul speaketh of the office of faith, James of the quality of

faith; Paul pleadeth for saving faith, James pleadeth against naked

assent; the one speaketh of the justifying of the person, the other of

the faith, &c. All these answers are to the same effect, either

subordinate to one another or differing only in expression, and do very

well suit with the scope of the apostle. You shall see everywhere he

seeketh to disvalue and put a disgrace upon that faith he speaketh of;

he calleth it a vain dead faith, a faith which is alone, &c. And when

he fixeth the scope of the disputation, he saith, `Show me thy faith by

thy works;, where he plainly discovereth what was the matter in

controversy, to wit, the evidencing of their faith. And it is notable,

that when he beginneth to argue, the proposition which he layeth down

is this, that a bare profession of faith without works will not save.

It is true, it is delivered by way of question, ver. 14, `What will it

profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, and hath not works?

Will faith save him?, Or, as it is in the original, will e pi'stis,

will that faith save him? Now such questions are the strongest way of

denial, for they are an appeal to the conscience; and you shall see

that the conclusion is this always, that faith which is alone and

without works, is dead; which plainly showeth what was the to`

zetou'menon, or the thing in question, to wit, the unjustifiableness of

that faith which is without works.

Out of the whole discourse you may observe:--

Obs. 1. That in the scriptures there is sometimes a seeming difference,

but no real contrariety. The to` enantiophane`s, the seeming

difference, is ordered with good advice. God would prevent misprisions

and errors on every side; and the expressions of scripture are ordered

so that one may relieve another. [215] As, for instance, some hold that

Christ had only an imaginary body, and was man but in appearance;

therefore, to show the reality of his human nature, you have that

expression, John i. 14, `The word was made flesh., Others, straining

that expression, held a change of the Godhead into the humanity; to

correct which excess we have another expression, 1 Tim. iii. 16, `God

manifested in the flesh., To a Valentinian, urging that place in

Timothy for Christ,s fantastic and imaginary body, we may oppose that

in John, `The word was made flesh;, to a Cerinthian, pleading for a

change of the Godhead, we may oppose that in Paul, `God manifested,,

&c. So in some places we are bid `to work out our salvation,, Phil. ii.

12, 13; and the whole business of salvation is charged upon us, to

check laziness. In other places the will and deed is altogether

ascribed to God, to prevent self-confidence. Thus Paul, having to deal

with pharisaical justiciaries, proveth invincibly justification by

faith without works; James, having to deal with carnal gospellers,

proveth as strongly that a profession of faith without works is vain.

The scripture hath so poised and contempered all doctrines and

expressions, that it might wisely prevent human mistakes and errors on

every hand, and sentences might not be violently urged apart, but

measured by the proportion of faith.

Obs. 2. That a bare profession of faith is not enough to acquit us from

hypocrisy. Christ would not own them that professed his name but

wrought iniquity, Mat. vii. 21, 22; so also the church should not own

men for their bare profession. In these times we look more at gifts and

abilities of speech than good works, and empty prattle weigheth more

than real charity.

Ver. 25. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works,

when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another

way?

Here he bringeth another instance. But why doth he mention Rahab? (1.)

Because this act of hers is made an effect of faith: Heb. xi. 31, `By

faith Rahab the harlot perished not with them that believed not, when

she had received the spies in peace., It was indeed a great act of

faith for one that had lived among heathens to be persuaded of the

power of the God of Israel, of the right they had to that land; which

faith was wrought in her by divine instinct, upon the report which was

made of God and his works. (2.) Because this instance doth well to be

annexed to the former. They might object that every one could not go as

high as Abraham, the great idea and pattern of all believers; ay! but

the lowest faith must produce works as well as the highest; and

therefore he bringeth Rahab for an in stance of the weakest faith.

(1st.) For her person; she was a woman, a harlot, a heathen, when God

wrought upon her; there being so many disadvantages, it is to be

presumed this was as low an instance as can be brought. (2d.) For the

act itself, it was accompanied with weakness, with a lie, which indeed

is suppressed, or not mentioned, lest it should deface the glory of her

faith. (3d.) Because there might be some doubt of this instance. They

might object that bare profession was accounted faith in Rahab, and she

a harlot. He replieth that in Rahab the doctrine might be made good;

for her faith, how weak soever, yielded some self-denying act or fruit.

But you will say, How is this pertinent to the purpose, to prove that

pretence or profession of faith without works is not enough to acquit

us of hypocrisy? I answer--You must conceive it thus: If she had only

said unto these messengers, I believe the God of heaven and earth hath

given you this whole land for a possession, yet I dare not show you any

kindness in this city, it had been but such a dead barren faith as he

here treateth of; but this belief prevailed so far with her, that she

performed a grateful office to them, though she incurred present

danger, and the tortures which the rage of her citizens would inflict

upon her for harbouring spies. I come now to the words.

Likewise also.--It hath relation to the former instance of Abraham.

Was not Rahab the harlot.--Lyranus thinks that the word hazzonah, for

harlot, was her proper name; others think it only signifieth that she

was a hostess or victualler; so the Chaldee paraphrase rendereth it a

woman that kept a tavern, tt' phdvqyt', gunaika pandokeu'trian; the

Chaldee word being formed out of the Greek, they derive the original

zonah from zun, which signifieth to feed, though others derive it from

zanah, he played the adulterer; and they think it altogether improbable

for a prince of Judah to marry a common harlot. But the article e

po'rne, that harlot, so commonly used in scripture, and because this is

still repeated as a noted circumstance, and the Syriac hath a word that

properly and only signifieth harlot, seem to infer that she was indeed

a woman of a vicious and infamous life , and it is but folly to excuse

that which God would have made known for his own glory. Probably she

might be both a hostess and a harlot too, as many times such are of an

evil fame. She lived from her parents; no mention is made of husband

and children: if her pretence had not been to keep a place of

entertainment, it is not likely that the spies would turn into an open

brothel-house, unless ignorant of it, or by divine providence guided

thither.

Justified by works; that is, approved to be sincere, and honoured by

God before all the congregation; there being a special charge to save

her and her household when all her countrymen were slain, and she being

after joined in marriage with a prince of Israel.

When she had received the messengers, and sent them out another

way.--The story is in the 2d of Joshua. But is not this act

questionable? Is it not treachery? Did she not sin against that love

and faithfulness that she owed to her country? Abulensis thinketh she

had not sinned if she had betrayed the messengers; but vainly, and

against the direct testimony of scripture: she sinned not, because she

had a warrant and particular revelation from God that the land of

Canaan, and so her town, was given to the Israelites, Josh. ii. 9-11,

&c. And being gained to the faith, she was to leave her Gentile

relation, and to be amassed into one body with the people of Israel,

and so bound to promote their interest, as Calvin well observeth. [216]

But you will say, If there be no sin, wherein lieth the excellency of

the action? what is it more than civility, or necessary prudence and

caution, she being thus persuaded? I answer--(1.) There was much faith

in it, in believing what she had heard of God in the wilderness and the

desert places of Arabia, and magnifying his power and ability to

destroy them. Though the people of her city were in great strength and

prosperity, they thought themselves safe within their walls, and were

not sensible of their sins and ensuing dangers; and besides, God having

revealed it to her by some special instinct, she was confident of

future success: Josh. ii. 11, `The Lord your God is God in heaven above

and the earth beneath: I know the Lord hath given you the land., And

so, as Origen observeth, [217] she acknowledgeth what is past,

believeth what is present, and foretelleth what is to come. (2.) There

was obedience in it; for whatever she did here in, she did it out of a

reverence and dread of God, whom she knew to be the author of this war;

and though there was some weakness in the action, yet for the main of

it, it was a duty. (3.) There was self-denial in it; it was an action

that might have been of a very dangerous consequence to her; but to

manifest her fidelity to God she overlooketh the threats and cruelties

of her citizens, [218] the promiscuous events of war, the burning of

her country, which she would never have done, if she had thought a

profession of confidence enough.

The points observable in this verse are many. I shall dispatch them

briefly.

Obs. 1. Many times God may choose the worst of sinners. Faith in a

harlot is acceptable: `The last shall be first;, that is, those that

set out late for heaven do often make more way than an early professor.

No women are reckoned in the genealogy of Christ but such as were

stained with some infamy; idolatrous women, adulterous women, in

Christ,s own line, such as Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba, Tamar. Chrysostom

[219] giveth the reason, os ia'tros, ouch os dikaste`s parage'gonen, he

came to save sinners, and therefore would be known to come of sinners

according to the flesh. Manasses was received after witchcraft, Paul

after blasphemy, 1 Tim. i. 13; and all as precedents in which God would

show forth mercy and long-suffering; as Rahab here. So you shall see it

is said, Mat. xxi. 31, `Publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of

God., The most odious and despised sinners, when they turn to God by

repentance, find grace and place in Christ,s heart.

Obs. 2. The meanest faith must justify itself by works and gracious

effects. Rahab, a Gentile convert, doth not only profess, but preserve

the spies. Let not hypocrites plead every one is not like Abraham. Are

you like Rahab? Can you produce any evidence of your faith? The lowest

degree will show itself by some effect or other. Christ in the garden

taketh notice of the `green figs,, Cant. ii. 13. The smallest faith,

though it be but like a grain of mustard-seed, will have some branches.

Obs. 3. Believers, though they justify their profession, are still

monuments of free grace. It is `Rahab, the harlot,, though justified by

works. The scars and marks of old sins remain, not to our dishonour,

but God,s glory.

Obs. 4. Ordinary acts are gracious when they flow from faith and are

done in obedience; as Rahab,s receiving the messengers: entertainment

in such a case is not civility, but religion: Mat. x. 42, `A cup of

cold water in the name of a prophet `is not courtesy, but duty, and

shall not lose its reward. Heb. xi., many civil and secular acts are

ascribed to faith, as fighting of battles, saving of children, &c.,

because by faith directed to spiritual ends, and performed by

supernatural strength. A carnal man performeth his religious duties for

civil ends, and a godly man his civil duties for religious ends, and in

offices natural and human he is spiritual. Certainly there is no

chemistry like to that of grace; there brass is turned into gold, and

actions of commerce made worship. A Christian is always doing his great

work, whether in the shop or in the closet, obeying God and glorifying

God in his respects to men.

Obs. 5. The great trial of faith is in acts of self-denial. Such was

Rahab,s, to prefer the will of God before the safety of her own

country; and such was Abraham,s in the former instance. Self-denial is

the first thing that must be resolved upon in Christianity, Mat. xvi.

24. A man is not discovered when God,s way and his own lie together.

Your great inquiry should be, Wherein have I denied myself for God?

thwarted any lust? hazarded any concernment? No trial like that when we

can part with some conveniency in sense, upon the proper and sole

encouragements of faith.

Obs. 6. The actions and duties of God,s children are usually blemished

with some notable defect; as Rahab,s entertainment with Rahab,s lie.

`Moses smote the rock twice,, Num. xx. 11; there was anger mixed with

faith. Abraham offered Isaac, but equivocated with his servants: `I and

the lad will return,, Gen. xxii. 5; and yet he meant with a mind to

sacrifice him. Thus we still plough with an ox and an ass in the best

duties, and discover corruption in the very trials of grace.

Obs. 7. God hideth his eyes from the evil that is in our good actions.

Here is mention made of receiving the messengers, but no mention of the

lie. He that drew Alexander, whilst he had a scar upon his face, drew

him with his finger upon the scar. God putteth the finger of mercy upon

our scars. See James v. 11, `Ye have heard of the patience of Job;, we

have heard of his impatience, his cursing the day of his birth, &c.,

but no murmurings are mentioned. How unlike are wicked men to the Lord

I they only pitch upon the evil and weaknesses of his people, and

overlook the good; like flesh-flies, that pitch upon the sores, or

vultures, that fly over the gardens of delight, and light upon a

carrion: one blemish shall be enough to stain all their glory. But the

Lord pardoneth much weakness where he findeth anything of grace and

sincerity. It is said, 1 Peter iii. 6, `Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham,

calling him lord., The place alluded to is Gen. xviii. 12. Sarah,s

whole sentence is full of unbelief: `Shall I have pleasure, my lord

also being old?, There was but one good word, that of lord, the note of

respect and reverence to her husband, and that the Spirit of God takes

notice of. Certainly it is good serving of that master, who is so ready

to reward the good of our actions, and to pardon the evil of them.

Ver. 26. For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without

works is dead also.

Here the apostle concludeth the whole dispute, showing how little is to

be ascribed to an empty profession of faith without works; it is but as

the body without the vital spirit--a carcase, useless but noisome.

There needeth not much illustration of this verse, the matter of it

being already discussed in ver. 17 and 20.

For as the body without the spirit.--There is some difference about the

meaning of the word pneu'matos; we read in the margin, breath; in the

text, spirit. Many prefer the marginal reading, because it is not

psuches, as the body without the soul, but as the body without the

spirit or breath. Of this opinion is Cajetan, whose words are notable,

because they fully accord with the Protestant doctrine. `By spirit,,

saith he, `is not meant the soul, but the breath: for as the body of a

beast when it doth not breathe is dead, so is faith without works dead,

breathing being the effect of life, as working is of living faith.

Whence it is clear what the apostle meaneth, [220] when he saith, faith

is dead without works, not that works are the soul of faith, but that

works are the companions of faith, as breathing is inseparable from

life., By which exposition their doctrine that charity is the soul of

faith, and their distinction of inform and formed faith, fall to the

ground. But, however, I rather think that pneu'matos in the text is not

to be translated breath, but spirit or soul, that substance which

quickeneth and animateth the body, which is elsewhere expressed by this

word; as in those noted places, Luke xxiii. 46, `Into thy hands do I

commit my spirit;, and Acts vii. 59, `Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.,

And that respiration which is the effect of life is expressed by other

words, pnoe` and anapnoe`; as Acts xvii. 25, he giveth zoen kai pnoen

kai ta panta, `he giveth life, and breath, and all things., The meaning

is, then, as a body without a soul, so is faith without works. And yet

hence it will not follow that charity or the works are the soul of

faith, for the comparison doth not hold in regard of animation and

information, but in regard of operation. As in the body without soul

there are only the outward proportions and lineaments, but nothing to

discover life; so in empty profession there are some lineaments of

faith, but no fruits to discover the truth and life of it, it differing

as much from faith as a carcase doth from a man.

Is dead; that is, cannot perform the functions and offices of life, or

of a man.

So faith without works.--The Papists understand true justifying faith,

for they suppose it may be without works; but dead faith cannot be true

faith, as a carcase is not a true man, and a true faith cannot be

without works, Gal. v. 6. We must understand, then, an external

profession of belief, which, because of some resemblance with what is

true, is called faith.

Is dead; that is, false or useless to all the ends and purposes of

faith.

For practical notes see ver. 17, 20; only observe:--

Obs. That naked profession, in respect of true faith, is hut as a dead

body and carcase. It is so in two respects:--(1.) It is noisome as a

rotten carcase. A carnal Christian is the carcase of a true Christian;

there are the lineaments with corruption. An impure life veiled under

profession is as noisome to God as a dead body is to you. When carnal

professors draw nigh to Christ, he goeth further off, as you would from

what offendeth: Mat. vii. 23, `Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity;,

I cannot endure your presence. When they come to him in prayer, `The

prayer of the wicked is abomination;, like the breath that cometh from

rotten lungs. (2.) It is useless, as to all the purposes of faith;

[221] it cannot unite you to Christ, that you may possess yourselves of

his righteousness, or give you a feeling of his Spirit. In short, it

bringeth no glory to God, yieldeth no comfort to him that hath it, and

no benefit to others; of no more use than a dead body when the spirits

are gone.

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[153] See Cartw. in Gen. xix. 21.

[154] `Non judicamus ex personis fidem, sed ex fide personas.,--Tertul.

[155] `Turcicum imperium, quantum quantum est, mica est quam

paterfamilias canibus projicit.,--Luth.

[156] Ut dominetur aliis prius servit; curvatur obsequio ut honore

donetur.,--Ambros.

[157] Dr Jackson in his Treatise of Faith, part ii. c. 26, p. 457.

[158] `Omnia dicta tanti existimantur, quantus est ipse qui dixerit,

nec tam dictionis vim atque virtutem quam dictatoris cogitant

dignitatem.,--Salvia. contra Avarit., lib. i.

[159] Hist. of Council of Trent. Edit. Lond. 1629, p. 55.

[160] `Compertum est damnata ut haeretica in libris Lutheri, quae in

Bernardi, Augustinique libris ut orthodoxa immo et pia

leguntur.,--Erasm. in Epist. ad Card. Mogunt.

[161] `Cur non et me quoque torque donas, et insignis hujus ordinis

militem creas?,--Thuan. Hist.

[162] `Per conventum significantur coetus seu cougregationes publicae

profanae, in quibus conveniebant Christiani ut justis legibus et

arbitris domesticas vel politicas communesque lites

dirimerent.,--Hevar. in loc.

[163] `Nec sane, quantum arbitror, putandum est leve esse peccatum in

personarum acceptione habere fidem Domini nostri Jesu Christi, si illam

distantiam sedendi ac standi ad honores ecclesiasticos referamus; quis

enim ferat eligi divitem ad sedem honoris ecclesiae, contempto paupere

instructiore atque sanctio re.,--Aug. Epist. 29.

[164] `President probati quique seniores, honorem istum non pretio sed

testimonio adepti.,--Tertul. in Apol.

[165] `Synagogae traditio est ut sedentes disputent, seniores dignitate

in cathedris, sequentes in subselliis, novissimi in pavimento super

mattas.,--Ambros. in primam ad Cor.

[166] `Primus locus viduis univiris, proximus virginibus, deinde

matronis.,--Grot. in loc.

[167] Herbert Thorndike, in his book of the Right of the Church in a

Christian State, printed at London, 1649. See pp. 38, 39.

[168] Lightfoot in Gen.

[169] `Genetivus hic non est objecti, sed attributi.,--Grot.

[170] `Adverte coeleste consilium: non sapientes aliquos, non divites,

non nobiles, sed piscatores et publicanos, quos dirigeret, elegit; ne

traduxisse potentia, redemisse divitiis, nobilitatisque auctoritate

traxisse aliquos videretur, et veritatis ratio, non disputationis

gratia, praevaleret.,--Ambr. in Luc., cap. 6, sec. 3.

[171] `Noluit prius eligere senatores, sed piscatores, magna artificis

misericordia! Sciebat enim quia si eligeret senatorem, diceret senator,

dignitas mea electa est, &c. Et paulo post.--Da mihi, inquit, istum

piscatorem, veni tu pauper, sequere me, nihil habes, nihil nosti,

sequere me.,--Aug. Ser. xix. de Verb. Dom.

[172] `Valde protestatus sum me nolle sic ab eo satiari.,--Luth.

[173] Qu. `in, or `during,?--ED.

[174] Ludolphus de Vita Christi.

[175] `Veritatem, non similitudinem.,--Laurent. in locum.

[176] `Qui facit solummodo ea quae vult facere, non dominicam

voluntatem implet, sed suam.,--Salvian.

[177] See Camero, the last edition of his works in folio, p. 170.

[178] Qu. `Greater than,?--ED.

[179] Aug. Retract., lib. ii. cap. 45; et Epist. 102 ad Evodium; et

Epist. 29 ad Hieron.

[180] `Contra eam charitatem facit, in qua pendent omnia.,--Aug. Epist.

29.

[181] `A quatenus ad omne valet consequentia.,

[182] So in first edition; in second edition, `toying., Qu.

`crying,?--ED.

[183] Tertullianus.

[184] Vide Sanctium in locum.

[185] `Cibus et potus sunt divitiae Christianorum.,--Hieron.

[186] See Luke ii. 29, and 2 Kings v. 19, where only is a salutation,

not an allowance or grant of his request; yea, Naaman,s words imply a

resolution rather than a case and request.

[187] `Venter non habet aures.,

[188] `Bona opera sunt spei quaedam seminaria, caritatis incentiva,

occulta praedestinationis judicia, non fiduciae fundamenta, futurae

felicitatis praesagia,, &c.--Bernard.

[189] `Hic notantur non certi homines, sed certa hominum

genera.,--Grot. in locum.

[190] `Immolari sibi Deus filium jussit, pater obtulit, et quantum ad

defunctionem cordis pertinet, immolavit.,--Salvian. de Gub. Dei, lib.

i.

[191] Saltmarsh in his Free Grace, cap. v., pp. 62-64.

[192] See Mr T. Goodwin in his preface before his book called `Faith

Triumphing in its Object.,

[193] Nazian. Orat. xiii. circa med.

[194] `Solve leonem et senties.,

[195] `Opera non sunt causa quod aliquis justus sit apud Deum, sed

potius sunt executiones et manifestationes justitiae,--Thom. Aquin. in

Gal. iii., lect. 4.

[196] Jackson of Faith.

[197] Qu. `impartation,--ED.

[198] `Ta` phre'ata enantloume'na belti'o e'sti.,--Basil.

[199] Luth. Praef. in hanc epistolam, ubi dicit, Haec verba Mosis

violenter a Jacobo trahi et torqueri, &c.

[200] `Fides, nisi bonorum operum fructibus perficiatur,

justificationein perfectam ac salutem sempiternam conciliare hominibus

non potest, ut apertissime testatur Jacobus.,--Volkel de Vera

Religione, lib. iv, cap. 3, 139.

[201] Spanhem. Dub. Evang., pars 2.--Dub. 64, et alibi.

[202] As also the author of the book of Maccabees saith it was now

fulfilled: Abraa`m en peirasmo? heurethe pi'stos, kai elogisthe auto?

eis dikaiosunen.--1 Mac, ii. 52.

[203] See Rom. iv. 23-25; Rom. v. 19; 1 Cor. i.30; 2 Cor. v. 21; Phil.

iii. 9.

[204] `emrature'the mega'los Abraa`m kai` phi'los prosegoreu'the tou

Theou.,--Clem. in Epist. ad Cor.

[205] `Servus herilis imperii non servus est sed minister.,--Seneca.

[206] `Eadem velle et nolle, ea demum firma est amicitia.,--Sallust.

[207] `Contentionis studium quoddam irritatum ab importunis

ostentatoribus doctrinae fidei, longius hujus epistolae auctorem quasi

extulisse videri possit, nam hoc in certaminibus semper fieri

consuevit.,--Camerar. in hanc Epist.

[208] `Paulus loquitur de prima justificatione, et nomine operum

intelligit opera quae fiunt sine fide et gratia, solis viribus liberi

arbitrii. Jacobus autem de secunda justincatione,, &c.--Bellarm. de

Verbo Dei, lib. i. cap. 13, sec. 12.

[209] `Contumeliosum est in sanctum meritum Christi, asserere secundam

justificationem, quae in nostris operibus consistit, majorem et

auctiorem et digniorem esse apud Deum quam primam, quae solo merito

Christi nititur, et quidem non primam sed secundam justificationem

mereri vitam aeternam.,--Chemnitius, Exam. Concil. Trident., p. 153.

[210] Socin. Fragm. de Juatificat., p. 9.

[211] Confess. Armin., cap. 18, sec. 3. Dr Hammond, Cat., p. 47, the

first edition.

[212] `Paulus ea a fide opera removet quae perpetuum perfectissimumque

per omnem vitae cursum obedientiam continent. Jacobus vero ea

intelligit opera quae homines spe praemiorum divinorum ducti ex animo,

omnibusque viribus perficiunt, quamvis omni prolapsione nequaquam

careant, habitus tamen vitiorum quidem omnium exuisse, omnium autem

virtutum sibi comparasse, merito dici possint.,--Volkel. lib. de Vera

Religione, cap. 3, p. 180.

[213] Qu. `heaven,?--ED.

[214] See Mr Ball of the Covenant, p. 20.

[215]

,Alterius sic

Altera poscit opem res, et conjurat amice.,

[216] `Sola cognitio Dei, quam Deus animo ejus indidit, eam eximit a

culpa, tanquam solutam communi lege, quamvis ad eum usque diem

obstricta fuisset suis popularibus; ubi tamen co-optata fuisset in

corpus Ecclesiae, nova conditio manumissio fuit a jure societatis, quo

jure devinciuntur cives.,--Calvin in Joshuam, ii. 4.

[217] `Illa quae aliquando erat meretrix, jam Spiritu. Sancto repleta

est, et de praeteritis quidem confitetur, de presentibus vero credit,

prophetat et praenunciat de futuris.,--Origen. Hom. 3, in Josuam.

[218] `Non minae civium, non bellorum pericula, non incendia patriae,

non suorum pericula terrent: disce, vir, disce, Christiane, quomodo

veruin Jesum sequi debeas, quando faemina contempsit omnia

sua.,--Ambrose in Enarrat. Ps. xxxvii.

[219] Chrysostom. Homil. 3, in Matt.

[220] `Unde apparet quo sensu dicit, fidem sine operibus mortuam esse,

non quod sentiat opera esse formam fidei, sed quod sentit opera esse

concomitantia fidei, sic at halitus concomitatur vitam

corporis.,--Cajetan in locum.

[221] `Houde`n ke'rdos ugious pi'steos, tes politei'as

diephtharme'nes.,--Chrysostom de Sacerdotio, lib. iv.

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CHAPTER III.

VER. 1. My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive

the greater condemnation.

Here the apostle diverteth to another matter, reinforcing what he had

said in the first chapter of the evil of the tongue; however, this

discourse is with good reason subjoined to the former. Those that

vainly boast of their own faith are most apt to censure others; and

they that pretend to religion are wont to take the greatest liberty in

rigid and bitter reflections upon the errors of their brethren.

My brethren.--The compellation, though familiar and usual to our

apostle, hath here a special emphasis. (1.) Good men are many times

surprised, and usurp too great a liberty over the failings of others.

(2.) He would not deal too rigidly himself, and therefore tempereth his

reproof with sweetness. (3.) The title carrieth the force of an

argument; brethren should not affect a mastership over each other.

Be not many masters.--What is the meaning? The word master hath divers

significations. Sometimes it is taken for an absoluteness of power and

authority in the church: thus Christ alone is a master, Mat. xxiii. 10;

his word is a law; his will is authentic. Sometimes it is taken for a

subordinate teaching and opening the counsels of God; and those who do

so by way of office are called `masters in Israel,, John iii. 10; and

so some take it in this place, and make the sense of the apostle,s

dissuasive to be, that every one should not easily or unlawfully invade

the office of public teaching. And the reason, `knowing that we shall

receive,, &c., they open thus: because God requireth more of them that

are teachers than of others, and so by rash entering into the office

they run the hazard of the greater judgment. But the context will not

bear this sense, the bent and drift of it being against the ill use of

the tongue; and the reason annexed will not gratify it without much

straining; and the scripture saith, that for not reproving and warning

we draw the greater judgment upon ourselves, rather than by teaching or

reproving, Ezek. xxxiii. 6. Therefore this second sense is not proper;

neither can the first be applied, as master is taken for authenticness

in the church, though Austin and Beda seem so to understand it, as if

the apostle had dissuaded them from setting up themselves as masters

and heads of factions, and broaching novel doctrines, that they might

appear in the head of a train, or, in the scripture phrase, `draw

disciples after them., But this is wholly alien and foreign to the

apostle,s scope. Master, then, is sometimes taken in the worst sense,

katachrestikos, for a supercilious reprover, for one that is gotten

into a chair of arrogance, whence he doth pro imperio, magisterially

enough inveigh against the practices of other men; and so it is taken

here. And the apostle maketh choice of this expression, `be not many

masters,--(1.) To show he doth not speak of public and authorised

reproof. God hath set some in the church that are to be censores morum,

masters of manners, as the teacher and ecclesiastical magistrate; but

because God hath allowed a few, let not every one be a master, or turn

censurer: `Be not many;, we are all apt, but this itch must be killed.

(2.) To show that he doth not forbid private brotherly admonitions,

such as proceed from Christian care and love, but such a reproving as

was supercilious and masterly, managed with as much sharpness and

rigour as a man would use to his slave, or a master to a scholar of the

lowest class and standing. And so some understand that polloi`

dida'skaloi, be not much masters, as if polloi` were taken for polu`,

many for much.

Knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.--This is the

first reason the apostle produceth against the pride of censuring,

which is grounded upon a consideration of the danger of the sin, or the

severity of judgment following it; meizon krima, `a greater judgment,,

either from men. Censurers have their own measure usually returned into

their bosoms, Mat. vii. 1, 2. Or from God. Who can expect pardon for

him that is severe to others? Mat. xviii. 32, 33. I chiefly understand

judgment and condemnation from God, which is the more severe to

censurers, upon a threefold ground:--(1.) The justice of retaliation.

We condemn others, and God condemneth us; we are severe to their

failings, and how can we expect that God should be merciful to ours?

(2.) Because God is the avenger of injuries, Rom. xii. 19, and among

them, blasting the repute of others is the greatest. (3.) A censurer,s

sins are more aggravated, because of that garb of indignation that he

seemeth to put on against them: see Rom. ii. 1. In censuring others we

do but pronounce our own doom and judgment, which the scripture

manifestly representeth to us in those known instances of David, 2 Sam.

xii., and Ahab, 1 Kings xx. 39, &c.

Obs. 1. The best need dissuasives from proud censuring. The apostle

saith, `My brethren, be not many masters;, and afterwards he putteth

himself in the number, `If we,, &c. It is the natural disease of wit, a

pleasing evil: it suiteth with pride and self-love, and feedeth

conceit. Proud nature thinketh itself somebody, when it can get into a

chair of arrogance, and cast out censures according to its own will and

pleasure, as if God hath advanced us into some higher rank and sphere,

and all the world had been made to be our scholars. It suiteth with

self-love, because it diverteth the care of our souls; they that so

narrowly look after the mote, forget the beam. And it strengtheneth

self-conceit; so many evils in others make our own the less odious. It

serveth vainglory, and provideth for our esteem abroad; we demolish the

esteem of others, that out of the ruins of it we may raise a structure

of praise to ourselves. Now all these evils are in the best of God,s

children. `Pride of life, is last mentioned, 1 John ii. 16, because it

is last mortified; it groweth with the decrease of other sins, and

thriveth by their decay. Well, then, `suffer the words of exhortation,,

Heb. xiii. 22. Some religious persons think such dissuasives as to them

are either superfluous or injurious, this touchiness argueth guilt: no

evil is more natural, no evil desireth less to be touched; insensibly

it stealeth from our hearts into our tongues. We sin, and do not think

of censuring; pride, being crossed, rageth: hear such matters

patiently; James speaketh to the brethren, `Be not many masters.,

Obs. 2. Censuring; it is an arrogation of mastership over others. All

teaching, especially reproof, is an act of power, and therefore the

apostle forbiddeth it to women, 1 Cor. xiv. 34, because they cannot

have power over a man. Well, then, when you are about to censure, check

it with this thought--What power hath God given me over my fallen

brother?, Why should I judge another man,s servant? to his own master

he standeth or falleth,, Rom. xiv. 4. It is a wrong to God to put

myself in his room; it is a wrong to my neighbour to arrogate a power

over him which God never gave me. We all stand upon the same level;

needless and unprofitable censuring is but a bold usurpation; and

besides the idleness of the words, we shall give an account for the

sauciness of them.

Obs. 3. Christians should not affect this mastership over their

brethren. You may admonish, reprove, warn, but it should not be in a

masterly way. How is that? (1.) When we do it out of pride and

self-conceit, as conceiving yourselves more just, holy, wise, &c.: Luke

xviii., `I am not as other men;, [222] he speaketh indefinitely. With

praise a Christian may say he is not as some men; some are as brute

beasts, made to be taken and destroyed; and with thankfulness we may

acknowledge that God hath not suffered us to run into the excess of

their riot. The Pharisee speaketh as if he were above common weakness:

Gal vi. 1, `Restore with meekness, considering yourselves;, we are all

involved in the same state of frailty. (2.) When we do it as vaunting

over their infirmities and frailties, in a braving way, rather to shame

than to restore them; as Ham laughed at Noah,s drunkenness: this doth

not argue hatred of the sin, but envy, malice against the person.

Paul,s temper was truly Christian: Phil. iii. 17, `I have told you

often, and now tell you weeping, they are enemies of the cross of

Christ., A good man taketh no delight to rake in a dung hill, others,

failings cannot serve his mirth and triumph: `My soul shall weep sore

for your pride in secret places,, Jer. xiii. 17. Censures are full of

passion, but Christian reproofs of compassion; such a difference there

is between reproving out of pride, and out of love and charity. (3.)

When the censure is unmerciful, and we remit nothing of extreme rigour

and severity; yea, divest the action of those extenuating circumstances

of which the matter is capable. The censure should be extended no

further than what may be necessarily inferred from the fact; jealousy

collecteth more than is offered, but `charity thinketh no evil,, 1 Cor.

xiii. 5, ou logi'zetai to` kako`n; it reasoneth no evil; that is, doth

not seek to make sins, but cover them; as when an action is capable of

two interpretations, it doth not fasten upon that which is evil, or

interpret doubtful things in the worst sense, or conclude a sin from an

inevident sign; as Eli did from Hannah,s fervency conclude her

drunkenness, 1 Sam. i. 14, 15; or if there be evil in it, it doth not

by undue surmises make it worse; as judge the heart by the fact, or by

one or more single actions infer a habit or malignity in the offender;

or if that be visible, it doth not prejudge their future condition.

Though charity be not blind, it looketh upon things as they are; yet

charity is not jealous to argue things into what they are not. It is

against all law and right to be judge and accuser too, and to hunt out

an offence, and then censure it. (4.) When we infringe Christian

liberty, and condemn others for things merely indifferent, this is to

master it indeed, and lay snares upon the conscience--a wrong not so

much to our brethren as to God,s own law, which we judge as if it were

an imperfect rule, James iv. 11. In habits and meats there is a great

latitude; and as long as rules of sobriety and modesty are not

violated, we cannot censure, but must leave the heart to God. See Rom.

xiv. per totum. (5.) When men do not consider what may stand with

charity as well as what will agree with truth; there may be censure

where there is no slander. Many religious persons think they are safe

if they can speak only of others what is true. But this is not all;

every evil must not be divulged, some must be covered with the cloak of

love; there may be malice in reporting the truth. An eager desire to

spread a fault wanteth not sin: `Report, say they, and we will report

it,, Jer. xx. 10. Nay, if there be no ill intent, such prattle will

come under the charge of idle words, for which we are responsible. The

apostle forbiddeth `whispering,, and `meddling in others, matters;, at

best it is but a wanton vanity. All that we do herein should be to

promote some aim of love and charity, that the offender may be

seasonably reproved; or for some common good, that by the uncasing of a

hypocrite others be not deceived and ensnared. (6.) When we do it to

set off ourselves, and use them as a foil to give our worth the better

lustre, and by the report of their scandals to climb up and commence

into a better esteem. In the whole matter we are to be acted by love,

and to aim at the Lord,s glory. Well, then, look to yourselves in your

reproofs, that they be not censures; they are so when they are

supercilious and magisterial, the issues of pride rather than love.

Envy often goeth under the mask of zeal; we had need be careful,

especially in times of public difference. For remedies:--(1.) Cherish a

humble sense of your own vileness and frailty. Others fall sadly and

foully; but what are we? [223] we were as bad, Titus iii. 2, 3; we may

be worse, 1 Cor. x. 12. Bernard [224] telleth of a man that, hearing of

a fallen brother, fell into a bitter weeping, crying out, He is fallen

to-day, and I may to-morrow. (2.) Exchange a sin for a duty: 1 John v.

16, `If any see his brother sin, let him pray., This will be a holy art

and means to spend your zeal with least danger and most profit.

Obs. 4. From that knowing that we, &c. A remedy against vain censures

is to consider ourselves, Gal. vi. 1. How is it with us? Gracious

hearts are always looking inward; they inquire most into themselves,

are most severe against their own corruptions. (1.) Most inquisitive

after their own sins. `The fool,s eyes are to the ends of the earth,,

always abroad; like the windows of the temple, broad outward, narrow

inward; curious to sift the lives of others, careless to reform his

own. But with good men it is otherwise, they find deceit enough in

their own hearts to take up their care and thoughts. (2.) Most severe

against themselves. A good heart is ready to throw the first stone

against itself, John viii. 4, 5; others can, with much heat, inveigh

against other men,s sins, and with a fond indulgence cherish their own.

Hatred against the person doth but take advantage of the miscarriage to

shroud itself from notice and censure; and though they hate the

traitor, yet they love the treason.

Obs. 5. Rash and undue judging of others, when we are guilty ourselves,

maketh us liable to the greater judgment. The apostle proceedeth upon

that supposition. Sharp reprovers had need be exact, otherwise they

draw a hard law upon themselves, and in judging others pronounce their

own doom; their sins are sins of knowledge, and the more knowledge the

more stripes. Ignorants have this advantage, ut mitius ardeant, they

have a cooler hell. Well, then, rest not in talking and prescribing

burdens to others; it is a cheap zeal; but `thinkest thou that thou

shalt escape?, Rom. ii. 3, and ver. 21, `Thou which teachest another,

teachest thou not thyself?, &c. There is little sincerity in that, as

well as little self-denial; and hypocrisy will render us liable to

condemnation. Hell is the hypocrite,s fee-simple, Mat. xxiv. 51. The

phrase of `receiving the greater judgment `is also applied to the

Pharisees, Mat. xxiii. 14, because of their hypocrisy. So that those

that reprove, whether out of office or charity, had need look to

themselves; their sins are sins against knowledge, and so have more of

malice and hypocrisy in them, and therefore draw on the greater

judgment. Lewd ministers could not but tremble in their hearts, if they

were sensible of their work. God purified Isaiah before he sent him to

reprove Israel, Isa. vi. 7. Your first work should begin at your own

hearts, and then you will carry on the duty with more comfort and

boldness.

Ver. 2. For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in

word, the same is a perfect man, and able to bridle the whole body.

He goeth on to dissuade from supercilious censures. In this verse he

urgeth two arguments. The first is the common frailty incident to all

men, which may be two ways urged:--(1.) Wilt thou condemn them for that

from which no men be exempted? The excuse of weakness and failings is

the unhappy privilege of all mortal men. Or (2.) Will you not show them

that tenderness which you need yourselves? You may also fail; `we all

of us offend in many things., The next argument, the difficulty of not

sinning by the tongue; he that can do that, can do anything in

Christianity.

In many things we offend all.--He saith we, including himself, though

an apostle of great holiness. Eusebius [225] saith, he was for his

virtue surnamed The Just. And indeed none is exempted, not the blessed

Virgin, who is taxed in scripture for some slips, Luke ii. 49; John ii.

3, 4. For that question, whether God can, by the singular assistance of

grace, keep any one in the animal and bodily life totally pure from

sin, it is altogether curious, and of no use and profit; God,s pleasure

being declared the other way. And to that other question, whether some

very short or transient action of a renewed man, whether civil, moral,

or natural, may not be without actual sin, I answer in these

propositions:--(1.) That in our deliberate actions, especially those

which are moral, there is some mixture of sin. In this sense you may

take that, Eccles. vii. 20, `There is not a just man upon the earth

that doeth good and sinneth not., You may understand, that sinneth not

in doing good; for he doth not say simply, There is not a just man that

sinneth not, but a just man that doeth good and, &c. And to this

purpose is that saying of Luther, so much upbraided by the Papists,

[226] that the best works of the regenerate are sins, if examined by

God. And Gregory the Great [227] hath a saying of the same sound and

sense, that man,s merit is but sin, and his righteousness

unrighteousness, if it should be called to a strict account. Yea, the

prophet Isaiah before them both, that `all our righteousness is as

filthy rags,, Isa. lxiv. 6. No work of ours is so pure but there is

some taint and filth of sin cleaving to it, which, without a mediator,

in the rigour of the law would be damnable. So that though the essence

of the work be good and holy, yet because of the fleshly adherences, it

cannot any way undergo the strictness of divine judgment; man being in

part holy, and in part carnal, the effect cannot exceed the force of

the cause; and as there is a mixture in the faculties and principles of

operation, so there will be in the actions themselves, especially in

actions religious, corrupt nature returning and recoiling with the more

force against resolutions of duty. (2.) There may be, I conceive, an

action so short that there is no room or scope for corruption to put

forth itself; as in a sudden holy glance or thought, we may conceive a

motion or lust of the spirit, or renewed nature in itself, and as

preceding a lust of the flesh, or the opposition of the old nature,

which, though it be not perfectly, yet is purely, holy. Besides, in

some actions the force and vigour of corrupt nature may be wholly

suspended by the power of God; as it is in conversion, in which divines

say we are wholly passive; [228] and though God doth not take away the

power of resisting, yet he bridleth it, and suspendeth it, that

corruption cannot put forth itself, but lieth hid in its own root.

Besides, in some actions, which are merely natural, as in walking a

step or two, there is not the least provocation to draw forth sin; and

therefore I cannot but justly condemn that unnecessary rigour in some,

who say, that a renewed man in every action, whether moral, civil, or

natural, be it but the walking of two or three steps, doth actually

sin; a fond nicety, which, under the colour of a deeper humility,

destroyeth true humiliation. We need not make man more guilty; it is

enough to humble us that `in many things we offend all., But the devil

loveth to cheat men of true humility by that which is affected and

strained; and when fancy inventeth supposed crimes, conscience is the

less troubled for those which are real; curiosity being a kind of

excuse for due remorse. (3.) Those actions are not acceptable with God

for their own sakes partly because though they are pure, or free from

sin, yet they are not perfect; they might be more holy. And partly

because they are done by a person that hath a corrupt nature, and is

stained with the guilt of other actual sins, the least of which renders

him obnoxious to the curse of the whole law, James ii. 10. So that

these actions also need a mediator; and, as the apostle saith, where we

`know nothing by ourselves, we are not thereby justified,, 1 Cor. iv.

4; or as it is, Job ix. 3, `If he will contend with him, he cannot

answer him one of a thou sand., For one such innocent action, there are

a thousand-stained and polluted. Another question may be, whether there

be not some sins which in their own nature are so foul that a child of

God can not fall into them? I answer--(1.) There are some gross

corruptions which are very contrary to grace, mia'smata tou ko'smou,

`corruptions of the world,, 2 Peter ii. 20, sins that stink in the

nostrils of nature; therefore the apostle saith, `The lusts of the

flesh are manifest,, Gal. v. 19, that is, to sense and reason; as

adultery, drunkenness, &c., which nature hath branded with marks of

shame and contempt; into these a child of God may fall, though rarely

and very seldom. We have instances of Noah,s drunkenness, Lot,s incest,

and David,s adultery; therefore may conclude, that the children of God

do not only sin freely in thought, but sometimes foully in act;

however, not usually, not but upon special temptation: they are not ad

pocula faciles, given to women, or to wine. The usual practice is a

note of God,s hatred: `A whore is a deep ditch, and he that is abhorred

of the Lord shall fall therein,, Prov. xxii. 14. These sins, therefore,

are not of usual incidence, as wrath, and worldliness, and pride are.

(2.) There are other sins which are extremely contrary to nature

itself, as Sodom,s bestiality, &c., into which a renewed man cannot

fall; partly for the great dishonour such a fact would reflect upon

religion; partly because it is a note of God,s tradition, or giving up

a man or woman to sin, Rom. i. 26, 27. These things are so far from

being practised by saints, that they are not to be named amongst them,

Eph. v. 3.

If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man.--Here is the

second argument; bridling the tongue is a note of some perfection and

effectual progress in grace. `Offend not in word,, that is, speaketh

only a known truth, and that seasonably, charitably, without vanity, or

folly, or obscenity, or rash oaths, as Gregory Nyssen [229] fully

expoundeth it. `Is a perfect man., You may take the words as a

supposition. If any man avoid the evils of the tongue, I will make bold

to call him a perfect man, such another as is not found among mortals.

Thus we say often, when we propose an unlikely practice, He that could

do this were a perfect man indeed. Or you may take it positively and

assertively, and so it is another argument against supercilious

censures. `If you offend not in word, you are perfect,, that is,

upright, sincere: those that are so, because they do not divide and

baulk with God, are expressed by the term perfect. Or else perfect is

put here for some ripeness and growth in Christianity. In the Jewish

discipline there were two sorts of persons--asketai`, beginners, that

did exercise themselves in virtuous actions and endeavours; then there

were others, whom Philo calleth telei'ous, perfect; they were those

that had attained to somewhat, and made some progress in the matters

learned. Thus perfect is taken, 1 Cor. ii. 6, `We speak wisdom among

those that are perfect., However weaklings are taken with toys, yet

grown, mortified Christians will discern wisdom and sublimity in the

plain preaching of Christ crucified. And this sense may be accommodated

to this place: He that bridleth his tongue is not askete`s, a beginner

or learner, one that trieth experiments in religion, but te'leios, a

perfect man, one that hath made some towardly progress.

And able to bridle the whole body.--By body, Grotius understandeth the

church, which is called `the body,, 1 Cor. xii. 20, Eph. iv. 12; and he

maketh the sense out thus: He that can bridle himself in disputation is

able to govern the church; an exposition curious, but strange to this

context. By bridling the body is meant, then, governing all his other

actions, which are expressed here by the term body, because they are

acted by the members of the body, eyes, hands, feet, &c. Why he

pitcheth so much weight upon this matter of governing the tongue, I

shall show you in the observations.

Obs. 1. None are absolutely freed and exempted from sinning: 1 John i.

8, `If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth

is not in us., The doctrine of the Catharists is a lying doctrine:

Prov. xx. 9, `Who can say I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my

sin?, Solomon maketh a challenge to all the world. Many may say so

boldly, but who can say so truly? All of us offend in many things, and

many of us in all things. There is in all a cursed root of bitterness,

[230] which God doth mortify, but not nullify; it is cast down, but not

cast out. Like the wild fig-tree, or ivy in the wall, [231] cut off

stump, body, bough, and branches, yet some strings or other will sprout

out again, till the wall be plucked down: God will have it so, till we

come to heaven. Well, then--(1.) Walk with more caution; you carry a

sinning heart about you. As long as there is fuel for a temptation, we

cannot be secure; he that hath gunpowder about him will be afraid of

sparkles. (2.) Censure with the more tenderness; give every action the

allowance of human frailty, Gal. vi. 1. We all need forgiveness;

without grace thou mightest fall into the same sins. (3.) Be the more

earnest with God for grace; God will keep you still dependent, and

beholden to his power: `Who shall deliver me?, Rom. vii. (4.) Magnify

the love of God with the more praise. Paul groaneth under his

corruptions, Rom. vii., latter end; and then admireth the happiness of

those that are in Christ, Rom. viii. 1: they have so many sins, and yet

none are damnable.

Obs. 2. The sins of the best are many. The apostle saith, `We offend.,

God would not abolish and destroy all at once. There is a prayer

against outward enemies, Ps. lix. 11, `Slay them not, lest my people

forget: scatter them by thy power; and bring them down, O God, our

shield., He would not have them utterly destroyed, but some relics

preserved as a memorial. So God dealeth in respect of sin; it is

brought down, but not wholly slain; something is still left as a

monument of the divine grace; as Peter of Alexandria, when he destroyed

the rest of the idols, left one that was most monstrous and misshapen

to put them in mind of their former idolatry. God will still honour

free grace; the condition of his own people is mixed, light chequered

with darkness; those that walk in the light may stumble. Oh! then--(1.)

Be not altogether dismayed at the sight of failings. A godly person

observed that Christians were usually to blame for three things:--They

seek for that in themselves which they can only find in Christ; for

that in the law which shall only be had in the gospel; and that upon

earth which shall only be enjoyed in heaven. We complain of sin; and

when shall the earthly estate be free? You should not murmur, but run

to your Advocate. You complain, and so do all that have the

first-fruits of the Spirit: 1 Peter v. 9, `All these things are

accomplished in your brethren that are in the flesh., They are all

troubled with a busy devil, a corrupt heart, and a naughty world. (2.)

However, bewail these failings, the evils that abound in your hearts,

in your duties, that you cannot serve God as entirely as you served

Satan; your evil works were merely evil, but your good are not purely

good; there your heart was poured out, e'xechu'thesan, Jude 11, here it

is restrained; there is filthiness in your righteousness, Isa. lxiv.

Obs. 3. To be able to bridle the tongue is an argument of some growth

and happy progress in grace. You shall see not only our apostle, but

the scripture everywhere maketh it a matter of great weight and moment:

Prov. xviii. 21, `Death and life are in the power of the tongue., Upon

the right or ill using of it a man,s safety doth depend. And lest you

should think the scripture only intendeth temporal safety or ruin, see

Mat. xii. 37, `By thy words shalt thou be justified, and by thy words

condemned., One of the prime things that shall be brought forth to

judgment are your words. So Prov. xiii. 3, `He that keepeth his mouth,

keepeth his life; but he that openeth wide his lips, shall have

destruction., He intimateth a similitude of a city besieged: to open

the gates betrayeth the safety of it; all watch and ward is about the

gate. So the tongue is the gate or door of the soul, by which it goeth

out in converse and communication; to keep it open or loose-guarded

letteth in an enemy, which proveth the death of the soul. So in other

places it is made the great argument and sign of spiritual and holy

prudence: Prov. x. 19, `In the multitude of words there wanteth not

sin; but he that refraineth his lips is wise., Empty vessels are full

of sound; discreet silence, or a wise ordering of speech, is a token of

grace. So Prov. xvii. 27, `He that hath knowledge spareth his words;

and a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit., In the original

it is `of a cool spirit,, not rash and hot, ready to pour out his soul

in wrath. So David maketh it to be a great argument or sign of our

interest in the promises: Ps. xxxiv. 13, `What man is he that desireth

life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? keep thy tongue from

evil, and thy lips from speaking guile:, that is the first direction.

So elsewhere he maketh it the character of a godly man, Ps. xv. 3. I

have heaped up these scriptures that the matter of keeping the tongue

may not seem light and trivial. The Spirit of God, you see, giveth

exhortation upon exhortation, and spendeth many scriptures upon this

argument. There were also special reasons why our apostle should be so

much in pressing it. (1.) Because this was the sin of that age, as

appeareth by the frequent dissuasions from vain boasting of themselves,

and detracting from others, in the 1st and 2d chapters; and it is a

high point of grace not to be snared with the evils of our own times.

(2.) It is the best discovery of the heart; speech is the express image

of it: Mat. xii. 34, `Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth

speaketh., When the heart is full, it overfloweth in speech. The story

of loquere ut videam is common: Speak that I may see thee; so Socrates

to a fair boy. We know metals by their tinkling. Ps. xxxvii. 30, `The

mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh

judgment, for the law of the Lord is in his heart., Good men will be

always discovering themselves, and giving vent to the fulness of their

hearts. (3.) It is the hypocrites, sin; they abstain from grosser

actions, but usually offend in their words, in boasting professions,

and proud censures: see James i. 26. (4.) All of us are apt to offend

with the tongue many ways; most of a man,s sins are in his words. One

reckoneth up twenty-four several sins of the tongue, and yet the number

may be increased--lying, railing, swearing, ribaldry, scoffing,

quarrelling, deceiving, boasting, tattling, &c. At first, indeed, there

was no other sin in society but lying, but now to how many evils doth

this one member subscribe? It is observable, that when the apostle

giveth us the anatomy of wickedness in all the members of the body, he

stayeth longest on the organs of speech, and goeth over them all: Rom.

iii. 13-15, `Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues have

they used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth

is full of cursing and bitterness,, &c. There is much need, you see, of

reforming and polishing this member. So Prov. xii. 13, `The snare of

the wicked is the transgression of his lips;, that is, not only by

which he taketh others, but by which he is taken himself, to his own

ruin and destruction. (5.) It is a sin into which we usually and easily

fall, partly by reason of that quick intercourse that is between the

tongue and the heart--we sin in an instant; and partly because speech

is a human act which is performed without labour; and so we sin that

way incogitantly, without noting or judging it: `Our tongues are our

own,, Ps. xii. 4; such natural actions are performed without thinking

of the weight and consequence of them; and partly because the evils of

the tongue are very pleasing, marvellously compliant with nature.

Well, then, take care, not only of your actions, but your speeches: Ps.

xxxix. 1, `I said I would take heed to my ways, lest I offend with my

tongue., He would take heed to the whole course of his life, but

chiefly watch his tongue; iniquity and offence was likely to shoot

forth soonest that way. Next to keeping our hearts, Solomon biddeth us

to keep our tongues: Prov. iv. 23, 24, `Keep thy heart with all

diligence;, then, `Put away a froward mouth and perverse lips., First

the heart, then the tongue, then the foot, ver. 26. Consider--(1.) Your

speeches are noted. Xenophon would have all speeches written, to make

men more serious. They are recorded, James ii. 12. Every idle word is

brought into judgment, Mat. xii. 36: light words weigh heavy in God,s

balance. (2.) They are punished: Ps. lxiv. 8, `Their own tongue shall

fall upon them., Better a mountain should fall upon you than the weight

of your own tongue. Origen observeth out of that expression which

intimateth that the rich man desired a drop to cool his tongue, Luke

xvi. 24, that his tongue was punished quia lingu� plus peccaverat,

because he had sinned most with his tongue: but the expression there

intendeth only ease and comfort. Other places are more clear: see Prov.

xiv. 3, `In the mouth of the foolish is a rod of pride, but the lips of

the wise shall preserve them., We boast and insult; God will make it a

rod to scourge us. It is not a sword, but a rod; because God will

punish contempt with contempt, both in this life and that to come. (3.)

Consider what a vile thing it is to abuse the tongue to strife,

censure, or insultation. The tongue is called the glory of man in the

Psalms: `Awake, my glory,, Ps. lvii. 8. It should not accommodate such

vile uses and purposes; we pervert it from its proper use. God made it

to celebrate his own praise, to convey the holy conceptions of the soul

to others. Man,s excellency should not be thus debased; better be dumb

than of a wicked tongue. (4.) It is not of small regard that God in

nature would show that he hath set bounds to the tongue: he hath hedged

it in with a row of teeth. [232] Other organs are double; we have two

eyes, two ears, but one tongue. Children have not a use of their tongue

naturally till they have a use of reason; certainly, therefore, it was

never intended to serve passion and pride and every idle humour.

For apt remedies--(1.) Get a pure heart; there is the tongue,s treasury

and storehouse. A good man is always ready to discourse, not forced by

the company, but because the law of God is in his heart: Prov. xv. 7,

`The lips of the wise disperse knowledge, but the heart of the foolish

is not so., By virtue of the opposition it should be `the tongue of the

foolish,, but whatever is in the tongue cometh from the heart; his

heart doth not [233] incline his tongue. [234] A stream riseth not

above the fountain. Out of the heart come blasphemies and evil

speakings, Mat. xv. 19. (2.) Watch and guard speech: Ps. xxxix. 1, `I

said, I will take heed to my tongue;, I said, that is, penitus decrevi,

I took up such a resolution. Nay, he saith, he would `keep his mouth as

with a bridle, especially when the wicked were before him., The tongue

had need be restrained with force and watchfulness, for it is quick and

ready to bring forth every wicked conception. You must not only watch

over it, but bridle it; it is good to break the force of these

constraints within us, and to suffocate and choke them in the first

conception. David, though enraged, would keep in his spirit as with a

bridle. Pambus in the Tripartite History was long in learning of this

lesson. So, see Prov. xxx. 32, `If thou hast done foolishly in lifting

up thyself, or hast thought evil, lay thy hand upon thy mouth;, that

is, to bridle and stifle those thoughts of anger, revenge, or any other

ill design; do not deal too softly with unruly evils, but strongly

resist and compress them. This rule should chiefly be observed in

worship: Eccles. v. 1, `Be not rash with thy mouth., Our words should

be more advised; a hasty carelessness engageth to sin: `The preacher

sought out words., Certainly in worship we should see our thoughts ere

they escape from us. (3.) All our endeavours are nothing. Go to God:

Ps. cxli. 3, `Set a watch, O Lord, before my month; keep the door of my

lips., He desireth God to keep him from speaking amiss when he was in

deep afflictions. It is God alone that can tame the tongue; desire the

custody of his spirit: Prov. xvi. 1, `The answer of the tongue is from

the Lord., When the heart is prepared the tongue may falter. In

preaching and praying we are sometimes stopped in the midst of the work

though the matter be meditated. The saints sometimes desire God to open

their mouth, Eph. vi. 19; Ps. l. 15; sometimes to shut it; he doth all

in this matter. (4.) That you may not offend in your words, let them be

oftener employed about holy uses. It is not enough to abstain from

evil-speaking: Eph. iv. 29, `Let no corrupt communication come out of

your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying., So Eph. v.

4, `Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, but rather

giving of thanks ,, eucha'ristia, that is, thankfully remembering your

sweet experiences. You may have joy, if Christians, in other things;

you may communicate to one another your experiences of God, and that is

better mirth than foolish jesting. As we must then avoid the evil of

the tongue, so we must commune one with another more fruitfully,

quickening one another to a sweet apprehension of the benefits of God.

The spouse,s lips `dropped honeycombs,, Cant. iv. Many possibly avoid

conferences grossly evil; but how slow are we to good! Solomon, that

describeth the sad effects of an evil tongue, doth also everywhere

discover the fruits of a good tongue. For a taste take these

places:--Prov. x. 20, `The tongue of the just is as choice silver;, not

only as it is purged from the dross of vanity, and lies, and filthy

speaking, but because of the worth and benefits of it. In another place

he saith it is the `tree of life,, Prov. xi. 30, whose leaves are

medicinable. And Prov. xii. 18, `The tongue of .the wise is health.,

All which should shame us, because we are so backward in holy

discourse, to refresh and heal one another. And out of the whole we may

learn that Christianity doth not take away the use of speech, but rule

it; and doth not make us dumb in converse, but gracious.

Ver. 3, 4. Behold, we put bits into horses, mouths, that they may obey

us; and we turn about their whole bodies. Behold also the ships, which,

though they be great, and driven of fierce winds, yet they are turned

about with a small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth.

These two verses being spent in comparisons and similitudes, need the

less of comment and illustration. The drift of them is to show that

little things are able to guide great bodies, as a bridle and a rudder;

and so the guiding of the tongue, a little member, may be of as great

use and consequence in moral matters. By the bridle we keep the horse

from stumbling, and by the rudder the ship from rocks. So answerably

Solomon saith, Prov. xxi. 23, `Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue,

keepeth his soul from troubles.,

Out of these verses observe:--

Obs. 1. That it is good to illustrate divine things by similitudes

taken from earthly. (1.) Our knowledge is by sense; by things known we

the better apprehend those that are unknown: and by an earthly matter,

with which we are acquainted, we conceive of the sweetness and worth of

that which is heavenly and spiritual. (2.) In a similitude the thing is

doubly represented, and with a sweet variety; though we know the man,

we delight to view the picture Christians should use their parts more

this way; there is much benefit in it; fancy is polished: we are more

fit for occasional meditation, and we apprehend spiritual things with

more clearness and affection.

Obs. 2. Nature, art, and religion show that the smallest things, wisely

ordered, may be of great use. Neglect not small things; we are often

snared by saying, `Is it not a little one?, Gen. xix. 20. And we lose

much advantage by `despising the day of small things,, Zech. iv. 10.

Obs. 3. God,s wisdom is much seen by endowing man with an ability of

contrivance and rare invention; that so fierce and wild a creature as

the horse should be tamed with a bridle, that things of so great a bulk

as ships should be turned about, and that against the violence of

boisterous winds, with a small helm: Aristotle [235] proposeth it as a

worthy matter of consideration. These crafts are all from the Lord:

Isa. liv. 16, `Behold, I create the smith that bloweth in the coals in

the fire, and bringeth forth an instrument for his work., He left these

inventions to human industry, but he giveth the wit and abilities.

[236] The heathens had a several god for every several craft, as the

Papists have now a tutelar saint; but the Lord giveth wisdom. As for

embroidery: Exod. xxxi. 3, `Bezaleel was filled with the Spirit of

God,, &c. Every art is a common gift of the Spirit. So for husbandry,

see Isa. xxviii. 24-26. So for war, Ps. cxliv. 1. Well, then, bless God

for the various dispensations of his gifts for the good of mankind, and

wait upon him, that you may understand the matter of your callings, and

find good in them: Prov. xvi. 20, `He that handleth a matter wisely

shall find good; and whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he., You must

wait upon the Lord for skill and for success; he teacheth to tame the

horse, to steer the ship.

Obs. 4. From the first similitude you may observe, that men, for their

natural fierceness and wantonness, are like wild beasts. Man affected

to be God, but became like `the beasts that perish,, Ps. xlix. 12. The

psalmist saith, Ps. xxxii. 19, `Be not like horse and mule, whose mouth

must be held with bit and bridle, lest they come near thee., To keep

them from doing harm, they must be held in with bit and bridle. So

there is a wantonness by which we are apt to kick with the heel against

God,s precepts, Deut. xxxii. 15. It is God,s mercy that we are

restrained. This natural fierceness may be discerned to be abated by

the guidance of the tongue.

Ver. 5. Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great

things: behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth!

Even so the tongue is a little member.--Here is the reddition of the

similitude; the tongue is a bridle and rudder, small in bulk, and yet

of great use. The apostle,s word is megalauchei, `boasteth great

things;, this indeed is the proper signification of the word. By the

force of the context James should have said, `doth great things;, for

the thing to be proved was, that he that can govern his tongue is able

to govern his whole body. To take off the prejudice that might arise

against such a proposition, he produceth two similitudes, wherein he

would insinuate that things little by good management may be of great

use; and thereupon, in the accommodation of the similitudes to the

present purpose, he should have inferred that the little member the

tongue, well ordered, can do great things; that is, the government of

it is of singular use in man,s life. But he rather, and that according

to the use of the apostles, repeateth the main proposition in such

terms as imply another argument. `And boasteth great things:, as if he

had said, The tongue witnesseth for itself; for by it men^ trumpet out

their confidences and presumptions, and boast they can bring great

things to pass. And he instanceth in boasting, not only as most

accommodate to his matter, but--(1.) Because it is the usual sin of the

tongue; this is a member that most of all serveth pride, a sin from

whence most of the errors and miscarriages of the tongue proceed. (2.)

Because this is usually the sin of those that have no command of their

spirits and actions. Hypocrites and vain men are proud boasters.

`Flattering lips,, and `the tongue that speaketh proud things,, are

joined together, Ps. xii. 3. So Prov. xiv. 3, `In the mouth of the

foolish is the rod of pride., True grace humbleth, false puffeth up.

Behold how great a matter a, little fire kindleth.--Another similitude,

to show that great inconveniences come from the abuse of so small a

member. A man would think that words, that pass away with the breath in

which they are uttered, had not such a weight and deadly influence;

but, saith the apostle, a little fire kindleth much wood. Small things

are not to be neglected in nature, art, religion, or providence. In

nature, matters of moment grow up from small beginnings. Nature loveth

to have the cause and seed of everything small: a little leaven

leaveneth the whole lump; thin exhalations descend in great showers;

small breaches in a sea-bank let in great inundations, &c.

Notes out of this verse are these:--

Obs. I. A usual sin of the tongue is boasting. Sometimes the pride of

the heart shooteth out by the eyes; therefore we read of `haughty

eyes,, and `a proud look,, Prov. vi. 17; but usually it is displayed in

our speech. The tongue trumpeteth it out--(1.) In bold vaunts.

Rabshakeh threatened he would make them `eat their own dung, and drink

their own piss., So Isa. xiv. 13, `I will ascend into the heavens, I

will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit upon the mount

of the congregation, on the sides of the north., He threateneth battle

against God himself, and then against his people. See Hannah,s

dissuasion, 1 Sam. ii. 3, `Talk no more exceeding proudly; let not

arrogancy come out of your mouth,, &c. (2.) In a proud ostentation of

our own worth and excellency: `Is not this great Babel, which I have

built?, First we entertain our spirits with whispers of vanity and

suppositions of applause; and then the rage of vainglory is so great,

that we trumpet out our own shame. It is against reason that a man

should be judge in his own cause. In the Olympic Games the wrestlers

did not put the crowns upon their own heads; that which is lawful

praise in another,s lips, in our own is but boasting. (3.) In

contemptuous challenges of God and man. Of God: `Who is the God of the

Hebrews, that I should let you go?, and Ps. xii. 4, `Our tongues are

our own; who is lord over us?, Of man: Daring, provoking speeches are

recorded in the word. Solomon saith, Prov. xviii. 6, `A fool,s lips

enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for strokes., Cartwright

on that place instanceth in those forms of irritation or provocation,

Do an, thou durst, and, Thou sordid fellow; which he saith are as the

alarum of war, and as drums to beat up to the battle. (4.) Bragging

promises, as if they could achieve and accomplish great matters above

the reach of their gifts and strength: `I will pursue, I will overtake,

I will divide the spoil,, &c., Exod. xv.

Obs. 2. Small things are to be regarded; and we must not consider

matters in their beginning only, but progress, and ultimate issue. A

little sin doth a great deal of mischief, and a little grace is of

great efficacy: Eccles. x. 13, `The beginning of a foolish man,s speech

is foolishness, but the latter end is foolish madness., At first men

toy, wrangle, for sport and pastime, but afterward, break out into

furious passion, and so from folly go on to madness. Contention at

first is but as a spark, but afterwards it being fomented and blown up

by unsober spirits, it `devoureth the great deep,, Amos vii. 4, putteth

whole kingdoms into combustion: Prov. xvii. 14, `The beginning of

strife is as when one letteth out water ,, it is easy to open the

sluices and let it out, but who can call the floods back again? Strife

is sometimes compared to fire, sometimes to water; they are both

unmerciful elements when once they are let loose: Prov. xxvi. 21, `A

man given to strife is as fire to the coals:, when the burning is once

begun, it is easily propagated and continued. So heresy at first is

inconsiderable, but it creepeth like a gangrene from one place to

another, till it hath destroyed the whole body. Arius, a small

Alexandrian spark, enkindled all the world in a flame. [237] So also

providence beginneth great matters upon small occasions. Luther,s

reformation was occasioned by opposing pardoners. Men begin to quarrel

one with another about trifles; and God inferreth great mutations and

changes of states and kingdoms. [238] The young men,s playing may prove

bitterness in the issue, 2 Sam. ii. 26. Christ,s kingdom at first was

despised, a poor tender branch, a little stone crumbled from the

mountains; but afterwards it `filled the whole earth,, Dan. ii. 37.

Well, then, out of all this--(1.) Learn not to neglect evils that are

small in their rise and original; resist sin betimes, Eph. iv. 27; give

no place to Satan. You know not the utmost issue of Satan,s tyranny and

encroachment. So for contention, neither meddle [239] with it at all,

or leave off betime. So for heresy;, take the little foxes,, Cant. ii.

15. Watch over the first and most modest appearances of error: `I did

not give place, not for an hour,, saith the apostle, Gal. ii. 5. (2.)

Learn not to despise the low beginnings of providence and deliverance:

there is a `day of small things,, Zech. iv. 10. God useth to go on when

he hath begun a good work. Philpot said, The martyrs had kindled such a

light in England as should not easily go out.

Ver. 6. And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue

among the members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire

the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.

Here he applieth the similitude of a little fire to an evil tongue:

`And the tongue is a fire,, &c. I shall open the phrases that are most

difficult.

A world of iniquity.--Things that are exuberant and abounding are

expressed by this proverbial speech, `a world., It implieth that the

force and power of the tongue to hurt is very great; as the world is

full of all kind of things, so the tongue of all kind of sin.

So is the tongue among the members; that is, of so great regard; it is

but one, and that a small member among the rest, and yet of such a

cursed influence, that it often draweth guilt upon all the rest of the

members.

That it defileth the whole body.--Ephraim Syrus understandeth this

clause without a figure; he thinketh it is an allusion to the

punishment of leprosy with which Miriam and Aaron were smitten for the

abuse of their tongues. But that agreeth not with this place. The

meaning is, therefore, it blotteth and infected the whole man with sin

and guilt, and so possibly there may be an allusion to what is said,

Eccles, v. 6, `Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin;, where

by flesh is meant the whole man; as also here by body: which term the

apostle used before, ver. 3, and with good advice. (1.) Because he

speaketh of the tongue, which is a member of the body, and so the

rather carrieth the expression in terms suitable. (2.) Because sin,

though it beginneth in the soul, is executed and accomplished by the

body; and it is some grace, when we cannot stop it in the

concupiscible, to stop it in the locomotive power; if not in the lust,

yet in the members. Or (3.) Body, because of that resemblance the

scriptures make between the sins of all the members and a body; and

therefore the course of our actions, whether good or bad, are expressed

by this term; as Mat. vi. 22, `The light of the body is the eye; and

therefore if the eye be single, the whole body is full of light,, &c.;

where body is put for all the actions of the soul: if the understanding

and aim be rightly directed, all the motions are right. Now the tongue

defileth this whole body, as it persuadeth to sin, or else uttereth and

bewrayeth sin, and so showeth the whole man to be defiled. It also

engageth to sin: the tongue often engageth the hand to smite with the

fist of wickedness, and by its brawling and contention other members

are involved in sin and inconveniences. So also for other sins, men

speak evil, and then commit it; one member infected maketh way for the

corruption and defilement of another; and the tongue being of so

sovereign an influence, tainteth all.

And setteth on fire.--He showeth the further efficacy of this

tongue-fire; it doth not only black and sully, but it devoureth and

destroyeth. He expresseth it by this phrase, `setteth on fire,, because

of the comparison foregoing; and it is very proper, partly in regard of

the effects of the tongue, which are usually false heats, passion,

wrath, raging, violence, contrary to which is that `cool spirit, which

Solomon saith is in the prudent man; partly in regard of the tongue,s

manner of working in contentions. It is rapid and violent; men are by

the tongue transported and heated into inconveniences; and it is also

disorderly, like raging fire, causing great confusions; and therefore

in any heat we had need look to the rise and quality of it: be sure to

watch over your spirit when it beginneth to grow furious and inflamed.

The whole course of nature.--In the original it is to`n tro'chon tes

gene'seos, which some render, `the wheel of our nativity,, by which he

intendeth the whole course of our lives; there is no action, no age, no

estate privileged from the influence of it. The Syriac interpreter

hath, `all our generations,, as if the sense were, that all ages of the

world are conscious to the evils of the tongue, and can produce

instances and experiences of it. But the word rather signifieth our

natural course, or the wheel of human conversation.

And it is set on fire of hell.--He showeth whence the tongue hath all

this malice and mischief; from hell, that is, from the devil, who is

the father of lies, the author of malice and virulency, and doth by the

tongue, as a dexterous instrument or fit servant, transmit lies, and

slanders, and strifes, for inflaming and enkindling the world. Some

read, phlogisome'ne, `it shall be set on fire of hell,, as implying the

punishment; but in all approved copies it is phlogizome'ne, `is set on

fire,, as noting the original.

The points observable are these:--

Obs. 1. There is a resemblance between an evil tongue and fire:--(1.)

For the heat of it. It is the instrument of wrath and contention, which

is the heat of a man--a boiling of the blood about the heart. Solomon

saith, `A man of understanding is of a cool spirit,, Prov. xvii. 27.

Hot water boileth over, so do passions in the heart boil out in the

words. Of the ungodly man it is said, Prov. xvi. 27, `In his lips there

is a burning fire. (2.) For the danger of it. It kindleth a great

burning. The tongue is a powerful means to kindle divisions and

strifes. You know we had need look to fire. It is a bad master, and a

good servant. Where it prevaileth, it soon turneth houses into a

wilderness; and you have as much need to watch the tongue. Solomon

saith, Prov. xxvi. 18, `The fool casteth firebrands, and saith, Am I

not in sport?, We throw fire abroad, scalding words, and do not think

of the danger of them. (3.) For the scorching. Reproaches penetrate

like fire. David compareth them to `coals of juniper,, Ps. cxx. 4,

which burn hottest and longest; they may be kept a whole year. The

Septuagint have tois anthra'xi tois eremikois, `desolating coals., Fire

is a most active element, and leaveth a great sense and pain. So do

reproaches, like the living coals of juniper. (4.) It is kindled from

hell, as in the close of the verse. Zeal is a holy fire that cometh

from heaven, this from hell. Isaiah,s lips were `touched with a coal

from the altar,, Isa. vi. 6; and the Holy Ghost descended in cloven

tongues of fire, Acts ii. But this is fire from beneath, of an infernal

original. Oh! labour then for a cool spirit. A tongue that is set on

fire from hell shall be set on fire in hell. You know who wished for a

drop to cool his tongue. The hot words of wrath, strife, and censure

come from Satan, and lead to Satan. [240] When you feel this heat upon

your spirit, remember from what hearth these coals were gathered. God,s

word was as fire in Jeremiah,s bones, so is wrath many times in ours;

yet though wrath boil, keep anger from being a scorching fire in your

tongues. See Ps. xxxix. 3, &c.

Obs. 2. There is a world of sin in the tongue. It is an instrument of

many sins. By it we induce ourselves to evil, by it we seduce others.

Some sins are formal and proper to this member, others flow from it. It

acteth in some sins, as lying, railing, swearing, &c. It concurreth to

others, by commanding, counselling, persuading, seducing, &c. It is

made the pander to lust and sin. Oh! how vile are we if there be a

world of sin in the tongue--in one member! Some [241] have reckoned as

many sins in the tongue as there are letters in the alphabet. Where

shall we find a rule and account to number up the sins of every

member?, All the imaginations are evil,, Gen. vi. 3. As there is

saltness in every drop of the sea, and bitterness in every branch of

wormwood, there is an `overspreading of abominations, throughout the

whole man, Dan. ix. 27. Again, we may consider the ingratitude of man.

Our tongue is our glory; [242] it is the member by which we discover

and show forth our reason; it fitteth us for commerce. Speech maketh

man a sociable creature; [243] yet there is a world of iniquity in the

tongue.

Obs. 3. From that and defileth. Sin is a defilement and a blot. We hear

of `filthy communication,, `filthy lucre,, and `filthy lusts., The very

show of sin is called `filthiness of the flesh,, 2 Cor. vii. 1.

Scandalous sinners are the stain of their society: `These are spots in

your love feasts., It will be your own disgrace. When, you give up

yourselves to the practice of sin, you get to yourselves a blot: Deut.

xxxii. 5, `Their spot is not as the spot of God,s people., And it will

be your eternal disadvantage: Rev. xxi. 27, `And there shall in no wise

enter into it anything that defileth., In short, sin is such a

filthiness that it is ashamed of itself. It seeketh to hide itself from

those that most love it, and goeth shrouded under the disguise of

virtue. There needeth no other argument to make it odious than to see

it in its own colours.

Obs. 4. Tongue sins do much defile. They defile others. We communicate

evil to others, either by carnal suggestions, or provoke them to evil

by our passion. They defile ourselves. By speaking evil of them we

contract guilt upon ourselves. Either they deserve it not, and so it is

a lie, which is a great blot, or if the crime imposed be true, their

sin is made ours by an undue speaking of it. [244]

Obs. 5. From that the whole body. An evil tongue hath a great influence

upon other members. When a man speaketh evil, he will commit it. When

the tongue hath the boldness to talk of sin, the rest of the members

have the boldness to act it: 1 Cor. xv. 33, `Evil words corrupt good

manners., First we think, then speak, and then do. Men will say it is

but talk. Be not deceived; a pestilent tongue will infect other

members.

Obs. 6. From that the course, or wheel, of our nativity. Man,s life is

like a wheel. It is always in motion; we are always turning and rolling

to our graves: Ps. xc. 3, `Thou turnest man to destruction, and sayest,

Return, ye children of men., The meaning is, they are turned into the

world, and returned to the grave. It noteth also the uncertainty of any

worldly state; the spokes are now up, and now down, sometimes in the

dirt, and sometimes out. The bishops of Mentz give a wheel for their

arms; it is but the emblem of our lives, and the inconstancy of every

condition of life; when you see the wheel , improve the occasion to

some good meditation. There is a story of Bajazet, as also of another

taken by an ancient king of France, when they saw the wheel of the

conqueror,s chariot, they smiled, saying, `The upper spokes will come

down again., Here we are always moving, sometimes up, sometimes down,

but still towards the grave.

Obs. 7. The evils of the tongue are of a large and universal influence,

diffuse themselves into all conditions and states of life. There is no

faculty which the tongue doth not poison, from the understanding to the

locomotive; it violently stirreth up the will and affections, maketh

the hands and the feet `swift to shed blood., Rom. iii. 14, 15. There

is no action which it doth not reach; not only those of ordinary

conversation, by lying, swearing, censuring, &c., but holy duties, as

prayer, and those direct and higher addresses to God, by foolish

babbling, and carnal requests; we would have God revenge our private

quarrel. Pulpits are made stages and cockpits, on which men play their

prizes and masteries, and set on private passions. There is no age

exempted; it is not only found in young men, that are of eager and

fervorous spirits, but in those whom age and experience hath more

matured and ripened. Other sins decay with age, this many times

increaseth; and we grow more forward and pettish as natural strength

decayeth, and `the days come on in which is no pleasure., I say, when

other sins lose their vigour, as being tamed and subdued by the

infirmities of old age, we see the spirit groweth more tart, nature

being drawn down to the dregs, and the expressions more passionate. No

calling is exempted. The tradesman in his shop abuseth his tongue for

gain: Prov. xxi. 6, `The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a

vanity tossed to and fro of them that love death;, the woman at home,

in idle tattling, and vain censures. Ministers in the pulpit often

prostitute the sacredness of their function to the corruption of the

tongue, by preaching for gain, by being `rash with their mouths to

utter anything before God,, Eccles. v. 1; by being furiously

passionate, &c. There is no temper so meek and humble but may be

perverted. Holy Moses, the meekest man upon earth, was angry at the

waters of strife, and brake out into passion: Ps. cvi. 33, `He spake

unadvisedly with his lips., Meek Christians in a disease, how fro ward

are they! injurious even to God himself. David well prayeth in a great

cross, `O Lord, keep the door of my lips,, Ps. cxli. 3. Well, then,

none of us should think these exhortations unnecessary. It is a vain

scoff, and it argueth horrible slightness of spirit, to charge this

only upon the female sex: through the strength and pregnancy of

imagination or fancy, they may be given to talk; but you see men, the

best and highest, are apt to offend. The apostle saith, `It setteth on

fire the whole course of nature., No part of man so noxious and

hurtful; no part of a man more fierce and unbridled; no part more easy

and apt to err.

Obs. 8. A wicked tongue is of an infernal original. The prophets,

fires, as I told you, were kindled from heaven; like the chaste fires

of the Roman vestals, which, if let out, were to be rekindled by a sun

beam. In all heats it is good to see whence they come; heat in good

matters out of a selfish aim, is a coal fetched not from the altar, but

the kitchen. Calumnies and reproaches are a fire blown up by the breath

of hell. The devil hath been `a liar from the beginning,, John viii.

44, and an accuser of the brethren, and he loveth to make others like

himself. Learn, then, to abhor revilings, contentions, and reproaches,

as you would hell flames; these are but the eruptions of an infernal

fire; slanderers are the devil,s slaves and instruments. Again, if

blasted with contumely, learn to slight it; who would care for the

suggestions of the father of lies? The murderer is a liar. In short,

that which cometh from hell will go thither again: Mat. v. 22,

`Whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.,

Wrath being expressed in a word of reproach, you see how deadly and

grievous it is. By nourishing an evil tongue, you do nourish and keep

in hell flame, which hereafter will break out to your destruction.

Ver. 7, 8. For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and

things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of man kind: but the

tongue can no man tame: it is an unruly evil, and full of deadly

poison.

Having showed the cursed influence of the tongue, he showeth how

difficult the cure is. Wild beasts are more tractable, and may be

sooner brought to hand, than an evil tongue; it is wilder than the

wildest beast.

Every kind of beasts, and birds, and serpents, and things in the

sea.--The enumeration is the more full, that he may show how far human

art can reach. For instances and stories, interpreters abound in them.

How lions have been tamed and brought to hunt as dogs, or draw the

chariot as horses, you may see Pliny in his Natural History, lib. viii.

cap. 16, and �lian, lib. xv. cap. 14. How birds have been taught, you

may see Plin. lib. x. cap 42, and Macrob. lib. ii. Saturn, cap. 10. Of

elephants, Lipsius, cent, prim�, Epist. 50. In short, nothing is so

violent and noxious by nature but human art and industry hath made it

serviceable to human uses. This is a fruit and relic of that dominion

God gave man over the creatures at first; by an instinct put into their

natures they were all to obey him and serve him; but man, revolting,

lost imperium suum and imperium sui, the command of himself and the

command of the creatures; he rebelling against God, the creatures

rebelled against him, to avenge the quarrel of the creator. But now, by

art and industry, and some relics of the image of God in himself, and

the help and concurrence of a general providence, he doth in part

recover his dominion over the creatures; but over himself he cannot by

any means, no, not over his tongue, `a little member;, for to that end

is this illustration brought here.

Is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind.--As if he had said, It not

only hath been done in ancient times, but we see it still done. He

useth this distinctness of expression to show that he doth not only

intend the subjection of the creatures before the fall, which was full

and voluntary, or some miraculous effects, as when the whale hurted not

Jonah, chap. ii.; or the lions, Daniel in the den, chap. vi.; or the

viper, Paul, Acts xxviii; but what is usual and ordinary, and falleth

out often in common experience.

But the tongue can no man tame.--The old Pelagians, wholly wresting

this place, did read it as an interrogation, as if the sense were, Man

can tame all other things, and can he not then tame himself? which is

quite contrary to the apostle,s scope, which is to show what an unruly

and an untractable evil the tongue is. Others, to avoid the seeming

harshness of the sentence, say, He speaketh of other men,s tongues; who

can stop them? as if it were a saying of a like sense with that Ps.

cxx. 3, `What shall we give to thee? or what shall be done to thee,

thou false tongue?, How shall I prevent it? But this also doth not

agree with the apostle,s scope, who doth not show how we should bridle

other men,s tongues, but guide our own. The meaning is, then, no man

can do it of himself; and we have not such an absolute concurrence of

the divine grace as to do it wholly.

It is an unruly evil, kako`n akata'scheton.--Some take it causally; it

is the cause of sedition and unruliness: but rather it signifieth what

was formerly expressed, an evil that will not be held in. It is a

metaphor taken from beasts that are kept within rails or chains. God

hath, in the structure of the mouth, appointed a double rail to it,

teeth and lips, and by grace laid many restraints upon it; and yet it

breaketh out.

Full of deadly poison.--It is an allusion to such creatures as hurt by

poison. The tongue is as deadly, and hath as much need to be tamed, as

venomous beasts. Besides, some beasts carry their poison in their

tongues, as the asp in a bladder under the tongue, which, when they

bite, is broken, and then the poison cometh out; therefore it is said,

Ps. cxl. 3, `They have sharpened their tongues as a serpent; adders,

poison is under their lips.,

The notes are these: from the 7th verse you may observe:--

Obs. 1. The tractableness of the beasts to man, and the disobedience of

man to God. Beasts are tamed, serpents are charmed by our skill, but we

are not charmed by all the witchcrafts and allurements of Heaven: Ps.

lviii. 4, 5, `Their poison is like the poison of a serpent; they are

like the deaf adder, which stoppeth her ear, which will not hearken to

the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely., It is an allusion to

the fashion of the asp, which, when he seeth the charmer, layeth one

ear close to the ground, and covereth the other with his tail. But now

we read in the text, `Serpents have been tamed, and are tamed., But all

the magic of the gospel, the sweet spells of grace, will not cure the

heart of man. So the ox, a creature of great strength, is obedient to

man, a weaker creature; but we kick with the heel against God, as the

prophet, Isa. i. 3, `The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master,s

crib; but my people doth not know, Israel doth not consider., Fallen

man may go to school to the beasts to learn mildness and obedience; and

yet God hath more power to subdue, and we have more reason to obey.

Obs. 2. The greatness of man,s folly and impotency in governing his own

soul. Though he tameth other things, he doth not tame himself. We seek

to recover our loss of dominion over the creatures, but who seeketh to

recover that power which he once had over his own soul? How can we lock

to have our dominion entire over beasts and inferior creatures, when by

the irregularity of our lusts we make ourselves as one of them? Ps.

xlix. 12, `He is as the beasts that perish., We all affect sovereignty,

but not holiness. Men seek to conquer others, but not themselves.

Solomon saith, `He that ruleth his own spirit is better than he that

winneth a city;, that is the nobler conquest, but we effect it not. We

would recover our lordship over the creatures, but still remain

captives to our own lusts. Domat feram, non domat linguam; it was

Austin,s [245] complaint, we do not tame the beasts in our own bosoms.

The evil tongue is the worst serpent; and the most rabid and curst of

all the fierce beasts is the railer; and therefore Solomon saith, Prov.

xxi. 19, `It is better to dwell in a wilderness, than with a

contentious and angry woman., In the wild desert there are lions, and

bears, and tigers, but these assault us but now and then, and these can

but rend the skin; but a contentious woman is like a tiger, that still

lieth in our bosoms, with sharp and bitter words, ever ready to fret

out our hearts.

Obs. 3. The deepness of man,s misery. Our own art and skill is able to

tame the fiercest beasts, and make them serviceable; beasts as strong

as lions and elephants; fishes that do, as it were, inhabit another

world; birds as swift almost as a thought; serpents hurtful and

noxious. But, alas! there is more rebellion in our affections; sin is

stronger, all our art will not tame it. We may teach beasts to do

things contrary to their fierceness and natural dispositions;

^elephants to crouch, horses to dance; but man is the'rion

dusmetachei'riston as Plato called him, a beast that will not easily

come to hand. We see in children much stubbornness, ere they come to be

ripened and habituated in sin. A man would think their inclinations

should be more flexible; but `folly is bound up in their hearts.,

Certainly man,s will is the toughest sinew in the whole creation.

Obs. 4. Art and skill to subdue creatures is a relic and argument of

our old superiority. The heathens [246] discerned we had once a do

minion, and the scriptures plainly assert it: Gen. i. 26, `Let them

have dominion over the fowl of the air, over the fish of the sea, and

over all the earth, and over the cattle, and over every creeping

thing., Next to God,s glory, they were ordained for man,s service and

benefit. We had a right and a grant from God, and therefore all the

beasts were to come to Adam and receive their names, which was a kind

of formal submission to his government, and a presenting of their

homage and fealty to him. For the maintaining of this government, God

gave man wisdom, and planted an instinct in the creatures by which they

should be ready to obey him, fearful of doing him harm and offence. And

therefore, when the grant was in part renewed, it was said to Noah and

his sons, Gen. ix. 2, `The fear and dread of you shall be upon every

beast of the earth, fowls of the air, fishes of the sea,, &c. So that

then Adam could converse among the beasts without fear (as Noah and his

sons did afterwards in the ark by singular dispensation), and command

them at his beck and will; there would have been, on man,s part, no

such difficulty to subdue them to human uses--Adam, in the great wisdom

with which he was then furnished, knowing how to accommodate himself to

the dispositions of the beasts; and on the beasts, part, there would

have been no repugnancy. But, alas! ever since the fall this right was

forfeited, and the creatures withdrew themselves from man,s obedience,

and proved hurtful and rebellious; [247] therein representing to us our

own treason and disloyalty. And therefore usually wild beasts are made

an instrument of divine vengeance: 2 Kings xvii. 25, `The Lord sent

lions among them., So Ezek. xiv. 15, `I will cause noisome beasts to

pass through the land, and spoil it., The insurrection and rebellion of

the creatures against us is a memorial of our unfaithfulness and

rebellion against God. But yet, though this grant be forfeited, it is

not wholly extinguished. A wicked man hath lost his right, but not the

use, which to him is continued out of God,s patience and general

providence, for the preservation of human society. And the elect have a

new title and right by Christ, which will at length fully instate them

in the absoluteness of the old dominion; [248] when the creature, being

`freed from the bondage of corruption,, shall willingly be subject to

the children of God, Rom. viii. 19-22. But for the present the dominion

is exercised in a much lower way than it was in innocency. Though we

have some skill to subdue them, and govern them for human uses, either

of profit or delight; and though there be some instinct of fear in the

hurtful creatures, and therefore they do not come abroad at such times

as man is supposed to be in the field, Ps. civ. 20-23, yet this

subjection is not with such willingness as formerly on the creatures,

part, Rom. viii. 20, nor with such easiness on ours, it being a matter

of more difficulty and toil. Besides that, there are many creatures

which, by their swiftness and fierceness, do wholly escape the terrors

of man,s sovereignty.

From the 8th verse observe:--

Obs. 1. The tongue is hardly tamed and subdued to any right use. I say

hardly; for he doth not say none, but no man can--no human art and

power can ever find a remedy and curb for it. And in this life God doth

not give out absolute grace so as to avoid every idle word. The note is

useful to refute the patrons of free-will; it cannot tame one member;

and also perfectists. Do but consider the offences of the tongue, and

you will see that you have cause to walk humbly with God. If he should

but charge the sins of your own tongue upon you, what will become of

you? But if it cannot be tamed, what shall we do? why do you bid us

bridle it? I answer--(1.) If we have lost our power, God must not lose

his right. Weakness doth not exempt from duty; we must bridle it,

though we cannot of ourselves. (2.) Though we cannot bridle it, yet God

can: Mat. xix. 26, it is a hard matter for `a rich man to enter into

the kingdom of God; but with God all things are possible., Difficulty

and impossibility as to the creature,s endeavours are left, that we may

fly to God. The horse doth not tame himself, nor the camel himself, nor

man himself; [249] man tameth the beast, and God tameth man; thou

tamest a lion, and thou didst not make it: God made thee, and shall he

not tame thee? Imago Dei domat feram, saith Augustine; domabit Deus

imagmem suam. The work is done by the next highest power. (3.) To those

that attempt it, and do what they are able, God will give grace; he

never faileth a diligent, waiting soul. When God hath given you to`

thelein, `to will,, he will give you to` energein, `to do;, the first

motions are from him, and so is the accomplishment; offer yourselves to

his work. (4.) Though we cannot be altogether without sin, yet we must

not altogether leave off to resist sin. Sin reigneth where it is not

resisted; it only remaineth in you where it is opposed. But you will

say, What is our duty? I answer--(1.) Come before God humbly; bewail

the depravation of your natures, manifested in this untamed member.

This was one of the sins which Austin confessed, he said his tongue was

fornax mali, an �tna that was always vomiting up distempered fires and

heats. Complain of it to God: `wretched man! who shall deliver me?,

(2.) Come earnestly; this was one of the occasions upon which Austin in

his Confessions [250] sobbed out his Da quod jubes, et jube quod

vis--Lord, give what thou commandest, and command what thou wilt. He

spake it upon the occasion of lust, and he spake it upon the occasion

of the evils of the tongue. Your applications to grace must be the more

earnest and frequent; cry for a remedy: `O Lord, keep the door of my

lips,, Ps. cxli. 3.

Obs. 2. From that an unruly evil. There is an unbridled license and

violence in the tongue: Job xxxii. 19, `Behold, my belly is as wine

which hath no vent, it is ready to burst like new bottles., When the

mind is big with the conception, the tongue is earnest to utter it: Ps.

xxxix. 3, `My heart was hot within me; while I was musing, the fire

burned., Therefore in the remedy we should use not only spiritual care,

but an holy violence: `I will keep my mouth as with a bridle,, `I will

lay my hand upon my mouth,, Ps. xxxix. 1. And you had need look to the

heart; it cometh from `the abundance of iniquity,, naughtiness must

have some vent for its excrement and superfluity; and from the heat of

wrath get a cool spirit; and from the itch of vainglory let man,s

honour seem a small thing, 1 Cor. iv. 3; and from the height of

discontent, full vessels will plash over. Meeken the heart into a sweet

submission, lest discontent seek the vent of murmuring.

Obs. 3. From that full of deadly poison. A wicked tongue is venomous

and hurtful: as Bernard observeth, it killeth three at once--him that

is slandered, his fame by ill report; him to whom it is told, his

belief with a lie; and himself with the sin of detraction. Bless God

when you escape those deadly bites, the fangs of detraction `A good

name is a precious ointment,, and a slanderous tongue is a `deadly

poison;, nothing will secure you but the antidote of innocency; but if

it be your lot, bear it with patience; there is a resurrection of names

as well as persons. Though you are poisoned by the tongue of

detraction, yet remember he is wont to give a cordial `in whose mouth

there is no guile,, 1 Peter ii. 22. It may also dissuade men from the

sin; we would not poison one another; slander is poison.

Ver. 9. Therewith we bless God, even the leather; and therewith we

curse men, that are made offer the similitude of God.

Here he showeth the good and bad use of the tongue; the good to bless

God, the bad to curse men; and the absurdity of doing both with the

same tongue: you put the same member to the best and worst use. Things

employed in worship, because of their relation are wont to be accounted

holy; certainly too worthy to be submitted or debauched to mean, at

least, to the vilest, uses and purposes; that were a monstrous and

unbeseeming levity.

I shall open the phrases in the points.

Obs. 1. The proper use of the tongue is to bless God: Ps. li. 15, `Open

my mouth, and I will show forth thy praise., If God give speech and

abilities of utterance, he must have the glory; it is the rent we owe

to him. This is the advantage we have above the creatures, that we can

be distinct and explicit in his praises: Ps. cxlv. 10, `All thy works,

O Lord, shall praise thee, and thy saints shall bless thee., The

creatures offer the matter, but the saints publish it. The whole

creation is as a well-tuned instrument, but man maketh the music.

Speech, being the most excellent faculty, should be consecrated to

divine uses: [251] Eph. v. 4, `Nor filthiness, nor foolish speaking,

but giving of thanks,, eucha'ristia, thankfully remembering your sweet

experiences. It is a Christian,s work, and his recreation: `While I

have breath I will praise the Lord,, saith the psalmist. God gave us

these pipes and organs for that purpose; your breath cannot be better

spent. Acts ii. 4, when they spake with other tongues, they spake `the

wonderful works of God., Well, then, go away and say, `I will bless the

Lord continually; his praise shall be always in my mouth,, Ps. xxxiv.

1. This is to begin heaven upon earth. Some birds sing in winter as

well as in spring. Stir up one another, Eph. v. 18, as one bird setteth

all the flock a-chirping.

Obs. 2. From that God, even the Father; that is, of Christ, and in him

of us: you had the same speech, chap. i. 27. The note is, We bless God

most cheerfully when we consider him as a father. Thoughts of God as a

judge cannot be comfortable. Our meditations of him are sweet when we

look upon him as a father in Christ. The new song and the new heart do

best suit. [252] Every one cannot learn the Lamb,s new song, Rev. xiv.

3. Praise cometh from us most kindly when it cometh from us like water

out of a fountain, not like water out of a still; out of a sense of

love, not out of a fear of wrath. Wicked men can howl, though they

cannot sing. Pharaoh in his misery could say, `The Lord is righteous.,

Obs. 3. From that and therewith me curse men. The same tongue should

not bless God and curse men, it is hypocrisy. Acts of piety are

counterfeited when acts of charity are neglected: Ps. l. 16, with 19,

20, `What hast thou to do to take my covenant in thy mouth? seeing thou

givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit: thou speakest

against thy brother, and slanderest thine own mother,s son., Hypocrites

are most censorious, but true piety maketh men meek and humble. It is

storied of Cranmer, that he never miscalled a servant, or used words of

disgrace and contempt to them. Religion begetteth a grave awe and

reverence. The seraphim never revile, but only praise God: Jude 9, `He

durst not bring a railing accusation against the devil., Some are of a

wicked temper, can only curse, like dogs, non proferitate, sed pro

consuetudine latrant, that bark not so much out of fierceness as

custom. They know not how to pray, their mouths are so inured to

cursing and evil-speaking. Others there are that can curse and bless at

the same time: `They bless with their mouths, but they curse inwardly,,

Ps. lxii. 4; others that curse and rail under a pretence of piety and

zeal. The evils of the tongue, where they are not restrained, cannot

consist with true piety. Obedience is counterfeit where it is not

uniform. One table cannot be kept with the violation of another. Oh!

check yourselves, then, when you are about to break out into passion.

Shall I pray and brawl with the same tongue? and divert from worship to

railing? With this tongue I have been speaking to God, and shall it

presently be set on fire of hell?

Obs. 4. Man is made after God,s own image: `Let us make man after our

image and likeness,, Gen. i. 26. In other creatures there are vestigia;

we may track God by his works, but man is his very image and likeness.

I shall not be large in this argument. This image of God consisteth in

three things--(1.) In his nature, which was intellectual. God gave him

a rational soul, spiritual, simple, immortal, free in its choice; yea,

in the body there were some rays and strictures of the divine glory and

majesty. (2.) In those qualities of `knowledge,, Col. iii. 10;,

righteousness,, Eccles. vii. 29: and `true holiness,, Eph. iv. 24. (3.)

In his state, in a happy confluence of all inward and outward

blessings, as the enjoyment of God, power over the creatures, &c. But

now this image is in a great part defaced and lost, and can only be

restored in Christ. Well, then, this was the great privilege of our

creation, to be made like God: the more we resemble him the more happy.

Oh! remember the height of your original. We press men to walk worthy

their extraction. Those potters that were of a servile spirit disgraced

the kingly family and line of which they came, 1 Chron. iv. 22.

Plutarch saith of Alexander, that he was wont to heighten his courage

by remembering he came of the gods. [253] Remember you were made after

the image of God; do not deface it in yourselves, or render it liable

to contempt, by giving others occasion to revile you.

Obs. 5. It is a dissuasive from slandering and evil-speaking of others,

to consider they are made after God,s image. I shall inquire--(1.) How

this can be a motive. (2.) Wherein the force of it lieth.

1. How can this be a motive, since the image and likeness of God is

defaced and lost by the fall? I answer--He speaketh of new creatures

especially, in whom Adam,s loss is repaired and made up again in

Christ: Col. iii. 10, `Ye have put on the new man, which is renewed in

knowledge after the image of him that created him., So Eph. iv. 24,

`That ye put on the new man, which, after God, is created in

righteousness and true holiness., God is tender of his new creatures;

intemperance of tongue against saints is dangerous: as he said, `Take

heed what you do; this man is a Roman,, so take heed what you speak;

these are Christians, created after God,s image, choice pieces, whom

God hath restored out of the common ruins. (2.) He may speak it

concerning all men, for there are some few relics of God,s image in

all, as Epiphanius well argueth out of that Gen. ix. 6, `Who so

sheddeth man,s blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image

of God made he him., In which reason there would be no force, if there

were not after sin some relics of God left in man, though much

deformed. So this saying in James, being promiscuously spoken of all

kind of men, it argueth, that in them as yet remaineth some similitude

of God, as the simplicity and immortality of the soul; some moral

inclinations instead of true holiness; some common notices of the

nature and will of God instead of saving knowledge; which, though they

cannot make us happy, yet serve to leave us inexcusable. So also some

pre-eminence above other creatures, as we have a mind to know God,

capable of divine illumination and grace; and in the fabric of the body

and countenance there is some majesty and excellency above the beasts,

as also in the relics of dominion and authority spoken of before. And

look, as we reverence the drizzled picture of a friend, and the ruins

of a stately edifice, so some respect is due to these remains of our

primitive integrity.

2. Wherein lieth the force of the argument--cursing man made after the

image of God? I answer--(1.) God hath made man his deputy to receive

love and common respects; higher respects of trust and worship are to

be carried out to God alone; but in other things, Christians, the

poorest of them, are Christ,s receivers. Hence those expressions, `He

that despiseth you, despiseth me,, Luke x. 16; and `Inasmuch as ye did

it not to one of these little ones, ye did it not to me,, Mat. xxv.

(2.) The image of God is that which we can come at: we would blast all

excellency: [254] we go as far as our malice can reach. As they say,

the panther, when she cannot come at the man, rendeth his picture; so

do we deal with God. (3.) God himself is wronged by the injury done to

his image; as among men the contempt and despite is done to the king

himself which is done to his image or coin; as Mat. xxiii. 18, to

`swear by the altar,, which was the symbol of God,s presence, was to

swear by God. [255] (4.) This is the fence God hath placed against

injury: Gen. ix. 6, `For in the image of God made he him., It is

referred, not to the slayer, as if he had sinned against those common

notices of justice and right continued in his conscience, but of the

man slain, he is the image of God: God hath honoured this lump of flesh

by stamping his own image upon him; and who would offer violation to

the image of the great King? Now to speak evil against him is to wrong

the image of God. All God,s works are to be looked upon and spoken of

with reverence, much more his image.

Well, then, in your carriage towards men let this check injury and

indecency of speech: he is God,s image. Though images are not to be

worshipped, yet the image of God is not to be bespattered with

reproaches; especially if they have a new creation, and a new forming:

these are vessels of honour. Consider against whom the sin is in its

latest result, a despite done to God himself, because done to his work

and image. Solomon saith, Prov. xvii. 5, `Whoso mocketh the poor

reproacheth his maker., God is the maker of all; but he instanceth in

the poor because they are the usual objects of our scoffs and

reproaches: though poor and mean, they are the image of God as well as

thou: this should beget a restraint and reverence. Nay, the poor are

secured by a special reason; their persons are the image of God, and

their condition is the work of God. Besides creation there is an

ordination of providence; you afflict a man, and you afflict misery,

which are both of God,s making; and though they cannot avenge the

injury, God can, whose command you have not only violated, but his

image.

Ver. 10. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing mid cursing. My

brethren, these things ought not to be so.

He amplifieth the absurdity by a repetition or new proposal of it. His

meekness is observable, he might have reproved them sharply; but

dissuading them from the evils of the tongue, he would himself give

them a pattern of modesty and gentleness.

These things ought not to be so; that is, they should be quite other

wise. It is a phrase savouring of apostolical meekness; Paul useth it

in almost a like case, 1 Tim. v. 13, `Speaking things they ought not;,

and Titus i. 11, `Teaching things which they ought not.,

Out of this verse observe:--

Obs. 1. That blessings and cursing do not become the same mouth. This

is like him in �sop that blew hot and cold with the same breath. A good

man should be uniform and constant: the same heart cannot be occupied

by God and the devil, nor the same tongue be employed to such different

uses. The Pharisee prayed and censured at the same time, Luke xviii.

10; and many pray and curse, pray and rail, in the same breath. This is

most unseemly; one part condemneth and destroyeth the other; the good

aggravateth the evil, and the evil disproveth the good: railing is the

worse because of the solemnity of the action; and praying is but a

revengeful eructation, when thus managed and accompanied. When the

tongue is employed in prayer, it is as it were hallowed and

consecrated, and therefore must not be alienated to common and vile

purposes. They were carnal wretches that said `Our tongues are our

own,, Ps. xii. 4; thine is given up to God.

Obs. 2. From that ought not to be. We must look not to what we desire

to do, but what ought to be done. Lust, or the bent of the spirit, is

not the rule of duty. Many advise with no other counsellor but their

own hearts; carnal constraints are an ill warrant. Beasts are led by

strength of instinct and natural impulse; man is to be governed by an

outward rule: there is an higher Lord than your own will. Look, then,

not to the earnestness of your motions, but the regularity of them; not

at what you would, but what you ought.

Ver. 11, 12. Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water

and bitter? Can the fig-tree, my brethren, bear olive-berries? either a

vine, figs? so can no fountain yield both salt water and fresh.

Here are several illustrations taken from the course of nature, to show

that one cause and original can have but one orderly and kindly birth.

He reasoneth from what is impossible in nature to what is absurd in

manners. In the similitudes he speaketh of what falleth out for the

most part. If any rare instances can be brought to the contrary, it

prejudiceth not the apostle,s scope, which is to show what falleth out

in the wonted course and influence of causes, and thereby to declare

how incompatible with true religion the evils of the tongue are if not

restrained.

Obs. Nature abhorreth hypocrisy and double-dealing; contrary effects

from the same cause are monstrous: it is against the whole ordination

of God among the creatures. There is not a surer note of hypocrisy then

deformity of effects and practices. It is true a Christian hath a

double principle--flesh and spirit; but not a double heart. All the

productions of the soul are like the yeanlings of Laban,s sheep, Gen.

xxx. 39, `Speckled and spotted:, but in an hypocrite,s life there is an

utter dissonancy and disproportion. Hate this double-dealing, when you

profess religion and live in sins; see how contrary it is to the whole

course of nature: say, Sure this cannot come from an uniform and good

heart. Especially use these illustrations to check the deformities of

your speech; when you are apt to bless and curse, pray and revile, say,

This would be monstrous in nature; is there such another cause in the

world as the tongue is--of such, different uses and employments?

Ver. 13. Who is a wise man, and endued with knowledge among you? let

him show out of a good conversation his ivories with meekness of

wisdom.

He now diverteth to another matter, though that which is near of kin

with the former, which is an exhortation to meekness, as opposed to

envy and strife.

Who is a wise man among you, and endued with knowledge? Some apply

this, as all the former discourse, to the ministry, as if the meaning

of the question or supposition were, If any be qualified for this

dispensation; and they are strengthened in this conceit by the words

here used, so'phos kai` episte'mon which hold forth the two gifts that

are necessary for the ministry. The apostle elsewhere calleth them `the

word of knowledge `and `the word of wisdom,, 1 Cor. xii. 8; but the

very structure of the words showeth them to be generally intended. He

speaketh of wisdom and knowledge, because all the former evils come

from a presumption of greater skill and ability than others; or because

they affected the repute of prudent, knowing Christians. Now, saith the

apostle, if you would be so indeed, you must be meekly godly. The

questionary proposal intimateth the rare contemperation of these two

qualities; wisdom and knowledge are very seldom coupled: knowing he

might grant these censors to be, but not wise.

Let him show out of a good conversation.--The first requisite of true

wisdom is to honour knowledge with practice, that being the end of all

information; and the knowing person having a greater obligation to duty

than others.

His works with meekness of wisdom.--Here is the second requisite,

prudent meekness in converse, wisdom being most able to consider of

frailties, and to bridle anger.

The points are these:--

Obs. 1. Wisdom and knowledge do well together; the one to inform, the

other to direct. They are elsewhere coupled: Hosea xiv. 9, `Who is

wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know

them?, There is a difference between these two, knowledge and wisdom,

wisdom and prudence, as appeareth by that Prov. viii. 13, `I, wisdom,

dwell with prudence., A good apprehension and a good judgment make a

complete Christian. Where heavenly wisdom is, there will be also

prudence, a practical application of our light to the occurrences of

life; and where God giveth knowledge, he giveth also wholesome and

needful counsels for the ordering of the conversation. Prudence

dispenseth the light of knowledge according to particular occasions.

Faith is opposed to folly as well as ignorance: Luke xxiv., `O ye

fools, and slow of heart to believe!, Faith is a wise grace, a

spiritual prudence, more for practical inferences than nice

speculations. Well, then, do not rest in `a form of knowledge,, Rom.

ii. 20; couple it with wisdom. A Christian is better known by his life

than discourse. Bare `knowledge puffeth up,, 1 Cor. viii. 1, getteth

into the head or tongue; then it is right, when `wisdom entereth into

thy heart,, &c., Prov. ii. 10. Men of abstracted conceits and sublime

speculations are but wise fools; like the lark, that soareth high,

peering and peering, but falleth into the net of the fowler. Knowledge

without wisdom may be soon discerned; it is usually curious and

censorious.

Obs. 2. That true wisdom endeth in a good conversation. Surely the

practical Christian is the most wise: in others, knowledge is but like

a jewel in a toad,s head: Deut. iv. 6, `Keep these statutes, for this

is your wisdom., This is saving knowledge, the other is but curious.

What greater folly than for learned men to be disputing of heaven and

religion, and others less knowing to surprise it! [256] This is like

him that gazed upon the moon, but fell into the pit. One property of

true wisdom is to be able to manage and carry on our work and business;

therefore none so wise as they that `walk circumspectly,, Eph. v. 15.

The careless Christian is the greatest fool; he is heedless of his main

business. Another part of wisdom is to prevent danger; and the greater

the danger, the more caution should we use. Certainly, then, there is

no fool like the sinning fool, that ventureth his soul at every cast,

and runneth blindfold upon the greatest hazard. I might enlarge myself

in all points of wisdom, but I forget the laws of this exercise. [257]

The use of all is to check those that please themselves in a false

wisdom. (1.) The worldly wise. Men are cunning to spin a web of vanity,

and to effectuate their carnal purposes. Alas! this is the greatest

folly: Jer. viii. 9, `Since they have rejected the word of God, what

wisdom is in them?, Who would dig for iron with mattocks of gold? The

strength of your spirits, your serious cares, are better worth than

vanity. Usually providence maketh fools of the worldly wise;, their

understanding undoeth them,, as it is said of Babylon, Isa. xlvii. 10,

they overwit and outreach themselves. (2.) Such as content themselves

with human knowledge. Some can almost with Berenger dispute de omni

scibili; or with Solomon, unravel nature `from the cedar to the

hyssop;, but know not God, know not themselves: like the foolish

virgins, make no provision for the time to come; and so do but wisely

go to hell. [258] Some of the heathens had large endowments; but

`professing themselves wise, they became fools., Rom. i. 22. (3.) Such

as hunt after notions and sublime speculations, knowing only that they

may know. A poor soul that looketh heaven ward hath more true wisdom

than all the great rabbis of the world: `The testimonies of the Lord

make wise the simple,, Ps. xix. 7. And in another place, `A good

understanding have all they that do there after., Others may have

sharper wits, but they have more savoury apprehensions; as blunt irons,

if heated, pierce deeper than those that are sharp and edged if cold.

(4.) Such as are sinfully crafty have wit enough to brew wickedness.

Oh! it is better be a fool in that craft: 1 Cor. xiv. 20, `Be not

children in understanding, but in malice be ye children., Happy they

whose souls never enter into sin,s secrets! Rom. xvi. 19, `I would have

you wise in that which is good, and simple in that which is evil., It

is best be one of the devil,s fools; simple as to wicked enterprises.

They that affect the glory of acuteness in sin do but resemble their

father the devil, who is of great knowledge, but much malice.

Obs. 3. The more true wisdom, the more meek. Wise men are less \angry

and more humble. (1.) Less angry: There is much spoken of a fool,s

wrath: Prov. xxvii. 3, `A stone is heavy, and the sand is weighty, and

a fool,s wrath is heavier than them both., He wanteth judgment and

understanding to allay and moderate the rage of it; so that where it

falleth, it falleth with the whole strength and weight of it. The more

wisdom a man hath, the more can he give check to passion; they can

oppose wise considerations, the frailties of nature, their own slips,

their need of pardon from God; at least they will not trust such a

furious passion, and let it out without restraint: Prov. xix. 11, `A

wise man deferreth his anger,, lest it burn with too hot a flame. Once

more we hear of the wrath of a fool: Prov. xvii. 12, `Let a bear robbed

of her whelps meet a man, rather than a fool in his folly;, that is, in

the heat of his rage (as the similitude implieth); and it is called

folly, for then men are most foolish. (2.) They are more humble: Prov.

xi. 2, `With the lowly there is wisdom,, Pride and folly always go

together, and so do lowliness and wisdom. The world many times looketh

upon meekness as folly, but it is heavenly wisdom. Moses is renowned in

scripture for wisdom and meekness. Men that are but morally wise, we

see, are most meek. The laden clusters will bow the head. Well, then,

we all affect the repute of wisdom; discover it in meekness, in bearing

with others, in being lowly within yourselves; other wisdom may serve

your carnal ends best; but this is true wisdom, this pleaseth God best:

`The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit is a thing of great price in

the eyes of the Lord,, 1 Peter iii. 4. The world counteth it an

effeminate softness; God counteth it an ornament; this the best

Christian temper. Christ is `the lion of the tribe of Judah,, but that

is to his enemies; he is a `lamb, to his followers. Fierce ruffianly

spirits do not become Christianity, no more than the wolves would the

lamb,s bosom. There are excellent fruits of meekness that discover the

use of it, either in setting on doctrine--man is won by love: `With

meekness instruct those that oppose themselves,, 2 Tim. ii. 25; this is

like the small rain upon the tender grass: or in preventing contention:

`A soft answer pacifieth strife;, Abigail stopped David,s fury, &c.

Obs. 4. Meekness must be a wise meekness. It is said, `Meekness of

wisdom., It not only noteth the cause of it, but the quality of it. It

must be such as is opposite to fierceness, not to zeal. The Spirit

appeared in `cloven tongues of fire,, as well as in the form of a dove;

and the apostle saith there is `a spirit of love and power,, which may

well consist and stand together, 2 Tim. i. 7.

Obs. 5. From that let him show forth. A Christian must not only have a

good heart, but a good life, and in his conversation show forth the

graces of his spirit: Mat. v. 16, `Let your light shine,, &c. We must

study to honour God, and honour our profession. It is one thing to do

works that may be seen, and another to do them that they might be seen

`that they may see your good works,, Hina, or the word for that, is

taken, ekbatikos, not aitiologikos. It doth not note the scope, but the

event. [259]

Ver. 14. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in our hearts, glory

not, and lie not against the truth.

Having showed what was the effect and token of true wisdom, he

inferreth that if the contrary were found in them, they had little

cause to glory, rather to be ashamed; and opposeth two things to the

former double effect of wisdom--to meekness and good works, envy and

strife.

But if ye have.--The apostle,s modesty in reproving is observable. He

doth not positively tax them, but speaketh by way of supposition. So

also chap. i. 25 and ii. 15. In reproofs it is wiser to proceed by way

of supposition than direct accusation.

Ye have bitter envying.--He noteth the root of tongue-evils. We pretend

zeal and justice, but the true cause is envy. He calleth it zelon

pi'kron, `bitter envying,, to distinguish it from that agathe` e'ris,

that `holy emulation,, which maketh us strive who shall excel each

other in the ways of godliness; as also from true zeal for God,s glory,

which they pretended; as if he had said, It is a zeal, but a bitter

zeal. As also to note the original of it; it proceedeth from the over

flow of gall and choler, that `root of bitterness, that is in the

heart. It also noteth the effects of it. It is bitter to ourselves and

others. It maketh us displeasant to those with whom we do converse; and

though it be sweet for the present, yet when conscience is opened, and

we taste the fruits of it, it proveth `bitterness in the issue., And it

showeth whither that similitude, ver. 11, tendeth, `Doth a fountain at

the same time send forth sweet water and bitter?,

And strife in your hearts.--This is the usual effect of envy. And he

saith `in your hearts;, because, though it be managed with the tongue

or hand, it is first contrived in the heart, and because this

aggravateth the matter. Breaches may fall out between Christians in

their converse besides intention; but where they are affected and

cherished, they are abominable.

Glory not; that is, either of your Christianity, an evil so contrary to

it being allowed, or of your zeal, it being so deeply culpable, or of

any special wisdom and ability, as if able to reprove others; this most

probably. For the main bent of the discourse is against opinionative

wisdom. You have no reason to boast of your wit and zeal in censuring

or contention, as men are wont to do in such cases, unless you will

glory in your own shame; rather you have cause to be humbled, that you

may get these vile affections mortified,

And lie not against the truth.--Some say by a carnal profession.

Hypocrisy is a practical lie. Some speak lies, others do them: John

iii. 21, `He that doth the truth cometh to the light,, &c. Rather by

false pretences of zeal and wisdom. It is a pleonasm usual in the

apostle,s writings: Rom. ix. 1, `I say the truth in Christ, I lie not;,

and 1 John i. 6, `We lie, and do not the truth.,

Out of this verse observe:--

Obs. 1. That envy is the mother of strife. They are often coupled: Rom.

i. 29, `Full of envying,, then followeth `murder and debate., So Rom.

xiii. 13, `Not in strife and envying;, 1 Cor. iii. 3, `There is among

you envying, strife, and factions;, so 2 Cor. xii. 20, `Envyings,

wraths, strifes;, and Gal. v. 20, `Emulations, wraths, strifes,

seditions., These things being so solemnly coupled in scripture,

intimate to us that envy is but a cockatrice egg, that soon bringeth

forth strife. The world had an early experience of it in Cain and Abel,

and afterwards in Abraham and Lot,s herdsmen; then in Joseph and his

brethren: Gen. xxxvii. 4, `They envied Joseph, and could not speak

peaceably to him;, and ver. 11, `They envied him,, and they conspired

to slay him; so in Saul and David: 1 Sam. xviii. 9, `He eyed David,

ever afterward; so also in the priests against Christ: `For envy they

delivered him,, Mat. xxvii. 18. There are two sins which were Christ,s

sorest enemies, covetousness and envy. Covetousness sold Christ, and

envy delivered him. These two sins are still enemies to Christian

profession. Covetousness maketh us to sell religion, and envy to

persecute it. The church hath had sad experience of it. It is the

source of all heresies. [260] Arius envied Peter of Alexandria, and

thence those bitter strifes and persecutions. It must needs be so. Envy

is an eager desire of our own fame, and a maligning of that which

others have. It is compounded of carnal desire and carnal grief. Well,

then, `let nothing be done through strife and vainglory,, Phil. ii. 3.

Scorn to act out of that impulse. Should we harbour that corruption

which betrayed Christ, enkindled the world, and poisoned the church?

Obs. 2. From that strife in your hearts. There is nothing in the life

but what was first in the heart: Mat. xv. 19, `Out of the heart proceed

evil thoughts, murders, blasphemies, thefts, adulteries;, there is the

source of sin, and the fountain of folly. As the seeds of all creatures

were in the chaos, so of all sins in the heart. Well, then, look to the

heart; keep that clean if you would have the life free from disorder

and distemper: Prov. iv. 23, `Keep thy heart above all keeping, for out

of it are the issues of life., The Jews were banished England for

poisoning fountains. The heart is the fountain, keep it clean and pure;

be as careful to avoid guilt as shame. If you would have the life holy

before men, let the heart be pure before God; especially cleanse the

heart from strife and envy. Strife in the heart is worst; the words are

not so abominable in God,s eye as the will and purpose. Strife is in

the heart when it is kept and cherished there, and anger is soured into

malice, and malice bewrayeth itself by debates or desires of revenge;

clamour is naught, but malice is worse. The apostle forbiddeth

krau'gen, `clamour,, or the loudness of speech, Eph. iv. 31. But `woe

to them that devise iniquity, and work evil upon their beds,, Micah ii.

1. Studied wickedness is worst of all.

Obs. 3. Envious or contentious persons have little reason to glory in

their engagements. Envy argueth either a nullity or a poverty of grace;

a nullity where it reigneth, a weakness where it is resisted, but not

overcome: `They that are Christ,s have crucified the flesh, with the

lusts and affections thereof,, Gal. v. 24. He is a carnal man that is

carried away with any inordinate affection or lust. Now, of all lusts,

this is the most natural: `The spirit that is in us lusteth to envy,,

James iv. 5. Children betray it first; vidi zelantem parvulum--I saw,

saith Augustine, a little child looking pale with envy. As it is

natural, so it is odious; it is injurious to God and his dispensations,

as if he had unequally distributed his gifts. It is hurtful to others;

we malign the good that is in them, thence hatred and persecution; it

is painful to ourselves, therefore called `the rottenness of the

bones,, Prov. xiv. 30. In short, it ariseth from pride, it is carried

out in covetousness and evil desire, and ends in discontent. Oh! then,

beware of this bitter envying and strife: Eph. iv. 31 , `Let all

bitterness, and wrath, and anger be put away from you., It is hateful

to God, prejudicial to others, troublesome to ourselves; it is its own

punishment. Nothing more unjust than envy, and yet nothing more just,

saith Nazianzen. Will you know what it is? Discontentedness at another

man,s good and prosperous estate, holiness, esteem, renown, parts, &c.

In carnal things it is sordid, in higher things it is devilish; in the

one we partake with the beasts, who ravenously seek to take the prey

from one another; in the other with the devils and evil angels, who,

being fallen from happiness, now malign and envy those that enjoy it.

Envy discovereth itself--(1.) By grief at others, enjoyments, Gen. iv.

Cain is sad because Abel,s sacrifice was accepted; their having is not

the cause of our want, but our envying it. (2.) In rejoicing at their

evils, disgrace, ruin: Ps. xxii. 7, `They laughed me to scorn; This is

he,, &c. David fasted for an enemy,s fulness, &c. (3.) By

incommunication: men would have all things inclosed within their line

and pale; are vexed at the commonest of gifts, because they would shine

alone. Moses, contrarily: `Would to God all did prophesy,, Num. xi. 28,

29. Consider these things, how unsuitable to your profession. So also

for strifes; they do not become those who should be cemented with the

same blood of Christ. [261] All strifes are bad: your heart was never

the better when you carne from them; but envious strifes are worst of

all, and yet usually this is the sum of our contests, `Who shall be

greatest?, Opinions are drawn in for the greater gloss and varnish (as

Paul said, Some preached gospel out of envy; Phil. i. 15), but usually

that is the main quarrel; and so religion, which is the best thing, is

made to serve the vilest affection.

Obs. 4. Envy and strife goeth often under the mask of zeal. These were

apt to glory in their carnal strifes; it is easy to take on a pretence

of religion, and to baptize envious contests with a glorious name. One

faction at Corinth entitled their sect by the name of Christ, `I am of

Christ,, 1 Cor. i. 12, they are reckoned among the rest of the

factions; `I am of Christ,, in the apostle,s sense, is as bad as `I am

of Paul, and I am of Apollos, and I am of Cephas., Well, then, examine

those affections that are drawn forth under a disguise of religion;

there may be zeal in the pretence, and bitter envy at the bottom. Sin

is often arrayed in the garments of virtue; and there are so many

things that look like zeal, but are not; and our own interest is so

often concerned in the interests of religion, that we have need to

suspect ourselves, lest the wild gourds of frowardness and passion be

mistaken for `the planting of the Lord,, zeal and righteousness. There

are two shrewd presumptions, upon which, if you cannot absolutely

condemn such motions, you have cause to suspect them. One is, when they

boil up into irregular and strange actions: true zeal, though it

increase the stream, doth not usually overflow the banks, and break one

rule to vindicate another. The other is, when we are apt to glory and

boast, as in this place: we usually boast of graces of our own making:

2 Kings x. 16, `Come and see my zeal for the Lord of hosts,, was in

effect but, Come and discern my pride and hypocrisy. Hypocrites have so

little of the power of religion, that they adore their own form.

Obs. 5. Hypocrisy and carnal pretences are the worst kind of lies. The

Lord complaineth, `They compass me about with lies., The practical he

is worst of all; by other lies we deny the truth, by this we abuse it;

and it is worse sometimes to abuse an enemy than to destroy him. It had

been more mercy in Tamerlane to have executed Bajazet, than to have

carried him up and down in scorn as his foot stool. Hypocrites do not

only feign against religion, but carry it up and down as a footstool,

upon which they step into their own interests and advancement. The

practical he is little better than blasphemy: Rev. ii. 9, `I know the

blasphemy of them that say they are Jews, and are not., It is a `lie

against the truth, indeed, and a blasphemy, when we entitle it to our

unclean intents.

Ver. 15. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly,

sensual, devilish.

To right the truth against whose glory they had lied, he addeth these

words, wherein he showeth that though they had a pretence of zeal and

wisdom, yet it was not heavenly wisdom, but such as cometh from the

devil, or the corrupt heart of man. There is a great deal of difference

between cunning and holy wisdom.

This wisdom descendeth not from above.--`From above;, that is, from

God, as chap. i. 17, whom we worship as above, because his glory

chiefly shineth forth in the heavens; true wisdom is of that descent.

Some [262] observe a criticism in the word kate'rchetai, descendeth, it

properly signifieth returneth; we lost it in Adam, and we receive it

again from above; the sense is, then, this is no wisdom of God,s

giving. But you will say, all common knowledge is from God, even that

which is employed about earthly matters. I answer--The apostle speaketh

not of skill, but carnal wisdom, and showeth it is not such as the Holy

Ghost giveth, but is inspired by the spirit of darkness.

But is earthly.--Here he cometh to show the properties of carnal

wisdom; he reckoneth up three, suiting with the three sorts of lusts

mentioned, 1 John ii. 16, as anon more fully. Earthly it is called,

because it suiteth with earthly minds, it is employed about earthly

things, to a carnal or earthly purpose. So Paul speaketh of some that

are sophoi` to aioni tou'to, only wise for this world, 1 Cor. iii. 18.

Sensual.--The word in the original is psuchike`, the vulgar rendereth

animalis, animal; it is elsewhere rendered natural, as 1 Cor. ii. 14,

a'nthropos psu'chikos, `the natural man,, one guided by carnal reason;

for he is opposed to pneuma'tikos, `the spiritual man,, ver. 15, one

that is furnished with divine illumination. It is again used, Jude 19,

psu'chikoi, pneuma me` e'chontes, and translated as here, `sensual men,

not having the Spirit., The word properly signifieth those that have a

soul, or arising from the soul; and it is usually opposed to the light

and saving work of the Spirit. It is good to know upon what grounds it

is translated sensual. I suppose the reason is partly from that place

of the apostle, 1 Thes. v. 23, where he distinguisheth of `body, soul,

and spirit,, as the three parts and subjects of the sanctifying and

renewing work of the Holy Ghost. In the original the words are pneuma,

psu'che, soma: by pneuma he understandeth the intellectual or rational

part; by psu'che, the mere animal or sensitive part, the sensual

appetite, that faculty that we have in common with the beasts; by

craj.,^a, that which is commonly understood by it, the body, as it is

the organ and instrument of the soul; so that psu'che, being in the

apostle,s distinction put for our mere animal part, or sensual

appetite, the translators turn psu'chikoi, which is the word that

cometh from it, by sensual. Partly because man, being left to himself,

to mere soul light or soul inclinations, can bring forth no other

fruits than such as are carnal, the bent of nature being altogether for

present satisfaction, the conveniences and delights of this present

life; and therefore, where it is left to its liberty and power, it only

mindeth these things. Thus you see why that word, which in its proper

and native signification signifieth animal, is sometimes translated

natural, and sometimes sensual. Thus Tertullian, when leavened with

Montanism, called the orthodox psychicos, meaning sensual, because they

did not with Montanus condemn second marriages.

Devilish.--This the third character of false wisdom. So it is

called--(1.) Because Satan is the author; carnal men are `taught of

hell., The devil teacheth them not only to brew wickedness, but to turn

and wind in the world: `The god of this world hath blinded their eyes,,

2 Cor. iv. 4; Eph. ii. 2. (2.) Because it is such a wisdom as is in the

devil; he is wise to do hurt. He appeared in the form of the serpent, a

subtle creature. So pride, ambition, envy, wrath, revenge, they are

Satan,s lusts. There are some sins which the scripture calleth `fleshly

and beastly lusts,, and there are other sins which are called `Satan,s

lusts,, John viii. 44, `Ye are of your father the devil, and his lusts

will ye do., Man hath somewhat in common with the beasts, and somewhat

in common with the angels. Adultery, riot, &c., these make a man

brutish; envy, pride, malice, slander, &c. , these make a man devilish.

The devil doth not commit adultery, steal, &c., but he is proud,

envious, slanderous. [263] Pride is his original sin, therefore called

`the condemnation of the devil,, 1 Tim. iii. 6. Envy and slander, they

are his actual sins. He envieth lost man; he is wise to devise

calumnies and reproaches; it is his work to be accusing and ripping up

the sins and faults of others. This latter sense is most proper.

Out of this verse observe:--

Obs. 1, That we should look after the original of that which we

conceive to be wisdom. Is it from above or from beneath? The quality is

oft known by the original. True wisdom is inspired by God, and taught

out of the word. See for both, Job xxxii. 8; Prov. ii. 6; and fetched

out by prayer, 1 Kings iii. 9, and Ps. xxv. 4, 5. Men have a natural

faculty to understand and discourse, but without the assistance,

counsel, and illumination of the Spirit we can do nothing in divine

matters; we have it from God, from his word and Spirit, after waiting

and prayer. God,s mind is revealed in scripture, but we can see nothing

without the spectacles of the Holy Ghost. The quickest, sharpest eye

needeth light: Dan. ii. 21, `He giveth wisdom to the wise, and

knowledge to them that know understanding., Well, then, you that

pretend to wisdom in religion may from hence know of what kind it is,

if you were wise indeed. Prayer will be a great part of your duty,

[264] the word will be your rule, and the Spirit your counsellor; and

then there needeth but one character more, there will be thankfulness

to your teacher. Wisdom, as it cometh from God, will carry the soul to

God, as the rivers return into the sea from whence they came.

Obs. 2. That the wisdom of man is corrupt. There is a maim in the

intellectuals and higher faculties, not only in the sensual appetite:

Rom. viii. 5, `They that are in the flesh mind the things of the

flesh., All the discourses of the understanding, till it be sanctified,

are but sottish and foolish. And afterwards, ver. 7, `The wisdom of the

flesh is enmity., If wisdom be merely natural, it will be presently

devilish. How vain are men without the Spirit of God in their worship!

How disorderly in their conversations! If left to ourselves, what gross

thoughts should we have of religion! The heathens, `thinking themselves

wise, became fools., Rom. i. 22. Oh! then, lean not upon your own

understandings; soul light is not enough, there must be spirit light.

The whole man is corrupted, head, and heart, and feet, and all.

Obs. 3. Carnal wisdom is either earthly, or sensual, or devilish. It is

a perfect distribution, like that, 1 John ii. 16, `For all that is in

the world is either the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and

pride of life., The evils of the world may be reduced to `these three

heads--sensuality, covetousness, and pride, suitable to the treble bait

that is in the world, pleasures, honours, profits; these, like the

three darts that struck through the heart of Absalom, do pierce through

the hearts of all worldly men. Thus the devil assaulted our first

parents, Gen. iii. 6: it was for fruit; [265] there is `the lusts of

the flesh;, it was for the eyes; there `the lust of the eyes: `for

wisdom; there `pride., Thus he assaulted Christ; he tempted him, Mat.

iv., to turn stones into bread to satisfy appetite; showed him the

glory of the world to tempt his eyes: `Cast thyself down;, there is

presumption and indiscreet confidence. This is contrary to the three

graces commended by the gospel--sobriety, righteousness, and piety:

Titus ii. 12, `The grace of God teacheth us to live soberly,

righteously, and godly in this present evil world,, &c. Soberly, in

opposition to the lusts of the flesh; righteously, in opposition to the

lust of the eyes; and. piously, to check the pride ^of life. So also

you may consider the three duties illustrated by Christ in his sermon,

Mat. vi.--alms, fasting, prayer. Fasting, to wean us from sensuality;

alms, from covetousness; and prayer, from pride. In short, the three

great ends of our creation are our salvation, the good of others, and

the glory of God. When men melt away their days in pleasure, they

neglect the great salvation. Covetousness is the bane of charity, and

pride and self-seeking doth quite divert us from serving God,s glory.

All sins, you see, grow upon these roots. Well, then, walk with

caution; there are many snares of divers sorts. Satan knoweth our

temper, and how to proportion the bait. We must not be secure; this

life is nothing but a continued temptation. [266] Here you may offend

by a glance of the eyes, there by a taste of pleasures, and anon by a

vain thought. If a man escape one snare, he may be caught by another.

Usually, indeed, lusts take the throne by turns; but yet there are some

inclinations in a man,s heart to one sin more than another. `We are all

gone astray,, but `every man to his way,, Isa. liii. 6. We are all out,

but some have their particular course: Mat. xxii. 5, `They made light

of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his

merchandise,, &c. Do not say, I am not a sinner, unless you reckon all

the kinds. Many are not sensual, but they are covetous; some are not

proud, but they are sensual. Every sinner hath his way; the devil,s

slaves are not all of a sort, &c.

Obs. 4. From that earthly. That wisdom is to be suspected for naught

which you find to be earthly. A Christian should be wise for the

kingdom of heaven: `The children of this world are wise in their

generation,, Luke xvi. 8. Oh! it is sad to be a fool for duty and wise

for the world, to be serious in trifles and to trifle in serious

matters. To the children of God it is said, `Set your affections on

things that are above,, Col. iii. 2; the word is phronein, we must be

wise for them: so Rom. viii. 5, `Minding things of flesh and spirit, is

to be wise in either kind. There are some unsavoury spirits that relish

nothing but earth and the world, think of nothing but spreading their

nets, please and entertain their spirits with carnal projects, and

images and suppositions of worldly profit, &c.

Obs. 5. Sensual wisdom is but folly; such as tendeth to gratify the

senses, and is spent upon outward pleasures. Brutes, that have no

election, excel us in temperance, they are contented with as much as

natural instinct carrieth them to, and yet to enjoy pleasures without

remorse is their happiness. Vain men rack their wits, employ their

understandings, to rear up their lusts; and, to make the provocation

more strong, they sacrifice their time, and care, and precious thoughts

upon so vain an interest as that of the belly. Certainly our despite is

great against the Lord; when we dethrone him, we set up the basest

things in his stead: `Whose god is the belly,, Phil. iii. 19. Thoughts,

the noblest offspring of the human spirit, were made for a higher

purpose then to be spent upon the satisfactions of the appetite; and

yet the apostle saith there are some who `make provision for the

flesh., Rom. xiii. 14, poiountes pro'noian: their care and projects are

to gratify their lusts, and please their senses.

Obs. 6. From that devilish. Fallen man hath not only somewhat of beast,

but of the devil in him. Christ had but twelve disciples, `and one of

them was a devil,, John vi. 70. Full of devilish wisdom and policy. It

is said of Judas when he plotted against Christ, Luke xxii. 3, `Then

entered Satan into Judas;, and then, saith Luther, there was a devil in

a devil. All wicked men are Satan,s slaves; they drudge in his work.

Some are as it were devils themselves in contriving mischief, hatching

wickedness, slandering the godly, envying the gracious estate of their

brethren, &c.

Ver. 16. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion, and every

evil work.

He proveth that such devilish wisdom as serveth envy and strife cannot

be good wisdom, for it bringeth forth quite contrary effects; that is

for holiness and meekness, this is for confusion and profaneness. The

sentence may be understood either in a public or private reference.

First, In a private reference; and then the sense is, that in what

heart soever envy and contention reigneth, there is also great disorder

and wickedness; and then the note is:--

Obs. That an envious and contentious spirit is an unquiet and wicked

spirit. (1.) It is an unquiet and disorderly spirit: `Envy is the

rottenness of the bones;, nothing more discomposeth the mind. The

contentment and felicity of others proveth our sorrow. An envious man

is his own Achan, the worst sort of cannibal, that not only troubleth,

but `eateth his own flesh,, Prov. xi. 17. (2.) An envious spirit is a

wicked spirit: there is no wickedness but they will undertake and

accomplish it; it is a raging passion, that putteth men upon sad

inconveniences. We gave you a catalogue of the fruits of it before. The

devil worketh upon nothing so much as envy and discontent: such a

spirit is fit for Satan,s lure. Well, then, look to the first stirrings

of it, and check it as soon as the soul beginneth to look sour upon

another,s happiness and advancement; you do not know how far the devil

may carry you. The first instances that we have of sin are Adam,s pride

and Cain,s envy: the first man was undone by pride, and the second

debauched by envy. The whole world, though otherwise empty of men,

could not contain two brothers when one was envied. Pride gave us the

first merit of death, and envy the first instance of it; the one was

the mother, the other the midwife of human ruin. Adam was a sinner, but

Cain a murderer; there envy tasted blood, and ever since it is glutted

with it. Cain,s envy tasted the blood of Abel, but Saul,s thirsted for

David,s, and Joab,s gorged itself with that of Abner and Amasa. And

still, if the severity of laws restrain it from blood, it pineth if it

be not fed with injury.

Secondly, It may be understood in a public sense, that among such a

people, where envy and strife reigneth, there will be confusions, and

tumults, and seditions, and all licentiousness. Strife followeth envy,

and sedition followeth strife, and all manner of wickedness is the

fruit of sedition.

Obs. 1. That where envy and strife is, there will be tumults and

confusions. Ill affections divide as much as ill opinions. Lust is the

great makebait. An envious proud spirit may undo a commonwealth. Look

to your hearts then; it is a sad thing to be the plague and pests of

your country: if you would not be noted with such a black coal, mortify

your vile affections. We learn hence, also, that religion is a friend

to civil peace; it striketh not only at disorder in the life, but lusts

in the heart, at envy and pride, the privy roots of contention. Why

should the world hate it? It represented a God who is `the God of

peace, and not of confusion,, 1 Cor. xiv. 33. It holdeth forth a gospel

that is `the gospel of peace,, Acts x. 36. It establisheth a wisdom

which prescribeth all ways of peace, Heb. xii. 14; Rom. xii. 18. It

increaseth the number of the godly, who do best in any community;

mortified spirits are most peaceable. Pride, envy, self-seeking, hurry

others into confusions, and they shake all to serve their own lusts and

interests.

Obs. 2. Through confusion and contention every evil work aboundeth.

Wickedness then taketh heart and courage, and acteth without restraint.

This day is this scripture fulfilled before our eyes; we need no other

comment but our own experience. Envy maketh us quarrel one with

another, and quarrelling openeth a gap to all looseness. Never had the

devil such a harvest in England as since these un happy differences;

one party debauching the country with vice, another poisoning it with

error. Christ hath got some ground indeed; but when shall the dregs of

the war be purged out? Thus usually it is; in the midst of contentions

laws are silent, religion loseth its awe, and then men do what is right

in their own eyes. There cannot be a better argument than experience to

make us see the benefit of public order and peace.

Ver. 17. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then

peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good

fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

He cometh now to reckon up the fruits of true wisdom. He calleth it

`the wisdom that is from above;, because, as I said before, all wisdom

is known by its descent. He giveth it several properties; they will be

best explained in the observations.

Obs. 1. True wisdom is a pure and holy wisdom. Hagne, the word which we

translate pure, signifieth chaste, modest. There is a double purity,

[267] such as excludeth mixture; so we say pure wine, when it is not

sophisticated and embased; and such as excludeth filthiness; so we say

pure water, which is not mudded and defiled; in the former sense purity

is opposed to double-mindedness or hypocrisy, in the latter, to

filthiness or uncleanness, which is the proper consideration of this

place; the word, as I intimated, signifying chaste. But you will say,

`Who can say, my heart is clean; I am pure from my sin?, Prov. xx. 9.

The answer will be best given in opening the term; I shall do it by six

pairs or couples. (1.) It is a cleanness in heart and life. Christ

saith, Mat. v. , `Blessed are the pure in heart;, and David saith, Ps.

cxix., `Blessed are the undefiled in the way., The heart must be pure,

and the way undefiled. So James iv. 8, `Cleanse your hands, ye sinners,

and purify your hearts, ye double-minded., Persons scandalous, whom he

intendeth by sinners, must cleanse their hands; hypocrites, noted in

the other expression, double-minded, they must make their hearts clean.

The first care must be spent about the heart; a pure spirit will not

brook filthy thoughts, unclean desires, fleshly counsels. Christ

condemneth the glance, Mat. v. 22; and Peter speaketh of some that had

eyes me'sous moichali'dos, `full of the adulteress,, 2 Peter ii. 14,

intimating the impure rollings of the fancy. True Christians do

`abstain from the lusts of the flesh,, 1 Peter ii. 11, as well `as

mortify the deeds of the flesh., Rom. viii. 13. Then after this we must

look to the life, that it be void of scandals and blots; that as we do

not incur blame from inward guilt, so we do not procure just shame from

the outward conversation, that the good conscience may be a feast to

give a cheerful heart, and the good name an ointment to give a cheerful

countenance. As in the soul there should not be pa'thos epithumi'as,

`the passionateness of lust;, so the body must be kept `in

sanctification and in honour,, 1 Thes. iv. 4. This is the first pair

and couple, a pure spirit and a pure life. (2.) It will not brook the

filthiness either of error or sin; error is a blot, as well as sin. The

way of God is called `the holy commandment,, and Gentilism `the

pollutions of the world,, 2 Peter ii. 20. Jude calleth false teachers

`filthy dreamers,, ver. 8. Dreamers, be cause of that folly and dotage

that is in error; and filthy, because of the defilement of it; and

therefore pure wisdom must be made up of truth and holiness. It is said

of deacons, 1 Tim. iii. 9, `Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure

conscience., Precious liquors are best kept in clean vessels. Some are

zealous against errors, that yet are slaves to their own lusts. It is

as great a judgment to be delivered up to vile affections as to a vain

mind. Jerome speaketh of some qui agebant vitam paganam sub Christiano

nomine, were heathens not in opinion but conversation. The bishop of

Aliff said in the Council of Trent, that the Protestants had orthodoxos

mores, but haereticum fidem, that they were in life orthodox, however

faulty in belief. But, alas! now it may be said that many have an

heretical conversation, and some of the worst heterodoxism is in their

manners. These are like Ithacius, of whom Sulpicius Severus saith there

was nothing good or notable in him but only the hatred of the

Priscillian heresy. Others, on the contrary, are of a plausible

behaviour, but of a vain mind; sober in regard of fleshly delights, but

drunk with error; see Rom. xii. 3. There is less shame, and

remurmuration of conscience goeth along with error, and therefore we do

not startle at it so much as at sin. `Julian, the apostate, was a very

just, temperate, strict man, but a bitter enemy to Christ,, [268] So

Swenkefield, a man devout and charitable, notable in prayer, famous for

alms, but of a very erroneous and fanatical spirit. It is excellent

when we can see truth and holiness matched. Sound in faith, fervent in

love, how well do these together. (3.) In word and deed. We read of the

pure life, and the `pure lip,, Zeph. iii. 9. There is a communication

that becometh Canaan, [269] and there is a life that becometh that

language. Many securely sin with the tongue, and would not be mistaken

for so bad as they appear in their talk! But your tongues are not your

own; they `defile the whole body,, James iii. 6. The apostle condemneth

`filthy communication,, and `foolish speaking,, Eph. v. 4, and iv. 29.

There is a sanctified discourse that becometh the children of God. On

the other side, many affect a luscious kind of discoursing, and such a

flaunting phraseology as is proper to deceivers. 2 Peter ii. 18, `They

speak great swelling words of vanity,, upe'ronka mataio'tetos many

nowadays [270] bluster with the terms of divine teachings, glorious

illuminations, the bosom of God, the inward root, &c., and such like

`swelling words,, Jude 16, which are but a cover and preface to corrupt

doctrine or a rotten heart; a vanity and fondness which hath always

been discovered in men of an heretical spirit. Calvin observed it in

the Libertines of his days; [271] and Jerome noteth the like in

Jovinian: Descripsit apostolus Jovinianum loquentem buccis tumentibus,

et inflata verba trutinantem (Hieron. lib. i. adversus Jovin). Such

windy discourses argue an unsavoury proud mind. (4.) There must be both

an evangelical and a moral cleanness; that is, there must be not only

an abstinence from grosser sins, but the heart must be washed in the

blood of Christ, cleansed from unbelieving distrustful thoughts. The

pure are principally those that believe the pardon of their sins in

Christ, and are renewed by the Holy Ghost. There is not only an

abstinence from sin, but a purging of their consciences, and a washing

of their hearts in `the fountain opened for uncleanness:, Zech. xiii.

1; 1 John i. 7. Now many little mind this; they are civilly moral, lead

a fair life in the world, but they are not `washed and made clean in

the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God,, 1 Cor. vi.

11. Others are for an evangelical, but not for a moral cleanness; cry

up justification to exclude sanctification, certainly to the neglect of

civil righteousness; pretend an interest in Christ, though the heart

were never purified. True purity is when the spirit is purged both from

guilt and filth, `the conscience from dead works,, Heb. ix. 14, and

`the heart from an evil conscience,, ver. 22. The conscience from dead

works; that is, from the death that is in it by reason of our works.

And the heart from an evil conscience; that is, that inward pollution

whereof the conscience is witness and judge, absolved from guilt and

cleansed from sin; the one by the merit, the other by the Spirit of

Jesus Christ. (5.) It must be in our inward frame, and our outward

administrations: Man loveth to divide where God hath joined; purity of

heart and purity of ordinances must go together. Many are for a pure

administration, and yet of an unclean spirit, as if outward reformation

were enough. When the conscience is purged, then it is meet `to serve

the living God,, Heb. ix. 14. It is an allusion to legal un cleanness,

which debarred from worship. So Mal. iii. 3, `I will purify the sons of

Levi, and then they shall offer the sacrifices of righteousness,,

Public care should not excuse private; the first work is to look to our

own spirits. But now others think all care of reformation is confined

to a man,s own heart. Let a man look to himself, and all is well

enough; Satan is busy on every hand. When outward endeavours are

perilous and put us to trouble, then we think it is enough to look to

ourselves, as if former times were better when administrations were

less pure. As a man is to look to himself, so to others: Heb. iii. 12,

`Take heed lest there be an evil heart of unbelief in any of you., So

Heb. xii. 15, `Looking diligently, lest any root of bitterness spring

up amongst you, and so many be defiled., The whole body is polluted,

not only by the infection and contagion, but the guilt of the peccant

member; scandalous sins are a blot upon the body, till effectual

remedies be used. True purity bewrayeth itself uniformly in public and

private reformation. (6.) It avoideth real defilements, and defilements

in appearance: 2 Cor. vii. 1, `Having such precious promises, let us

cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit., What is the

meaning? To keep the flesh or body pure from the show of sin, as to

keep the heart pure from the guilt of sin. The case presented was about

being present at idol feasts, though they knew the idol to be nothing;

the apostle dissuadeth them by the promises of God,s dwelling amongst

them, and then inferreth, `Having such promises, let us keep ourselves

from all flesh-filthiness;, that is, defiling the body with such

outward presence, or idolatrous rites, as well as `spirit-filthiness;,

that is, defiling the soul with idolatry itself. So Jude 23: `Hating

the garment spotted by the flesh., It is a phrase taken from legal

uncleanness, which was contracted by touching the houses, the vessels,

the garments of unclean persons; detest the show of participating with

men in their uncleanness. Socrates [272] speaketh of two young men that

flung away their belts, when, being in an idol temple, the lustrating

water fell upon them, `detesting,, saith the historian, `the garment

spotted by the flesh., The true Christian is loath to go too far, and

therefore avoideth `all appearance of evil,, 1 Thes. v. 22. Bernard

glosseth, quicquid est male coloratum, whatever is of an ill show, or

of ill report: that he may neither wound conscience nor credit; this is

pure wisdom indeed.

All this is required of those that would be truly pure; and `this will

be your wisdom,, Deut. iv. 6, how troublesome soever it be in the

flesh, and inconvenient in the world: the flesh may judge it folly, and

the world a fond scrupulosity; but it is a high point of wisdom to be

one of `the world,s fools,, 1 Cor. iii. 18. The wisdom required in the

world is a holy innocency, not a Machiavellian guile, Mat. x. 19. What

is more wise than to manage actions in the fear of God, direct them to

the glory of God, and conform them to the will of God? Others may be

more able to spin out a web of sin, or for worldly contrivance; but no

matter though your souls enter not into that secret. [273] It is the

glory of a man to be a fool in sin, and wise in grace. Let it be your

care, then, to drive on the great design of holiness; this will conform

you to God, which is man,s excellency; bring you to enjoy God, which is

man,s happiness: Mat. v. 8; Heb. xii. 14.

Obs. 2. True wisdom is peaceable, and void of strifes and contentions.

Solomon, the wisest king, hath his name from Peace: Christ, who is `the

wisdom of the Father,, is also `our Peace., It is one of the honours of

God, `the God of peace,, 2 Thes. iii. 16; 1 Cor. xiv. 33. Peace is the

purchase of Christ, the work of the Spirit. The great design of heaven

was to make peace between two of the greatest enemies--God and sinful

man. It is one of the great privileges of heaven; all is quiet and

peaceable there: thunder is in the lower regions; in the lower parts

are heat and cold, moisture and drowth, contrariant qualities and

creatures. It were easy to expatiate upon so sweet an argument. But

loose praises do but entice the fancy into pleasing imaginations;

distinct discussions usually are more powerful, to which I must gird up

the discourse more closely. There is a sweet connection between peace

and wisdom: Moses is renowned for wisdom and meekness; the wisest, and

yet the meekest man upon earth in his time. The more cool the spirit

is, the more freedom for wise debate. Holiness is a Christian,s

ornament, and peaceableness is the ornament of holiness. The Alcoran

saith, God created the angels of light, and the devils of the flame:

Certainly God,s children are children of the light, but Satan,s

instruments are furious, wrathful, all of a flame.

But you will say, Wherein must we be peaceable? I answer--True

Christians will strive to keep peace, to make peace; to preserve it

where it is, to reduce it where it is lost; they are eire'nikoi,

peaceable, and eireno'poioi, peacemakers.

First, They are peaceable; neither offering wrong to others, nor

revenging wrong when it is offered to themselves; which indeed are the

two things that preserve human societies in any quiet, whereas violence

and rigorous austerities disturb them. This is your wisdom, then, to be

harmless and innocent. The world may count it an effeminate softness,

but it is the truest prudence, the ready way to a blessing. It is said,

Mat. v. 5, `The meek shall inherit the earth., Others keep a bustle,

invading other men,s right and propriety; yet, when all is done, the

meek have the earth. A man would think they should lose their

patrimony, yet they hold by the safest and surest tenure. And as they

offer no wrong, so they pardon it when it is offered to them: those

that see they have so much need of pardon from God, they pardon others.

God is not inexorable: how often doth he overcome evil with good! And

truly when God is so ready to hear, men should be more ingenuously

facile. Men think it is generous to keep up their anger; alas! it is

but a sorry weakness; infirmitas animositatis, as Austin calleth it,

the weakness of strength of stomach. David, the wronged party, sought

peace, Ps. cxxvii. 7: it is more suitable to the pattern. God, the

party injured, `loved us first,, 1 John iv. 19; and Jesus Christ, `in

the night in which he was betrayed,, 1 Cor. xi. 23, instituted the

supper, consigning to man the highest mysteries, when man did him the

most spite. So when he was crucified, he prayed for his enemies.

Christians have little reason to think of recompensing evil for evil:

no spirit more unsuitable to your profession than revenge; it is sweet

to you, but very odious to God. Certainly they must needs be prejudiced

against the expectation of pardoning mercy that examine all things by

extreme right. Some observe that David was never so rigid as when he

lay under his sins of adultery and murder; then `he put the Ammonites

under saws and harrows of iron, and made them, pass the brick kilns,, 2

Sam. xii. 31.

And as the children of God are careful of civil peace, so also of

church peace. True wisdom looketh not only at what may be done, but

what should be done in such a juncture of time and affairs; it will do

anything but sin, that we may not give just offence. Basil, by reason

of the prevalency of the adversaries, abstained from offensive words in

the doctrine of the Holy Ghost. [274] Unsober spirits draw their

liberty to the highest, and in indifferent matters take that course

that will offend; there is little of the wisdom that is from above in

such a spirit. True wisdom, as it is careful not to offend Christ by a

sin, so not to offend the brethren by a scandal; as it will not sin

against faith by error, so not against love by schism. By faith we are

united to Christ, by charity one to another; it is careful that neither

band be broken. I know the imputation of schism may be unduly charged;

and the spouse, being despoiled of her own ornaments, may be clothed

with this infamy: but however they that separate had need look to their

spirits. The scripture hath put sad marks upon separation. Cain was the

first separatist: Gen. iv. 16, `He went out from the presence of God.,

God is everywhere; the meaning is, from the church. Jude saith, `They

are sensual, not having the Spirit,, Jude 19. Korah made a cleft in the

congregation, and God made the earth to cleave and open upon him. The

good mother would rather lose the child then see it divided. It is said

of love, 1 Cor. xiii. 7, `It beareth all things, endureth all things,

hopeth all things;, that is, all such things as are proper to the

allowance of charity. However, the terms being universal, it showeth

men should do much, endure much, before they go off from the communion

of any church, not upon such slight grounds as many do, merely to

accommodate a fond desire. Whatever we are forced to do by providence

and conscience, it must be done with grief; as all acts of extremity

are sinful if they be not done renitenti animo, with some reluctation.

The question of separation lieth much in the dark; enforcements to love

are clear and open: such withdrawment is a mighty exasperation;

therefore we should be careful in the circumstances of it. The modesty

of Zanchy is well worth notice:--`I, Jerome Zanchy, testify to the

church of God to all eternity, that I separated from the Church of Home

with no other intent but to turn again to communion with it as soon as

I may with a good conscience; which that it may be, should be my prayer

to God,, &c. [275]

Secondly, They are peacemakers, striving to reduce it where it is lost.

It is a thankless office to intermeddle with strife; but there is a

blessing promised: Mat. v. 8, `Blessed are the peacemakers, for they

shall be called the children of God., They have the greater

encouragement from heaven, because they meet with so much scorn upon

earth. Men that desire to make up the breach meet with the displeasure

of both sides, as those that interpose between two fencers receive the

blows: me'sos, saith Nazianzen, Orat. 2, de Pace, ap' amphote'ron

kako`n pa'schei. But the glory of the duty doth recompense the

inconvenience of it; and those endeavours that want success among men

do not want a blessing with God. Well, then, they are far from true

wisdom that love to live in the fire, that cherish contentions, and

royl the waters that they may fish in them, that increase the

difference and add oil to the flame that they may promote their private

interests.

Obs. 3. From that first pure and then peaceable. That true wisdom

ordereth the first and chiefest care for purity. You shall see this

order in other places:--Mat. v. 8, 9, `Blessed are the pure in heart;,

and then, `blessed are the peacemakers;, so 2 Kings xx. 19, `Is it not

good that peace and truth should be in my days?, There is the sum of

Hezekiah,s wish, truth hath the first place. Of all blessings purity

and religion is the best. As God is the best of beings, so religion is

the best of blessings. A people may be miserable under a peace, but not

under purity. [276] A wilderness with God is better than the plenty of

Egypt with idols. Troubles and distractions do far excel a sinful

peace. When the devil possessed the nations they were in great peace:

Luke xi. 21, `When the strong man keepeth the house, the goods are in

peace., If we would be contented with half Christ, all would be quiet.

[277] In this sense Christ saith that he `came to send a sword;, and it

is happy that he doth. Besides, all true peace is founded in purity and

holiness. Be it civil peace: Prov. xvi. 17, `When a man,s ways please

the Lord, he will make his enemies to be at peace with him., The best

way is to make peace with God, and then he can bend and dispose hearts

to every purpose. So for ecclesiastical peace. Holiness meekeneth

spirits, and the purest and surest agreement is in the truth. [278]

First there is `a pure language,, and then `one shoulder,, Zeph. iii.

9. One faith is urged by the apostle as a ground of union, Eph. iv. He

will bring it to that at length. The world looketh at purity as the

makebait, but it is the great reconciler.

There are two corollaries that may be drawn from hence:--(1.) If the

chiefest care must be for purity, then peace may be broken in truth,s

quarrel. It is a zealous speech of Luther, that rather heaven and earth

should be blended together in confusion than one jot of truth perish.

[279] It is a sleepy zeal that letteth errors go away quietly without

conviction. If the gospel stir up uproars in Ephesus, Acts xix., yet it

is better it were preached than forborne. Though shrine-makers lose

their craft, it is better than the whole city should lose their souls.

Calm lectures of contemplative divinity please more; but the wolf must

be hunted out, as well as the sheep foddered. (2.) Truth must never be

violated for peace,s sake, nor any accommodation agitated to the

disservice of religion, [280] lest while we make peace with man, we

make a breach with God. The world would have stirs ended; desire peace,

but not with holiness: Mark ix. 50, `Have salt in yourselves, and peace

one with another., Doctrine must be kept whole some, and truth retain

its savour and acrimony, and then look after peace. Well, then--(1.)

Truth must not be embased by unworthy mixtures for peace,s sake, as in

the design of the Interim. God hateth those cothurnos, socks in

religion, when truth is made to serve every man,s turn, and is

mollified to a compliance with all factions. Nazianzen observeth of his

father, that he always hated this daubing and temporising, [281] when

truth is made to speak `half in the language of Canaan, and half in the

language of Ashdod., (2.) Truth must not be injured by promiscuous

tolerations. [282] This were to love our ease more than God. (3.) Truth

must not be proscribed and suppressed. M0n double their troubles by

hoping to free themselves this way. The Jews rolled a stone against

Christ,s sepulchre, and set men to watch it, but Christ rose again.

Though carnal policy conspire against it, yet truth will have a

resurrection. The Romans came, though the Pharisees thought to provide

against that fear by killing Christ, John xi. 48. Maximinus, that he

might enjoy a continued peace, interdicteth the profession of

Christianity, and then presently followeth a civil war, which was his

undoing. `The dwellers on earth, rejoiced when the witnesses were

slain, but they revived again to their woe and torment, Rev. xi. 10,

13. Carnal policy lifted up against truth never thriveth.

Obs. 4. Next to purity we must regard peace. He doth not only say,

`first pure,, but `then peaceable., Truth is to be preferred, yet peace

is not to be neglected. We are bidden to follow after, dio'kein te`n

eire'nen, to `prosecute peace,, Heb. xii. 14. There are many

commendations of it in scripture: `It is a good and pleasant thing,,

Ps. cxxxiii. 1. It is a note of religion, John xiii. 35, `By this shall

all men know,, &c. The curtains of the tabernacle were to be looped

together; so should Christians. It is the beauty, the glory of the

church: Cant. vi. 9, `My dove is but one; the daughters saw her, and

blessed her., It is the church,s strength against common adversaries:

broken forces are soon dissipated. When Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek

combine, should we stand single? It is the nurse of piety; truths have

less power when controverted. It is the pleasure which the godly have

in the world: the best part of the present world is the church. Now

when the church groweth full of strifes, the godly grow weary of it:

Ps. cxx. 6, `My soul hath too long dwelt with them that hate peace.,

Strigelius desired to die, to be freed ab implacabilibus odiis

theologorum, from the implacable strifes of divines. Well, then, use

all endeavours to purchase this great blessing. See how it is enforced,

Rom. xii. 18, `If it be possible, and as much as in you lieth,, &c.

Deal with God; treat, yield, comply with men, as far as you can with

religion and a good conscience: 2 Thes. iii. 16, `The Lord give you

peace always, and by all means,, &c. We must be earnest with the Lord,

use all ways and means with man. You should not stick at your own

interests and concernments. Curtius, a heathen, ran into the gulf to

save his country. Nazianzen saith, If I be the Jonah, throw me into the

sea to allay the storm. Usually we stick here: `All seek their own

things, and not the things of Jesus Christ,, Phil. ii. 21. Nay, mostly

our strifes are for carnal interests, sovereignty and greatness, who

shall bear sway; as the disciples were in controversy `who should be

greatest,, till their noise awakened Christ,s zeal. Oh! consider, the

Lord himself hath given us a fair pattern: one end why he abolished the

ceremonial law was for peace sake, Eph. ii. 15-17. And though we cannot

quit ordinances, because they are not in our power, yet certainly there

may be a suspension of practice or a forbearance of profession in

matters of a lesser or lower importance for the better advantage of

religion. As in nature many things act contrary to the rule of their

particular nature for the conservation of the universe, so many of the

smaller things of religion may be forborne for the general peace. It

were good to consider how far the case of continuing circumcision may

be a precedent.

Obs. 5. From the next qualification observe, that true wisdom is

gentle. The word is epieike`s. Beza rendereth it aequa, equal, or just

with moderation; so we translate epiei'keia, Phil. iv. 5, `Let your

moderation be known to all men., Elsewhere we translate it by patience;

the deacon must be epieike`s, patient, 1 Tim. iii. 3. When men stand

upon terms of extreme right, contentions are engendered, and all

patience is lost. This gentleness, then, is opposite to severity of

practices, and rigour of censures, and insobriety of disputes. And so a

truly wise Christian is moderate--(1.) In his censures; not always

making the worst of matters, but charitably and favourably judging,

where things are capable of a candid interpretation. Those

akribodi'kaioi, that examine all things by rules of extreme right, and

use harder terms than the quality of man,s actions requireth, though

they would seem more wise and quick-sighted than others, show that they

want much of this true wisdom which the apostle commendeth. Austerity

is the note of folly. Wise Christians, in weighing an action, always

cast in the allowance of human frailty. (2.) In his opinions; not

urging his own beyond their weight, nor wresting those of his

adversaries beyond their intention to odious consequences which they

disclaim, a fault which hath much disturbed the peace of Christendom.

[283] Charity should consider not what followeth of itself upon any

opinion, but what followeth in the conscience of those that hold it;

though usually these uncharitable deductions and inferences are rather

forced by the disingenuity of the adversary, than found in the opinions

of the author. A man may err in logic that doth not err in faith; and

though he may be urged with the consequences of his opinion, yet he may

not be charged with them. You have no reason to infame him with the

brats of your own malice: to make any man worse than he is, is the way

to disgrace an adversary, not reclaim him. (3.) In his conversation,

going off from his own right for peace,s sake; other wise, while we

seek to do ourselves the greatest right, we do ourselves the greatest

wrong; revenge proveth our own trouble: Eccles. vii. 16, `Be not just

over-much, neither make thyself over-wise; why shouldst thou destroy

thyself?, [284] That rule is of great extent and use in the affairs of

human life. Among other senses and intents of it, this is one, to

forbid a rigid innocency and severe prosecution. When magistrates deal

extremely in all cases, the name of justice is made a cover for

cruelty. The severity of the laws must be mitigated, not in an

indulgence to sin, but upon just and convenient reasons, and the equity

must still be preferred before the letter. So also it concerneth

private Christians, when they stand upon right, and will not part with

it upon any considerations, how conducible soever it be to the glory of

God, and our peace with others. David saith, Ps. lxix. 4, `I restored

that which I took not away;, and our Lord paid tribute to avoid

scandal, though otherwise he were not bound, Mat. xvii. 27. We are not

only to look to what is lawful, but what is equal and convenient. [285]

Obs. 6. That true wisdom is easy to be entreated; eupei'thes, exordble,

and of an ingenuous facility, either to be persuaded to what is good,

or dissuaded from what is evil. Men think it is a disgrace to change

their mind, and therefore are headstrong, wilful, unpliable to all

suggestions and applications that are used towards them. But there is

not a greater piece of folly than not to give place to right reason. I

confess there is a faulty easiness. Some are of the temper of those

Asiatics that could not say, ou, No, no; or like that king in the

prophet, Jer. xxxviii. 5, `The king is not he that can say you nay;,

easily drawn by company and evil counsel. It is better to be stiff than

thus flexible to every carnal insinuation. In the way of religion, to

be deaf to entreaties is not obstinacy, but resolution. Thus Paul,

though they did even break his heart, they could not break his purpose,

Acts xix.; and Galeacius Carracciolus broke through the entreaties of

friends, the embraces of his wife, the cries of his children, that he

might keep his purpose to God. The easiness to be entreated that is

here commended must be shown--(1.) In a condescension to all honest and

just motions and requests; it becometh not them that find God,s ear so

ready to hear to be inexorable. The crying of the poor hath such a

resemblance with our addresses to God that I wonder how they that

expect mercy should not find more ready bowels: the unjust judge was

won by the widow,s importunity, Luke xviii. (2.) In yielding to the

persuasions of the word; this is that which is intended in the promise

of the `heart of flesh,, Ezek. xxxvi. 26, a heart docile and tractable.

Some harden their hearts to God,s fear; will not be either persuaded to

good: the apostle calleth such ato'pous, absurd, `unreasonable men,, 2

Thes. iii. 2, or dissuaded from evil: Hosea iv. 17, `Ephraim is joined

to idols, let him alone., The Septuagint read, me'tochos ton eido'lon,

incorporated with his idols; there is no disjoining him and idols;

leave him to his mad pervicacy. So see Jer. ii. 25, and xliv. 17-19,

where there is a perfect description of our English vulgus. (3.) In

yielding to the counsels of others when better reason is discovered.

Job would not `despise the counsel of his servant,, Job xxxi. The same

is recorded of Naaman, 2 Kings v. 12. So David was persuaded by

Abigail, 1 Sam. xxv. 33. (4.) In matters of dispute, not jangling

beyond sobriety. Many out of pride will hold fast their first

conclusion, though manifestly disproved: Prov. xxvi. 16, 1 The sluggard

in his own conceit is wiser than seven men that can render a reason.,

Usually we find it thus, men will not let go their prejudices, and what

is wanting in argument is made up in obstinacy, as if matters were to

be decided by the strength of will rather than reason, 2 Peter ii. 10,

`self-willed., Men think that a disparagement which indeed is the

greatest praise, to strike sail to a represented truth. [286]

Obs. 7. The next qualification of wisdom is `full of mercy,, which is

shown either to those that offend or to those that want. (1.) To those

that offend: Prov. xix. 11, `It is the glory of a man to pass over a

transgression., Men think it is a disgrace, as if clemency did argue a

man void of courage and spirit. But in the judgment of the word it is

your honour; there is more generosity in pardon than revenge. (2.) To

those that want: Col. iii. 12, `As the elect of God put on bowels of

mercy;, that is a good garment for a Christian, without which he is

naked and filthy before God.

Obs. 8. The next qualification is, `full of good works,, by which he

understandeth all offices of humanity which will become good nature and

grace. It is a scandal brought upon religion, as if it were too tetric

and morose; whereas it is kind and affable, full of a holy sweetness;

and he calleth those offices of humanity `good fruits,, because they

are from mercy as from a root. Well, then, religion is not a barren

tree; the godly are the best neighbours: common offices are performed

out of a principle and engagement of grace. It is the great fault of

some that when they begin to be religious, leave off to be human, as if

there were no tree that grew in Christ,s garden but crabs.

Obs. 9. Another property of true wisdom is adia'kritos. We render it in

the text without partiality; in the margin, without wrangling: the word

will brook other senses, without suspicion, or without judging; all are

proper enough to the matter in hand: `Without partiality;, that is,

making no difference between person and person because of outward

respects, which indeed is a high point of wisdom. Fools are dazzled

with outward splendour, and, like children, count nothing good but what

is gay and adorned with pomp; this the apostle calleth `knowing things

after the flesh,, 2 Cor. v. 16. True wisdom weigheth nothing in a

carnal balance. If you render it `without wrangling,, the sense is

thus: True wisdom is an enemy to brawling disputes; passion dwelleth at

the sign of the fool. If `without suspicion, or `curious inquiry,,

thus: True wisdom doth not suspiciously inquire after other men,s

faults; when we desire to make others worse than they are, we make

ourselves worse than they; inquisitiveness argueth malice. Solomon

condemneth listening: Eccles. vii. 21, `Take no heed to every word that

is spoken, lest thou hear thy servants curse thee., When men will be

hearkening to every word that is spoken, they are often acquainted with

their own disgrace. Or you may render it, `without judging, or

`censuring., Fools are the greatest censurers; what they want in worth

is made up in pride; and because they cannot raise themselves to an

equality with others, endeavour by censures to take them down, that

they may be as low as themselves.

Obs. 10. The last property is, `without hypocrisy., In true wisdom

there is much light, but no guile. The greatest care of a Christian is

to be what he seemeth to be, and to account godliness the chiefest

cunning. Carnal men count them wise that can manage their matters with

most craft and guile, and gratify their interests by a plausible

dissimulation; but this the Lord hateth. The hypocrite is the greatest

fool, and putteth the greatest cheat upon himself in the issue; all

that he gaineth by his designs is but the fee of hell: `He shall give

him his portion with hypocrites,, Mat. xxiv. 51. Well, then, reckon

sincerity as the highest point of wisdom: 2 Cor. i. 12, `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 had our

conversation in the world,, &c. Avoid hypocrisy in all the actions of

your life, not only in addresses to God, but your respects to men. The

scriptures, that require `faith unfeigned,, 1 Tim. i. 5; 2 Tim. i. 5,

do also require `love unfeigned,, 1 Peter i. 22; 2 Cor. vi. 6; Rom.

xii. 9: `Let us not love in word and tongue, but in deed and in truth,,

1 John iii. 18. We should be as willing to do them good, as to proffer

it; to reprove, as to flatter; to pray to God for them in secret, as to

make professions of respect to themselves.

Ver. 18. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that

make peace.

These words are the conclusion of the whole discourse, intimating the

happiness of them who have the wisdom formerly described. The words

have been diversely expounded. Some thus: That peaceable men do sow a

seed that afterward will yield sheaves of comfort into their bosoms; as

if the meaning were, that in their peaceable endeavours they did sow

the seed of the everlasting reward which afterwards they should receive

in heaven. Others thus: That though they do with a great deal of

modesty and sweetness bear with many evils, yet they do not leave off

to sow the seed of righteousness. The first sense maketh it an argument

of persuasion, the next an anticipation of an objection; the first

noteth the happiness of the reward, the last the quality of their

endeavours. Which is to be preferred? I answer--I suppose they may be

compounded and drawn into one; their sowing implying the hope and

expectation of the reward, and their `sowing the fruit of

righteousness,, the quality of their endeavours, which will appear by a

fuller explication of the terms.

The fruit of righteousness.--It is an expression elsewhere used; as

Phil. i. 11, `Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are

by Christ to the praise and glory of God;, so Rom. vi. 22, `Having your

fruit to holiness,, &c.; and again, Heb. xii. 11, `Afflictions yield

eire'nikon ka'rpon dikaiosu'nes, the quiet fruit of righteousness., In

short, `the fruit of righteousness,, either that fruit which is of

righteousness, to wit, eternal life, which is the reward that God hath

promised to sanctification; or else it is put for holiness and

sanctification itself, which is called fruit in scripture, and that in

many regards:--(1.) In regard of the root, Christ, John xv. 5, 16. (2.)

Because they are the free, native, and noble offspring of the Spirit in

us; whereas lusts and sins are a servile drudgery: that is the reason

why the apostle expresseth himself with such difference, Gal. v. 19,

e'rga sa'rkos, `the works of the flesh;, but ver. 22, ka'rpos

pneumatos, `the fruit of the Spirit., (3.) Because of the increase and

growth; as fruits by degrees come to maturity and ripeness; so Phil. i.

11. Thus in the Canticles we read of buds and tender grapes. (4.)

Because of its excellent and happy reward; it will be fruit, not an

empty and dry tree; so Rom. vi. 22. (5.) In regard of the delay of this

reward; it will be fruit, though now seed; therefore he saith, `the

fruit of righteousness is sown,, which is the next term.

Is sown.--It implieth either their care of holiness--they have sown

it--or the sureness of the reward of grace; it is not as water spilt

upon the ground, but as seed cast into the ground; you do not lose your

labour, such endeavours will yield an increase; see Isa. xxxii. 17. Or,

lastly, it implieth their non-enjoyment of the reward for the present;

they do not reap, but sow: how the harvest [287] of a peaceable

righteousness is not so soon had. It is usual in scripture to express

such effects and consequents of things as do not presently follow by

sowing and ploughing.

In peace.--The meaning is, either in a peaceable and sweet way; but

that seemeth to be expressed in the last clause, `that make peace;, or

else with much spiritual tranquillity and comfort, much rest and peace

in their souls for the present. So Heb. xii. 11, eire'nikon ka'rpon,

`the peaceable fruit of righteousness., Righteousness or sanctification

bringeth peace with it.

Of them that make peace.--So Christ saith, Mat. v. 9, `Blessed are the

peacemakers., It implieth not the event and success, but the endeavour

or care, conatum, non eventum; the notion of making in scripture phrase

belonging to the bent of the soul; as to make a he is to be given to

lying. So 1 John ii. 29, `Every one that doth or maketh righteousness,,

&c., o poion te`n dikaiosu'nen. So 1 John iii. 8, `He that doth or

maketh sin,, o poion te`n amarti'an noteth the full bent and

inclination of the soul. So to `make peace,, is to have strong and

hearty affections this way.

So that you may take the words as a direction to duty, and the sense

is, that they that are studious of peace ought to have a care of sowing

righteousness; or as a promise of a blessing, and then thus: They that

with their peaceable endeavours couple a care of righteousness, they

shall have a threefold blessing, increase of grace with peace for the

present, `and shall reap the crop of all hereafter.

Obs. 1. Whatever we do in this life is seed; as we sow, so we reap.

[288] See how the scripture followeth this metaphor both ways; in point

of sin or duty. In sin, see Gal. vi. 8, and Job iv. 8; so Prov. xxii.

8; Hosea viii. 7. It may be long first, but the crop will be according

to the seed: `They have sown the wind, they shall reap the whirlwind.,

The whirlwind is nothing but wind imprisoned in the bowels of the

earth; and so it is an excellent allusion to note the damage and ruin

which they receive who study nothing but vain things. In duty or good

actions: Hosea x. 12, `Sow to yourselves in righteousness, and reap in

mercy,, &c.; that is, endeavour good works, and you will find God

propitious; they are the way, not the cause. God showeth mercy

according to works, though not for works. So in particular it is ap

plied to charity: 2 Cor. ix. 6, `He that soweth sparingly shall reap

sparingly., So to penitent tears: Ps. cxxvi. 5, `They shall sow in

tears, and reap in joy., There is an intimate connection between our

endeavours and the Lord,s recompenses. (1.) Let it press us to a care

of our actions; they are seed; they fall upon the ground, not to be

lost, but to grow up again; we may taste the fruits of them long after

they be committed; be sure you sow good seed. To help you, consider

there must be subactum solum, a ground prepared, Hosea x. 12. If you

would reap mercy, `plough up your fallow ground;, so Jer. iv. 3, 4. The

heart is like waste ground, till it be prepared by breaking; then let

the actions be good for principle, manner, and end. We must not only do

good, but well; a man may sin in doing good, but not in doing well.

Chiefly you must regard the end, God,s glory. A tree beareth fruit for

the owner: Hosea x. 1, `Israel is an empty vine, that bringeth forth

fruit to himself., Actions done with a carnal aim are not seed, they

lose their fruit and reward with God, Mat. vi. 1. (2.) Have a care of

the season, it is the seed-time; [289] a husbandman would not lose

that. Eternity dependeth upon this moment; now we sow our everlasting

weal or woe. Take heed of sowing nothing, then you can expect nothing;

he had not a drop that would not give a crumb. And take heed of sowing

to the flesh; when others have their bosoms full of sheaves, you will

be empty; the foolish virgins made a great cry when their vessels were

empty, &c. (3.) Ground of hope to the children of God; their works are

not lost, it is seed that will spring up again: Eccles. xi. 1, `Cast

thy bread upon many waters, and after many days thou shalt find it,,

`Thy bread,, that is, `thy bread corn., Faith, which is `the evidence

of things not seen,, can look for a crop out of the waters. If the

reward were sure, .men would act more uniformly and proportionably to

their hopes. Oh! consider, whatever you do to God, or for God, it is

seed. Wicked men count it lost, a vain profusion, or as foolish a

course as ploughing the ocean, or scattering seed upon the sea. Ay! but

you will find it again, there is no loss by serving God, Mal. iii. 14.

(4.) It is comfort to us. Here we are miserable; it is our seed-time

that is usually in tears; you must expect the harvest: Ps. xcvii. 11,

`Light is sown for the righteous., It is buried out of sight, but it

will spring up again. The corn must first die in the ground; you cannot

sow and reap in a day. `The patient abiding of the righteous shall not

perish for ever.,

Obs. 2. That a care of righteousness bringeth peace with it. All good

actions cause an enthumi'an, serenity in the mind. The kingdom of grace

yieldeth `joy unspeakable,, 1 Peter i. 7, though not glory unspeakable.

We have `songs in our pilgrimage,, Ps. cxix. 54. God will have us to

enter upon our possession by degrees; joy entereth into us before we

enter into our master,s joy. We have first the day-star, then the sun.

What a good master do we serve, that giveth us a part of our wages ere

we have done our work! Whilst we are sowing we have peace, the

conscience and contentment of a good action. There is no work like

God,s: `In the keeping of his commands there is reward,, Ps. xix. 7.

Sin bringeth shame and horror, but gracious actions leave a savour of

sweetness, and diffuse a joy throughout the soul. There is no feast to

that of a good conscience: Jer. ii. 5, `What iniquity did your fathers

find in me?, Did you ever lose by communion with God? A man cannot do

an ill action without blame. But how quietly do we enjoy ourselves when

we have enjoyed our God! Conscience of duty giveth the purest

contentment to the mind. Base comforts and sinful satisfactions are

bought with clamour of conscience, and then they are bought very dear.

What a great reward may we expect, since we have so much joy and peace

in the expectation of it? How great are the joys of heaven, since the

very interest in them casteth such a lightsome brightness upon the

soul! If the taste be such, what is the fulness? If the morning glances

and forerunning beams be so glorious, what will the high noon be? If

there be songs in your pilgrimage, you will have hallelujahs in your

country.

Obs. 2. It is the duty of God,s children to sow the fruit of

righteousness in peace. The oil of grace and the oil of gladness do

well together. That you may not lose the comfort of grace, live

socially with God and sweetly with men. (1.) Socially with God.

Maintain a constant and intimate communion and commerce between you and

heaven, that `your fellowship may indeed be with the Father and the

Son,, 1 John i. 5. Neglect of God maketh the conscience restless and

clamorous: `Acquaint thyself with God, and be at peace,, Job xxii. 21.

When David had discontinued his intercourse and communion, he lay

a-roaring, Ps. xxxii. Things can never be quiet out of their centre;

after gross neglects and strangeness, conscience will scourge you. (2.)

Sweetly with men. An austere man troubleth his own flesh; there is a

holy amiableness, as well as a strict righteousness. It is said of

Jesus Christ: Luke ii. 52, `He increased in favour with God and man.,

We should walk in his steps in a holy strictness, and an amiable

sweetness. Athanasius was magnes and adamas--an adamant and a

loadstone; neither of a loose easiness, nor of an uncivil austerity. Do

this, and you will increase in comfort and grace; couple a sweet

goodness with a severe righteousness.

Obs. 4. From that them that make peace. That true lovers of peace are

and must be also lovers of righteousness. Peace without righteousness

is but a sordid compliance; righteousness without peace is but a rough

austerity. They are not true friends to peace that can enhaunt with

wicked men, digest violations of God,s law, truth, and worship, because

ease is good, and go on with a sleepy and careless silence; can violate

truth, debase it; stupidly bear with errors without witnessing against

them. These, whilst they seek to knit with men, they disjoin themselves

from God; and whilst they would make up a strife with others, they make

a greater between God and their own souls. So, on the other side, they

are not true friends to righteousness that have no care of making

peace. Hypocrites carry on all things with a blind and brawling

violence. It is true God,s children cannot choose but speak warmly; but

I intend those that care not what ruptures they make, how they

disadvantage the cause of religion, so as they may discharge or

disgorge their rage and passion: John xiii. 35, `By this shall ye know

that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another., As to men, that is

the badge or note; sons of God are not usually sons of the coal. Oh!

that we could learn this holy art of coupling righteousness with peace,

that we could reprove with faithfulness, and yet bear with meekness;

that we might not do the office of an executioner, but a chirurgeon. Be

zealous, and yet with temperateness and moderation. But of this before.

Obs. 5. That a righteous peaceableness is blessed with grace here, and

glory hereafter. This verse is a promise, as well as a direction. This

is our comfort against all the difficulties and inconveniences that

holy and peaceable endeavours meet with in the world; your reward is

with God, you have a pledge of it in your own souls; while strifes

lessen grace in others, you grow and thrive and; you shall reap in

glory.

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[222] `Non dicit, ut aliqui, modestiae fuisset istud; sunt enim aliqui

profecto daemones humana specie larvati, universalem naturam sortitur

indefinitus enunciandi modus.,--Dr Hall, Serm. Synod. Dord.

[223] `Aut sumus, aut fuimus, aut possumus esse quod hic est.,

[224] Bernard. de Resurrect. Dom.

[225] Euseb. Eccl. Hist., lib. ii. cap. 1.

[226] `Opus bonum optime factum mortals peccatum est,; et paulo post,

`Omne opus justi damnabile est, et mortale peccatum, si judicio Dei

judicetur.,--Luther in Assert., arts. 31, 32, 35, 36.

[227] `Omne virtutis nostrae meritum est vitium, et omnis humana

justitia injustitia est si stricte judicetur.,--Greg. Moral. 9, caps.

1, 14.

[228] `Deus in ipso regenerationis opere adeo potenter in voluntatem

agit, ut actualiter resistendi potentia proxima pro illo tempore

suspendatur; emotam autem et in actu primo positam resistendi potentiam

non quidem funditus extirpat, sed in sua amara radice delitessere

permittit.,--Theol. Britan. in Synod. Dord., Art. de Conversione.

[229] `Me` lalein ta` ma'taia, eide'nai kairon kai` me'tra kai` lo'gon

anankaion kai` eWpi'kisin eu'stochon, me` lalein arru'thmos, me`

chalazein tou`s entuncha'nontas te sphodro'teti.,--Nyssenus, peri`

eupoiias.

[230] `Habitat, sed non regnat; manet, sed non dominatur; evulsum

quodammodo, nec tamen expulsum; dejectum, sed non prorsus ejectum

tamen.,--Bern. in Psal. xc., serm. 10.

[231] Similitude Procli apud Epiphan. Haeres 64.

[232] `Deinon e'pos phu'gen e'rkos odo'nton.,--Homer.

[233] Qu. `but,?--ED.

[234] `Qualia principia, talia principiata.,

[235] `Dia` ti` peda'lion mi'kron ep' escha'tou ploi'ou tosau'ten

du'namin e'chei,, &c.--Arist. ii. Mechanikon, cap. 5.

[236] `Reliquit haec sane Deus humanis ingeniis eruenda; tamen fieri

non potest quin ipsius sint omnia, qui et sapientiam tribuit homini ut

inveniret, et illa ipsa quae possunt inveniri primus

invenit.,--Lactant. de Falsa Relig., lib. i. cap. 18.

[237] `In Alexandria una scintilla fuit, sed quia non statim oppressa

est, totum orbem ejus flamma populata est.,--Hieron.

[238] `Penes reges est inferre bellum; penes autem Deum terminare.,

[239] Qu. `either meddle not,?--ED.

[240] `Illic incipit, et illuc rapit.,

[241] Laurent, in loc.

[242] Ps. cviii. 1, and xvi. 9, compared with Acts ii. 26.

[243] `Anthropos en phu'sei zoon poli'tikon.,--Arist. Pol., lib. i.

cap. 2.

[244] `Peccatum quod alter incurrit operando, tuum facis obloquendo.,

[245] Aug. Serm. 4, de Verbis Domini.

[246]

`Sanctius his animal mentisque capacius altae,

Deerat adhuc, et quod dominari in cetera possit,

Natus homo est.,--Ovid. Met., lib. i.

[247] `Quia per peccatum deseruit homo eum sub quo esse debuit,

subditus est iis supra quae esse debebat.,--Aug. Tract. in Johan.

[248] See Dr Alting, Problem. Theol., pars 1, quaest. 61, 62.

[249] `Attendite similitudinem ab ipsis bestiis quas domamus. Equus non

se domat, camelus non se domat, aspis non se domat; sic et homo non se

domat, sed ut dometur equus, bos, camelus, elephantus, leo, aspis,

quaeritur homo; ergo Deus quaeratur ut dometur homo.,--Aug. Serm. 4, de

Verbis Domini, tom. x.

[250] August. Confess. lib. x. See Cornel. a Lapide in hunc locum.

[251] See Nazianzen. Orat. ii. in Pascha.

[252] `Canticum novum et vetus homo male concordant.,--Aug. in Psalm.

[253] `Quoties diis genitum se putavit, toties in barbaros, multo

ferocius et insolentius pugnavit.,

[254] `E tou eiko'nos ti`me epi` to` proto'tupon anabai'nei.,--Basil.

de Spiritu Sancto, cap. 13.

[255] `So Maximinus his statues were thrown down, in disgrace to the

person.,--Euseb. Hist. Eccl., lib. ix., cap. 11.

[256] `Surgunt indocti, et rapiunt coelum, et nos cum omnibus doctrinis

nostris detrudimur in Gehennam.,

[257] See Dr Sibbs in Hosea xiv. 8.

[258] `Sapientes sapienter descendant in infernum.,--Hieron.

[259] Chrysost. in locum.

[260] `Fuerunt quidam nostrorum vel minus stabilita fide, vel minus

docti, vel minus cauti, qui dissidium facerent unitatis vel ecclesiam

dissiparent; sed ii quorum fides fuit lubrica, cum Deum nosse se aut

colere simularunt, augendis opibus et honori studentes affectabant

maximum sacerdotium, et a potioribus victi secedere cum suffragatoribus

suis maluerunt, quam eos ferre praepositos quibus concupiebant ipsi

praeponi,, &c.--Lactan., lib. 4, Instit., cap. ult.

[261] `Eodem sanguine Christi glutinati.,--Aug.

[262] `Non dicit e'rchetai, sed kate'rcheta. Is apud Demosthenem et

Aristotelem, innotante Budaeo, dicitur kate'rchesthai, qui redit exul,

seu postliminio redit.,--Brochm. in locum.

[263] `Invidientia vitium diabolicum, quo solus diabolus reus est, et

inexpiabiliter reus; non enim dicitur diabolo ut damnetur, adulterium

commisisti, furtum fecisti, villam alienam rapuisti, sed homini stanti

lapsus invidisti.,--Aug. lib. de Disciplina Christiana, cap. 1.

[264] `Bene orasse est bene studuisse.,--Luther.

[265] Qu. `food,?--ED.

[266] `Nemo securus esse debet in ista vita quae tota tentalio

nominatur.,--Aug. Conf., lib. x.

[267] Dr Hammond, Pract. Cat. in Mat. v. 8.

[268] Vide Petri Merentini Praef. in Juliani Miso.

[269] The lip of Canaan, Isa. xix. 18.

[270] Belmen., and others.

[271] `Communi sermone spreto, exoticum nescio quod idioma sibi

fingunt, interea nihil spirituals asserunt.,--Calv. in Jud. 13.

[272] Socrates Scholasticus, Eccles. Hist., lib. ii.

[273] See before on ver. 13.

[274] Nazianz. alicubi.

[275] `Ab Ecclesia Romana non alio discessimus animo, quam ut si

correcta ad priorem ecclesiae formam redeat, nos quoque ad illam

revertamur, et communionem cum illa in suis porro caetibus habeamus,

quod ut tandem fiat, toto animo Dominum Jesum precamur; quid enim pio

cuique optatius, quam ubi per baptismum renati sumus, ibi etiam in

finem usque vivamus, modo in Domino; ego Hieronymus Zanchius

septuagenarius cum tota familia testatum hoc volo toti ecclesiae

Christi in omnem eternitatem.,

[276] `Krei'tton eu'pathous omonoi'as e upe`r eu'sebei'as dia'stasis.,

So Nazianzen (though a man zealous for peace) Orat. 2, de Pace.

[277] `Si dimidio Christi contenti essemus, facile transigeremus

omnia.,--Calvin.

[278] `Oude`n ou'tos i'schuron pro`s eire'nen os peri` tou theou

sumphoni'a.,--Naz. ubi supra.

[279] `Potius ruat coelum quam pereat una mica veritatis.,--Luth.

[280] `Ne dum humana foris jurgia metuant, interni foederis discussione

feriantur.,--Ambros.

[281] `Ou kata` tou`s nun so'phous kataklino'menos oude` technikos kai`

mesos tou kath' emas li'gou pooista'menos.,--Naz.

[282] See my sermon before the Parliament on Zech. xiv. 9.

[283] See Davenant Sent. de Pace Procur., and Dr Hall of Christian

Moderation, lib. ii. sect. 11.

[284] See Dr Hall,s sermon on that scripture, recorded in the History

of the Synod of Dort.

[285] See Mr Perkins of Christian Moderation on Phil. iv. 5.

[286] `Laudem non veniam meretur repudium agniti erroris.,--Tertul.

Apol.

[287] Qu. `but sow now; the harvest,?--ED.

[288] The metaphor is used of all moral actions, either good or evil.

[289] `Hieme non seminavit; venit aestas, et nihil messuit.,

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CHAPTER IV.

VER. 1. From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not

hence, even from your lusts, that war in your members?

He had in the former chapter spoken against strifes, as proceeding from

envy, and pressed them to a holy wisdom; he doth here speak against

strifes and contentions, as proceeding from other carnal lusts, as

ambition, covetousness, &c., which make them vex one another, and break

out into unseemly brawlings. He proceedeth by way of question and

conviction, as appealing to their consciences.

From whence come wars and fightings among you?--These words, polemoi

kai machai, wars and fightings, are usually applied to their private

contentions; either strifes and contentions about riches, greatness,

and outward pomp, or else vexatious lawsuits, and that before

unbelieving judges. And the reason alleged for this exposition is,

because the Christians of those times durst not openly invade one

another in a hostile way: they must of necessity then have disturbed

the peace of the places where they were scattered. But how plausible

soever this exposition may seem, to me it is frivolous; partly (1.)

because it is harsh to render polemoi kai machai, by private strifes

and contentions; partly because these wars the apostle speaketh of did

go so far as bloodshed; ver. 2, `Ye kill, and desire to have, and

cannot obtain; ye fight and war, and yet ye have not., And (2.) in the

epistle to the Hebrews, they went so far as slandering, [290] the true

Christians being spoiled and rifled by the counterfeit, Heb. x. 34. And

(3.) Histories speak of wars and tumultuary agitations that then were

between Jew and Jew; as Acts v. 37; see Josephus, lib. xviii. cap. 1,

4, 10, and lib. xx.; see Grot. in locum. And in these probably many of

the pseudo-Christians were engaged. (4.) The apostle out of his special

relation doth in this epistle not only write to the believers, but the

whole nation of Israel, as doth appear by many passages of the epistle,

and hath been once and again cleared.

Come they not hence, even from your lusts, apo ton hedonon, `from your

pleasures,, as it is in the margin. Lust and pleasure are often put for

each other, and sometimes they are coupled; as Titus iii. 3, `Serving

divers lusts and pleasures:, both note the affection of a wicked man to

sin. Lust noteth properly the earnest motion of the soul after sin;

pleasure, the contentment it findeth in sin. Sin is a pleasure to

wicked men; it taketh up their desires or delights: 2 Peter ii. 13,

`Take pleasure to riot away the daytime ,, 2 Thes. ii. 12. `Had

pleasure in unrighteousness,, Pleasure is a sign of a perfect habit,

and it is hardly left. Beware of a delight in sin, when acts of

uncleanness, or thoughts of revenge are sweet to you, or when you

please yourself in surmises of vanity, and proud reflections upon your

honour and greatness in the world. Lord, if ever sin overcome, let it

be my burden, and not my pleasure. It is a sad and high degree to

`rejoice to do evil.,

Which war in your members.--There are several sorts of wars in the

heart of man. In a wicked man,s heart there may be combats--(1.)

Between a man and his conscience. A heathen [291] could say, stasia'zei

auton psu'che, their soul is in a mutiny; and elsewhere, speaking of a

wicked man, ou'de pro`s eauto`n philikos e'chei, he is not friends with

himself. A wicked man and his conscience are at odds and difference.

(2.) Between conviction and corruption. Sin stormeth at the light that

discovereth it, and `the law of the members, riseth up against `the law

of the mind., (3.) Between corruption and corruption. Lusts are

contrary one to another, and therefore jostle for the throne, and

usually take it by turns. As our ancestors sent for the Saxons to drive

out the Picts, so do carnal men drive out one lust by another, and,

like the lunatic in the Gospel, Mat. xvii., `fall sometimes in the

water and sometimes in the fire., As diseases are contrary, not only to

health, but to themselves, so are sins, not only to grace, but to one

another; and we ought not seek to cure a dead palsy by a burning fever.

But now in a godly man the war is between sin and grace, fleshly

counsel and enlightened reason. Now these `wars, are said to be `in

their members., By members are understood both inward and outward

faculties, which are employed as instruments of sin; and the inward

faculties are called members elsewhere: Rom. vii. 23, `The law in the

members., He meaneth the strong inclination and bent of the will and

affections against the knowledge of the truth. So Rom. vi. 13, `Give

not up your members to be weapons of unrighteousness;, that is, your

faculties, which are exercised in and by the members of the body, and

because of the analogy and proportion that they carry to the outward

members, as the eye to the understanding, the will to the hand, &c.

Obs. 1. Lust is the makebait in a community. Covetousness, pride, and

ambition make men injurious and insolent. (1.) Covetousness maketh us

to contend with those that have anything that we covet, as Ahab with

Naboth; hence those injuries and vexatious suits between neighbour and

neighbour; hence public contentions. [292] Men care not how they

overturn all public welfare, so they may attain those things upon which

their covetous and carnal desires have fastened. The Assyrian king did

`destroy and cut off nations not a few,, to add to the greatness of his

empire, Isa. x. 7. (2.) Pride is the cockatrice egg that discloseth the

fiery flying-serpent: Prov. xiii. 10, `By pride cometh contention.,

Pride endureth no equals. Hainan,s thirst of blood came from his

haughtiness; the apostles strove who should be greatest. (3.) Ambition.

Diotrephes, loving the preeminence disturbed the churches of Asia, 3

John 10. (4.) Envy. Abraham and Lot,s herdsmen fell out, Gen. xiii. 7.

Two great ones cannot endure one another near them: Gal. v. 26, `Let us

not be desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one

another.,

Obs. 2. When evils abound in a place, it is good to look after the rise

and cause of them. Men engage in a heat, and do not know wherefore:

usually lust is at the bottom; the sight of the cause will shame us. Is

it not because I would be greater than others, more pompous and high

than they? Grammarians talk of finding out the root, and philosophers

of finding out the cause; so may Christians also. It is good to sift

things to the bran and bottom. From whence doth this come? 1 Cor. iii.

3, `While there is among you envying, strife, and divisions, are ye not

carnal?, It is good to check the fervour of an engagement by such a

pause and consideration.

Obs. 3. Lust is a tyrant that warreth in the soul, and warreth against

the soul. (1.) It warreth in the soul; it abuseth your affections, to

carry on the rebellion against heaven: Gal. v. 17, `The flesh lusteth

against the Spirit,, &c. The Spirit no sooner presenteth a good motion,

but the flesh riseth up in defiance against it; there is pride, and

passion, and earthly-mindedness, envy, sensuality, unbelief,

self-seeking, carnal policy; as soon as you purpose to repent, believe,

pray, these are ready to hinder you, to distract you, that you cannot

do the things that you would; nay, the flesh sometimes lusteth against

the flesh: sin is a burdensome taskmaster, it commandeth contrary

things. How often is a man divided between his pomp and his sparing,

his luxury and his covetousness! (2.) It warreth against the soul: 1

Peter ii. 11, `Abstain from fleshy lusts, which war against the soul.,

You carry an enemy in your own bosoms, which defaceth the beauty,

disturbeth the order, and enthralleth the liberty of the soul. Instead

of God,s image there is Satan,s likeness; and instead of subjection to

reason there is the rebellion of appetite and vile affections; instead

of freedom for righteousness there is a sad bondage, which we may

discover, but cannot help.

Before I go from this verse, I must handle two questions; one is

concerning outward wars, and the other concerning inward.

Quest. 1. Concerning outward wars. The apostle,s speech is inde finite,

and at first seemeth to condemn all wars, as if they were of a base

original and descent, of the lineage of lust; therefore I shall inquire

whether any wars are lawful or no. Besides the insinuation of the text,

a further cause of doubting is the unsuitableness of it to a Christian

spirit, it being the most dreadful way of retaliating and revenging

wrongs, which is contrary to Christianity, and a course not only

questioned by some modern Anabaptists, but by antiquity itself. The

eleventh canon of the Nicene Council enjoineth penance to them that

take up arms after their conversion to Christianity; and to this very

day it is decried by the whole Socinian school, as contrary^ to

evangelical meekness and patience, and that course of defence which

Christ hath instituted, to wit, martyrdom, or shedding of our own

blood, not spilling that of others.

I answer briefly--(1.) There is nothing in scripture expressly against

it, nothing but strained consequences, as that of Mat v. 43, 44,

concerning love of enemies, which is forced; for nothing is there

commanded but what is commanded in the Old Testament. Now there wars

are approved, yea, appointed by God; and that saying of Christ

concerneth private persons forbidding private revenge, passions, and

animosities; and so likewise Mat. v. 39, where we are forbidden to

resist, must be understood of the retaliations of private revenge; and

so that of Rom. xii. 19-21, `Avenge not yourselves,, &c. The

magistrate,s vengeance is God,s vengeance; he is a person authorised by

the Lord: therefore is it forbidden to a private man--he is not God,s

minister--to avenge them that do ill, &c. (2.) If there were some thing

in the letter against it, it were to be modified by some commodious

interpretation, rather than commonwealths should be deprived of such a

necessary support. If the avoiding of a personal inconvenience, as one

argueth well, hath by all men been accounted a sufficient reason to

expound literal scriptures to a spiritual sense, as those of cutting

off the right arm and the right eye, then questionless the letter of

such scriptures must be made receptive of other signification; lest

human societies should be destroyed, and disarmed of so necessary

defence, and the world be turned into one universal rout and confusion;

for religion is reasonable and innocent, and would establish no such

inconveniences to mankind. (3.) There seemeth to be somewhat in the

letter of the scripture for it. Wars in the Old Testament are approved

and commanded by God. In the Apocalypse there is a manifest ap

probation, if not excitation, of the people of God in their wars

against antichrist. Besides, that they are not simply unlawful, it may

be pleaded that John, being asked concerning the duty of soldiers,

instructeth them, but doth not deny their calling, [293] Luke iii. 14.

And again, Peter baptizeth Cornelius without requiring him to give over

his military employment, Acts x.; he continued in it when religious,

ver. 2; he sent to Peter stratio'ten eusebe, `a devout soldier of them

that waited on him continually., So Christ commendeth the centurion,

without disallowing his office; so Paul used a band of soldiers against

the treachery of the Jews; all which instances yield probable

arguments. (4.) It may be proved lawful by such reasons and

consequences as do well suit with the analogy of faith and the intent

of the scripture. Christ came not to destroy communities. Now war is

the solemn instrument of justice, the restraint of vice and public

insolences, the support of a body politic against foreign invasions and

domestic rebellions. It were against the interest of all government to

deny them this power to resist and withstand the insolences of

foreigners or the mutinies of subjects. [294] They are higher powers,

ordained for God to resist evil, Rom. xiii. 4; that is, for the

punishment of vice, which cannot be done without war many times, as in

the story of the book of Judges, chap, xx., and with us now: we are

bidden to give all necessary supports to them that are in authority for

the maintenance of justice, Mat. xxii., `Give to Caesar,, &c., and Rom.

xiii. 6, 7. (5.) There is so little in scripture about it, because

nature of itself is prone to such cruel and violent remedies, it being

revengeful and ambitious. You shall see in all such like cases, where

man is very ready to practise, the scripture is very sparing in

licensing or requiring. We all desire to sin cum privilegio, with a

warrant from heaven; and to say as those in the prophet, `Thou hast

deceived us,, Jer. iv. 10; or this we do by divine warrant. Therefore

the scripture in many matters useth great silence and reservation,

lest, by frequent injunctions, it draw out our natural cruelty and

revenge, which it seeketh everywhere to restrain. (6.) There are

several other reasons why Christianity should be so sparing in

directions and alterations concerning war. Partly to take off the

scandal of being a makebait, the usual consequent of the gospel being a

sword through the corruption of the world. Partly to keep people

patient, and in a peaceable cohabitation, as long as equity and common

safety may permit, and that there may be an exercise for faith,

expecting the recompenses of God for all the wrong done to us; and of

thankfulness, for giving for Christ,s sake. Partly to restrain cruelty

and delight in war. That is a character of profane men, how lawful

soever the quarrel may be: Ps. lxviii. 30, and cxx. 7, `They are for

war,, &c. It is a barbarous and beastly disposition. [295] Partly to

show that peace must not be broken but upon urgent necessity. Every

discontent with present affairs will not warrant so desperate a remedy;

a thing so highly penal and afflictive should be the last refuge.

Partly to prevent un lawful wars. But you will say, What wars are

unlawful? I answer--To make a war lawful there must be a concurrence of

several things: there must be offensio patientis, the merits of the

cause--jurisdictio judicantis, the warrant of authority--intentio finis

convenientis, the uprightness of intention--and aequitas prosequentis,

the form of prosecution. (1.) When there is not a good cause, the

assailed may cry, as David, `Lord, they hate me without a cause., Every

slight pretence will not warrant it, nor every real cause, till other

means are tried; for war, being the highest act of vindictive justice,

must never be undertaken but upon weighty reasons. It is good to look

to this circumstance; if the cause be good, and you are moved with

other particular reasons, you sin. (2.) When there is no good authority

to warrant it. The power of the civil sword is committed to magistracy,

though for the people,s good: it is not for every one that is

discontented with the present government to take up arms at pleasure;

that layeth a ground of all disorder and confusion. But now what

authority is necessary may be gathered from the particular constitution

of every kingdom: distinct societies have their distinct forms and

administrations; in most, the supreme power doth not consist in one,

but more persons. (3.) When there is not a right end in those that

raise the wars, and in all that engage in it, which must be not only

the glory of God in the general, but those particular civil and

righteous ones which are proper to war, as the just defence of the

community, or the punishment of such enormous offences as cannot

otherwise be redressed. In short, the end of all war should be a

righteous peace; not to en large territories, to revenge affronts, to

weaken a growing power; [296] not to feed a desire of gain, not to give

vent to pride by a discovery of our force and puissance, not to royl

the waters that we may fish the better, not to work public changes and

innovations for the accomplishing of such things as our covetousness

and ambition desireth; not for honour, pay, but in obedience to the

higher powers, and a sense of the common good. (4.) When it is not

managed in a righteous way, as with cruelty and oppression. Before

engagement there should be treating, Deut. xx. 10, they were first to

`proclaim peace;, so 2 Sam. xx. 18, `They shall ask at Abel, and so

make an end., We should not run upon one another like beasts, not

staying for any capitulations. In the battle you must shed as little

blood as possibly may be; after the battle you should take nothing from

the vanquished but the power of hurting. Briefly, nothing should be

done but what suiteth with the just ends of the war, nothing that

violateth the law of nature or nations.

Many things might be spoken to this purpose, but I would not dwell upon

the discourse. One scruple I shall but touch upon, and that is, whether

religion be to be defended with arms or no? I answer--Spiritual things

are best defended with spiritual weapons. Christ,s warfare is not

carnal; but yet sometimes the outward exercises of religion and worship

may be established and secured by laws; and among other privileges and

rights, the liberty of pure worship may be one, which, if it be invaded

by violence, may be defended with arms. So a magistrate may arm his

subjects against an invading idolater. The estates of a kingdom may

maintain their religion against the tyranny and malice of the prince,

if, after faith given to maintain the laws and the religion

established, he should go about to violate it: but if the prince be

absolute, and not under former obligations, we have no other remedy

left but prayers, and tears, and meek defences.

Out of all you may learn--(1.) Not to cry up a confederacy with every

one that crieth up a confederacy. Wars may easily be unrighteous, and

it is dangerous to come under the guilt of it. Here we walk upon the

brink; it is the most solemn and severe act of vindicative justice, and

therefore must not be undertaken slightly. (2.) If we may so many ways

sin in war, what cause have we to be humbled, if any of us have been

guilty of an undue concurrence to so great an evil, either by irregular

engagement, or perverse intentions! The more universal the influence or

sad consequences of a sin are, the more grievous should it be in the

remembrance; besides the hurt done to our own souls, there is a wrong

to others.

Quest. 2. The next question is, Whether lusts war in the heart of a

godly man? The occasion of doubting is, because he writeth to

Christians, and saith, `Lusts that war in your members., And Peter

writing to the same saith, `Abstain from fleshly lusts,, &c., 1 Peter

ii. 11.

Ans. I answer--Yes. The life of a Christian is a wrestling, conflicting

estate; there is a double nature in the best, `flesh and spirit,, Gal.

v. 17. We carry an enemy in our bosoms; the Canaanite is not wholly

cast out. It was a good prayer of him that said, `Lord deliver me from

one evil man, and it shall suffice,, meaning himself. [297] Flesh and

spirit, like the twins in Rebecca,s womb, they war and struggle; yea,

lusts stir and rage more in a godly heart, to sense and feeling, than

in a wicked. `When the strong man keepeth the house, the goods are in

peace,, Luke xi. 21. There is no stir; wind and tide goeth together.

Conviction may sometimes awaken drowsy lusts, otherwise all is still

and quiet; but usually there is more trouble with Bin after conversion,

especially presently upon conversion. A bullock is most unruly at first

yoking, Jer. xxxi. 18; and green wood, as soon as it beginneth to be

fired, casteth much smoke. The devil rageth when he hath but a short

time, Rev. xii. 12. And the like you must expect, though in a less

degree, in all the duties of holiness. When Joshua came before the

Lord, `Satan was at his right hand ready to resist him,, Zech. iii. 1.

Since the fall it is some evidence of grace to find this contrariety;

since the admission of sin, grace is more discerned by the combat than

by the absolute victory.

But you will say, How doth this war in a godly man differ from that in

a wicked man? The ground of inquiry is, because condition and common

illumination may make wicked men hate some sins: there is in them a war

between the natural light of conscience and sensual courses, and their

hearts will reproach them for gross sins or gross neglects.

I answer--(1.) There is a great deal of difference. Partly in regard of

the grounds. A gracious man opposeth sin as it crosseth God,s holiness,

a wicked man as it crosseth God,s justice; the one saith, God hateth

this, the other saith, God will punish this; the one worketh out of a

principle of love, the other of fear: the one hateth sin as defiling,

the other as damning; the one as disabling him for good, Rom. vii. 18;

Gal. v. 17, the other because of incommodity and sensible

inconvenience; otherwise they can brook sin well enough; he doth not

oppose sin as it interrupteth his communion with God. A wicked man

careth not to be with God, so he might be securely without him. In

short, in a godly man the two seeds and natures are opposite, but in

the wicked there is only some foreign awe impressed upon the

conscience, and his dislike is rather from a present anger than a

settled hatred. (2.) Partly in regard of the manner. In the one, sin is

opposed voluntarily, willingly, readily, because he hateth sin and

loveth the commandment; in the other, God,s restraint is more grievous

than corruption: `The carnal mind is enmity to the law of God., Rom.

viii. 7. They snarl at the restraint, they would be `willingly

ignorant,, 2 Peter iii. 5. A child of God doth the evil that he hateth,

but resistance in wicked men is nothing but the rising of a carnal will

against an enlightened understanding. (3.) Sometimes in regard of the

help. In the one the Spirit warreth against the flesh; in the other,

most commonly flesh against flesh; as our fathers drove out the Picts

by the Saxons, so they extrude one lust by another. A godly man riseth

against sin upon such considerations as the Spirit suggesteth: `How can

I do this wickedness, and sin against God?, Gen. xxxix. 9; but a wicked

man is mostly moved by carnal considerations. (4.) Partly in regard of

the extent. A godly man,s resistance is universal; he hateth sin as

sin; [298] and true hatred is pro`s ta` ge'ne, against the whole kind:

[299] Ps. cxix., `I hate every false way., A wicked man hateth some

gross and staring sins; others, which are plausible and profitable, are

reserved as a sweet morsel under their tongues. The hatred of a godly

man is perpetual and irreconcilable; that of a wicked man may be

pacified; he distasteth sin when conscience is roused. A man,s heart

riseth against a sword when it is drawn against him, but after it is

laid down he will take it up; that resembleth a wicked man,s

resistance. A man,s heart riseth against a toad, so that he will not

touch it dead or alive; that resembleth the natural and constant enmity

that is between a gracious heart and sin. (5.) In regard of the

effects. A gracious soul is more humbled and cast down: Rom. vii., `O

wretched man that I am,, &c. It putteth him upon humble and pious

addresses to God by prayer, and maketh him more jealous and watchful

over his own heart; but a convinced man loseth ground conflicting with

sin in his own strength; by his own thoughts he cometh at length to

lose all awe and fear.

Ver. 2. Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot

obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.

In the context the apostle applieth himself to the cure of carnal

desires; he hath mentioned one effect in the 1st verse, inward and

outward trouble, both in the world and in our own members; he now

cometh to another argument, the dissatisfaction and successlessness of

those endeavours which come from lust, they distract the head with

cares, and engage the heart in sins, and all to no purpose.

Ye lust, epithumeite, ye desire; but usually it is taken, in an ill

sense, for inordinate and passionate desires; therefore it is well

rendered ye lust.

And have not.--It may be taken two ways; either you never obtained, or

have now lost: male parta male dilabuntur--ill means seldom arrive to

possession, or, it, they do, possession is soon lost. Grotius supposeth

the apostle intimateth the great want and dearth they sustained in the

days of Claudius, Acts xi. 28; all their violent practices could not

secure them against the inconveniences of those times. There is

somewhat a like expression with this, Prov. xiii. 4, `The soul of the

sluggard desireth, and hath nothing., But there the word speaketh of

empty wishes and lasy velleities, here of passionate desires; there of

the soul of the sluggard, here of the soul of the covetous.

Ye kill.--Calvin, Beza, Cajetan, Erasmus, and others, read phthoneite,

ye envy, though most Greek copies read as we do, phoneu'ete, ye kill.

The other reading was the rather embraced, because the charge seemed

harsh, to say, `ye kill,, when, in the received exposition, the wars

here mentioned were only private contentions and lawsuits. But we

cleared it before, that wars is here taken properly; and therefore are

not urged with this inconvenience, and need not understand it, as

OEcumenius doth, of spiritual killing, as if the sense were, ye kill

your own souls; or of interpretative murder, mentioned 1 John iii. 15;

but may expound it in the usual and received import of the word,

covetousness going as high as murder; as 1 Kings xxi. 1, 2, and Prov.

i. 19, `Every one that is greedy of gain taketh away the life of the

owners thereof., In those public tumults, occasioned by their rapine

and avarice, many were slain.

And desire to have, kai` zeloute, ye emulate, or are given to envy. The

word is sometimes taken in a good sense: 1 Cor. xiv. 2, `Forasmuch as

ye are emulous of spiritual gifts;, the word is zeloute. There is a

good emulation when we strive to imitate them that excel in virtue, or

to go beyond them; but there is also a carnal emulation, which chiefly

respecteth outward enjoyments, and noteth a grief that any should enjoy

any outward excellency equal with us or beyond us, and a strong

covetous or ambitious desire of appropriating that excellency to

ourselves. In the first there is malice, in the second covetousness: we

take it chiefly for the latter act of emulation, and therefore render

it, `ye desire to have.,

And cannot obtain, ou dunasthe epituchein.--The word is emphatical, ye

cannot arrive to happiness; that is, either to their happiness whom ye

thus envy or emulate, or else to the happiness you fancy, carnal

desires being either disappointed, or else increasing with enjoyment;

it is a distemper that will not be satisfied. The language of lust is

give, give; it is an appetite without bound or measure. If we had one

world, yet we are not happy, we would covet another: carnal desire is a

gulf that is never filled up. [300] Enjoyments seem little, because

there is still so much in hope; like children, that greedily desire a

thing, and when they have it despise it; or like drunkards, who are

always pouring in, yet do not quench, but inflame the appetite. See

Eccles. iv. 8, and v. 10. Well may it be said, then, `ye cannot

obtain., Carnal men possess much, but have nothing.

Ye fight and war, and yet ye have not; that is, though their violence

and carnal desires had broken out so far as public insurrections and

tumults, yet still they were at a loss.

Because ye ask not; that is, you do not use the lawful means of prayer.

But how can it be said, `ye ask not,, since in the next verse he saith,

`Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss,? I answer--(1.)

Possibly here he may task one abuse, there another; here that they

hoped to help themselves by their own endeavours without prayer, there

that their prayers were conceived to a carnal purpose. (2.) Because

prayers not conceived in a humble and holy manner are no prayers;

lust,s prayers are no prayers, eructations of lusts, not spiritual

supplications; a howling, Hosea vii. 14, which God regardeth not.

Obs. 1. Lustings are usually disappointed: `Ye lust, and have not., God

loveth to cross desires when they are inordinate; his hand is

straitened when our desires are enlarged. Sometimes out of mercy. It is

a blessing to meet with disappointment in the ways of sin; you cannot

have a worse judgment then to have your carnal desires filled up. O

unhappy men, whom God leaveth to themselves without restraint! Prov.

xiv. 14, `The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways,

and a good man shall be satisfied from himself., The cursed apostate

shall have enough of honours, and pleasures, and preferments. It was a

mercy to the church to be disappointed: `She shall follow after her

lovers, but shall not overtake them; she shall seek them, but not find

them;, then `she shall think of her former husband,, &c. Hosea ii. 7.

Prosperous and successful wickedness encourageth a man to go on in that

way; some rubs are an advantage. What we desire with greediness we

enjoy with surfeit. To disappoint and check our lust, God in mercy

fenceth up our way with thorns. Sometimes in judgment, that he may

torment men by their own lusts; their desires prove their just torture.

The blood heated by intemperance, and the heart enlarged by desire, are

both of them sins that bring with them their own punishment, especially

when they meet with disappointment. Amnon and Ahab were both sick, the

one with lust, the other with covetousness.

Use 1. Learn, then, that when the heart is too much set upon any thing,

it is the ready way to miss it. Rachel,s desires of children made her

the more barren. The fool talked of bigger barns, and that night his

soul was taken away. When you forget to subject your desires to God,s

will, you shall understand the sovereignty of it. When the heart is

strongly set upon a thing, there is no reservation of God,s good

pleasure. We say, I will; and God saith, I will not. We will have such

a thing: `I will go after my lovers,, as if we were petty gods. God

will have his will against your wills: `I will fence thy way with

thorns:, there is an implicit and interpretative contest between us and

God. Again, when desires mistake in their object, they miss of their,

end. God cannot endure that the same affection should be lavished on

outward things which is only proper to himself and his grace:

`violence, would become `the kingdom,, Mat. xi. 12. When Amnon is as

sick for Tamar as the spouse is for Christ, it begetteth a jealousy.

Affections should rise according to the worth of the object: `Labour

not for the meat that perisheth, but the meat which endureth for ever,,

John vi. Your industrious desires would become a better object; your

strength should be laid out for everlasting bread; that is a labour

without sin, and without disappointment.

Use 2. Be not always troubled when you cannot have your will; you have

cause to bless God. It is a mercy when carnal desires are disappointed:

say, as David, 1 Sam. xxv. 32, `Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, that

sent thee to meet me this day., Your hearts have been set on great

estates, and you thought, with the fool in the Gospel, of enlarging

your barns and exalting your nest, and of a sudden God came in and

blasted all these carnal projects. Bless God for such providences: how

secure, or sensual, or carnal would your spirit have been else! It was

a mercy that `the world was crucified `to Paul, as well as Paul

`crucified to the world,, Gal. vi. 14. So when you have been crossed in

the pursuit of some lust or uncleanness, you may afterward kneel down

and adore the wisdom and seasonableness of such providences.

Possidonius in the life of Austin hath a memorable history. He being to

visit a place, with his guide mistook the way, fell into a bypath, and

so escaped the hands of some bloody Donatists that lay in ambush to

take away his life. God may lead you beside your intentions to avoid

some dangerous sins that would else have destroyed your souls: Hosea

ii. 6, `I will hedge up her way with thorns., Some cross providences

may be a hedge to keep thee from further misery.

Use 3. It teacheth you what reflections to make upon yourselves in case

of disappointment. When we miss any worldly thing that we have desired,

say, Have not I lusted after this? Did not I covet it too earnestly?

Absalom was the greater curse to David because he loved him too much.

Inordinate longings make the affections miscarry. Observe it, those

objects seldom prove happy that have too much of our hearts. We find it

often that men of great care are successless; they turn and wind hither

and thither, and are still like a door upon the hinges, in the same

state and case: Ps. cxxvii. 2, `It is in vain to rise early, and go to

bed late, and eat the bread of sorrows., A carking industry may be in

vain and to no purpose; the success of human endeavours lieth in God,s

blessing and concurrence; it is the prerogative he hath reserved to

himself; he keepeth it as a bridle over mankind, to keep them in

obedience, duty, and dependence. Providence doth sometimes wean us from

lust to grace, and showeth us that a blessing is sooner had by faith

than worldly care: Ps. xxxix. 6, `Surely every man walketh in a vain

show; heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them., Man

goeth and cometh, and tosseth to and fro, and is gathering of riches,

and increaseth the heap, and God of a sudden scattereth all. How often

have you seen a covetous, carking man, like a mill-horse, still going

round, and yet always in the same place?

Obs. 2. That where there is covetousness there is usually strife, envy,

and emulation. Epithumeite, ye lust; phoneu'ete, ye kill; zeloute, ye

emulate; these hang in a string. As there is a connection and a

cognation between virtues and graces--they go hand in hand--so there is

a link between sins, they seldom go alone. If a man be a drunkard he

will be a wanton; if he be covetous he will be envious. Christ cast out

seven devils out of one Mary Magdalene, and another man was possessed

with a legion. When the heart is brought under the power of any sin, it

lieth equally obnoxious to all sin. Covetousness may be known by its

companions, strife, envy, and emulation: Rom. i. 29, `With

covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy., Self-love is the root of

all the three; it maketh us covet and desire what is good and

excellent, and it maketh us envy that others should enjoy it; and then

to break all bonds of duty and charity that we may wrest it from them.

A covetous man is a full wicked man; he enlargeth his desires for

himself, but is much straitened towards others; his eye is evil when

God,s hand is good. We often meet with strange compounds and prodigies

of vice and sin: 2 Tim. iii. 2, `Covetous, proud, boasters, lovers of

themselves,, &c. It is said of Catiline that he was monstrum ex variis

diversisque et inter se pugnantibus naturis conflatum, a compound and

bundle of warring lusts and vices; so are many wicked men a composition

of many sins, which seem to differ in their essence, but spring from

the same root of corruption.

Obs. 3. From that ye lust, ye kill, ye fight and war.--It is lust and

covetousness that is most apt to trouble neighbourhoods and vicinities.

Solomon saith, Prov. xv. 27, `He that is greedy of gain troubleth his

own house;, we may add, yea, and all the houses near him; he is truly

`the troubler of Israel., Man is by nature a sociable creature, fit for

commerce. [301] A covetous man is a wen of the body politic, not a

member. A wen, by sucking the nourishment that is due to other parts,

groweth monstrous and ugly in itself, and robbeth the body; so he being

altogether for private gain, perverteth that which is the cement of all

confederacies and societies--a care of the commonweal. Bodies are

preserved when `the members care for one another:, 1 Cor. xii. 24. But

this is not all. Covetousness is a base affection, that will put a man

upon the basest and most unworthy practices; men given to it trouble

their families by exacting all their labours, and trouble human

societies by unjust contentions; they quarrel with those that possess

that which they covet. Ahab spilt Naboth,s blood for his vineyard,s

sake. They promote public changes and innovations, that they may

feather their nests with the common spoils. Besides all this, they

bring down God,s judgments upon their people: Achan,s covetousness

troubled whole Israel, Josh. vii. Especially if high in place and

honour; as when magistrates build their own houses upon others, ruins,

and purchase large revenues and estates with the public purse, or

detaining the hire of the poor. See Jer. xxii. 13. Well, then, no

wonder that covetous men meet with public hatred and detestation; they

are not only injurious to God, but human societies; they are a sort of

men that are neither moved with arguments of nature or grace. It is a

character of a bad spirit, Luke xviii. 2, that `he neither feared God

nor regarded man., These two restraints God hath laid upon us--his own

fear to preserve religion, and the shame of the world to preserve human

societies. Now some men are moved with neither. It was a character of

the Jews in their depravation, 1 Thes. ii. 15, `They please not God,

and are contrary to all men;, they agree with none but themselves. So

elsewhere it is said, 2 Thes. iii. 2, `Unreasonable men, that have not

faith;, neither grace, nor good nature, nor faith, nor reason. So

Lactantius saith of Lucian, Nec diis nec hominibus pepercit, he spared

neither God nor man. Covetousness maketh men of such a harsh and sour

disposition. Towards God it is idolatry; it robbeth him of one of the

flowers of his crown, the trust of the creature; and it is the bane of

human societies. Why are men,s hearts besotted with that which is even

the reproach and defamation of their natures?

Obs. 4. That lust will put men not only upon dishonest endeavours, but

unlawful means, to accomplish their ends, killing, and warring, and

fighting, &c. Bad means will suit well enough with base ends; they

resolve to have it, rem, quocunque modo rem; any means will serve the

turn, so they may satisfy their thirst of gain: 1 Tim. vi. 9, `They

that will be rich fall into temptations and a snare;, Prov. xxviii. 20,

`He that hasteth to be rich shall not be innocent., If God will not

enrich them, Satan shall; [302] and what they cannot get by honest

labour they make up by the deceitful bag. Learn, then, what a tyrant

lust is; if God doth not bless us, it maketh us go to the devil. And

again, know that that is rank lust which putteth you upon dishonest

means.

Obs. 5. From that ye lust, and have not; and again, ye kill and

emulate, and have not; and again, ye fight and war, and have not.--That

do wicked men what they can, when God setteth against them, their

endeavours are frustrate. Let them try all ways, yet still they are

disappointed: Ps. xxxiii. 10, `He maketh the devices of the wicked to

be of none effect., God will not let his creatures to be too hard for

him in all strifes; he will overcome, and have the best of it, Rom.

iii. 4. But when doth God set himself to frustrate the endeavours of

the creature? I answer--When the creature setteth itself to frustrate

his counsels and intents. That may be done several ways:--(1.) When we

will do things in despite of providence. They are disappointed once or

twice in an evil way, yet they will try again, as if they would have

the mastery of God; as the king of Israel would adventure the other

fifty after two fifties were destroyed, 2 Kings i.; Pharaoh would

harden his heart after many plagues; Balaam would smite his ass three

times, Num. xxii. 25, and after that he would build altar upon altar to

curse Israel. (2.) When men seek by carnal policies to make void God,s

promises or threatenings. God had said, `I will cut off Ahab,s

posterity,, To avoid this he falleth a-begetting of children; he had

seventy children, that were all brought up in seventy strong cities,

yet all beheaded by Jehu. Herod, that he might make sure work of

Christ, killed all the children of Bethlehem, and some say his own son,

nursed there; whereupon Augustus said, Melius est Herodis porcus esse

quam filius--it is better to be Herod,s swine than his son: and yet

Christ was kept safe: Prov. xxi. 30, `There is no wisdom, nor

understanding, nor counsel against the Lord., He useth many words to

show that all the exquisiteness and choiceness of parts will not be

able to manage the contest against providence. (3.) When men crossed by

providence seek happiness elsewhere by unlawful acts and means, as

violence, cozenage, extortion, deceit, as if Satan could make them more

prosperous than God; see if these men do not go back in their estates;

if their families, which they seek to raise by such means, be not

ruined. The old world would build a tower, as if there were more

security in a tower than a promise, Gen. xi. 4. Many devices there are

in man,s heart to compass their ends, but they are all blasted and

marked with the curse of providence. (4.) When you say I will, without

God,s leave: see Exod. xv. 9; James iv. 3. Such confident purposes and

presumptions as are not subjected to God,s pleasure are seldom

prosperous. (5.) By reiterated endeavours against the church: see Isa.

viii. 9, 10. They are still `broken in pieces,, though they join force

to policy, combine themselves in leagues most holy, and renew their

assaults with a united strength; therefore the prophet repeateth it so

often, `Ye shall be broken in pieces, ye shall,, &c.

Obs. 6. From that because ye ask not; that is, ask not God,s leave in

humble and holy prayer. The note is, that it is not good to engage in

any undertaking without prayer. In prayer you ask God,s leave, and show

your action is not a contest with him. The families that call not upon

God,s name must needs be cursed: in their actions they do, as it were,

say they will be happy without God. We learn hence--(1.) That that

argument against prayer is vain: God knows our requests already; and

God,s decrees are immutable, and cannot be altered by our prayers. So

argued of old Maximus Tyrius, a heathen philosopher, and so many

Libertines in our days. I answer--Prayer is not for God,s information,

but the creature,s submission; we pray that we may have his leave. And

again, God,s decrees do not exclude the duty of creatures and the work

of second causes: Ezek. xxxvi. 37, `I will yet for this be inquired

after by the house of Israel;, so Jer. xxix. 11, 12, `I know the

thoughts of peace that I have towards you, yet ye shall call upon me,

and I will hear you., (2.) That no actions must be taken in hand but

such as we can commend to God in prayer; such recreations as we are

ashamed to ask a blessing upon must not be used; such enterprises we

must not engage in as we dare not communicate to God in our

supplications: Isa. xxix. 15, `Woe unto them that seek deep to hide

their counsel from the Lord;, that is, design their enterprises, and

never inquire after the will of God, or communicate their purpose to

him in prayer.

Ver. 3. Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may

consume it upon your lusts.

In this verse he anticipateth and preventeth an objection. They might

say, We do ask, and go to God (suppose) by daily prayers. The apostle

answereth, You ask indeed; but because of your vicious intention you

cannot complain of not being heard; would you make God a servant to

your lusts? For to convince them, he showeth what was the aim of their

prayers the conveniences of a fleshly life: `Ye ask, that ye may

consume it upon your lusts or pleasures,, tais hedonais.

There are several points notable in this verse; they may be reduced to

these three:--

1. That we pray amiss when our ends and aims are not right in prayer.

2. That our ends and aims are wrong when we ask blessings for the use

and encouragement of our lusts.

3. That prayers so framed are usually successless; we miss when we ask

amiss.

Obs. 1. I begin with the first. That we pray amiss when our ends and

aims are not right in prayer. The end is a main circumstance in every

action, the purest offspring of the soul. Practices and affections may

be overruled; this is the genuine, immediate birth and issue of the

human spirit. We may instance in all sorts of actions; we know the

quality of them, not by the matter, but the end. In indifferent things

the property of the action is altered by a wrong end. To eat out of

necessity is a duty we owe to nature; to eat out of wantonness is an

effect of lust. So in all things instituted and commanded, the end

determineth the action. Jehu,s slaying of Ahab,s children was not

obedience, but murder, because done for his own ends. God required it,

2 Kings x. 30; and yet God saith, Hosea i. 4, `I will avenge the blood

of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu., God required it as a righteous

satisfaction to justice. Jehu spilt it out of ambition; therefore so

many persons slain, so many murders. So in these actions of worship,

they are good or bad as their end is. Speaking to God may be prayer, if

it come from zeal; it may be howling, if it come from lust, Hosea vii.

14; then it is but a brutish cry, as beasts out of the rage of appetite

howl for the prey, or things they stand in need of. For worship must

never have an end beneath itself. We act preposterously, and not

according to reason, when the means are more noble than the end. When

we make self the end of prayer, it is not worship of God, but

self-seeking. All our actions are to have a reference and ordination to

God, much more the acts that are proper to the spiritual life; it is

called a `living to God,, Gal. ii. 19. That is the main difference

between the carnal life and the spiritual; the one is a living to

ourselves, the other is a living to God. Now especially acts of worship

are to be unto God and for God, for there the soul setteth itself to

glorify him; and the addresses being directly to him, must not be

prostituted to a common use. Well, then, consider your ends in prayer,

not the manner only, not the object only, but the end. It is not enough

to look to the vehemency of the affections; many make that all their

work, to raise themselves into some quickness and smartness of spirit,

but do not consider their aim. It is true, it is good to come with full

sails; `fervent prayer, is like an arrow drawn with full strength, but

yet it must be godly prayer. A carnal spring may send forth high tides

of affection; the motions of lust are usually very earnest and rapid.

It is not enough to look to the fluency and serviceableness of

invention; carnal affections and imagination joined together may engage

the wit, and set it a-work; invention followeth affection. It is not

enough to make God the object of the prayer, but the end also. Duty is

expressed sometimes by `serving God,, at other times by `seeking God;,

serving noteth the object, seeking noteth the end; in serving we must

seek, &c.

Obs. 2. The next point is, that our ends and aims are wrong in prayer

when we ask blessings for the use and encouragement of our lusts. Men

sin with reference to the aim of prayer several ways: (1.) When the end

is grossly carnal and sinful. Some seek God for their sins, and would

engage the divine blessing upon a revengeful and carnal enterprise; as

the thief kindled his torch that he might steal by at the lamps of the

altar. Solomon saith, Prov. xxi. 27, the wicked offereth sacrifice

`with an evil mind., Foolish creatures vainly imagine to entice heaven

to their lure. Balaam buildeth altars out of a hope that God would

curse his own people; and wicked men hope by fasts and prayers to draw

God into their quarrel; others seek a blessing upon their theft and

unjust practices. The whore had her vows and peace-offerings for the

prosperity of her unclean trade, Prov. vii. 14. This was a thing which

heathens condemned. Juvenal laughed at it in one of his satires. Plato

forbiddeth it in his Alcibiades. Pliny detesteth it as a stupid

impudence, to profane the religion of the temples by making it

conscious to unclean requests. These impious stories of prayers

commended to the Virgin Mary for a blessing upon thefts and adulteries,

which yet they say were granted because of the devoutness of the

supplicants in the psalter and rosary, are worthy all Christians,

abomination. [303] (2.) When men privily seek to gratify their lusts,

men look upon God tanquam aliquem magnum, as some great power that must

serve their carnal turns; as he came to Christ, Luke xii. 13, `Master,

speak to my brother to divide the inheritance., We would have somewhat

from God to give to lust; health and long life, that we may live

pleasantly; wealth, that we may `fare deliciously every day;, estates,

that we raise up our name and family; victory and success, to excuse

ourselves from glorifying God by suffering, or to wreak our malice upon

the enemies; church deliverances, out of a spirit of wrath and revenge.

As they were ready to `call for fire from heaven,, not knowing of what

spirit they were, Luke ix. 55. So some pray for the assistance and

quickenings of the Spirit to set off their own praise and glory, and

pervert the most holy things to common uses and secular advantages.

Simon Magus would have gifts that he might be tis me'gas, a man of

great repute in his place, Acts viii. 9. The divine grace, by a vile

submission and diversion, is forced to serve our vainglory. (3.) When

we pray for blessings with a selfish aim, and not with serious and

actual designs of God,s glory, as when a man prayeth for spiritual

blessings with a mere respect to his own ease and comfort, as for

pardon, heaven, grace, faith, repentance, only that he may escape

wrath. This is but a carnal respect to our own good and welfare. God

would have us mind our own comfort, but not only. God,s glory is the

pure spiritual aim. Then we seek these things with the same mind that

God offereth them: Eph. i. 6, `He hath accepted us in the beloved, to

the praise of his glorious grace., Your desires in asking are never

regular but when they suit with God,s ends in giving. God,s glory is a

better thing, and beyond our welfare and salvation. So in temporal

cases. When men desire outward provisions merely that they may live the

more comfortably, not serve God the more cheerfully. Agur measureth the

conveniency and inconveniency of his outward estate, as it would more

or less fit him for the service of God: Prov. xxx. 8, 9, `Not poverty,

lest I deny thee; not riches, lest I forget thee., So in public cases

of church deliverance, when we do not seek our own safety and welfare

so much as God,s glory: Ps. cxv. 1, `Not to us, not to us,, &c.; that

is, not for our merits, not for our revenge, our safety, but that mercy

and truth may shine forth. [304]

But you will say, May we not seek our own good and benefit?

I answer--Not ultimately, not absolutely, but only with submission to

God,s will, and subordination to God,s glory. The main end why we

desire to be saved, to be sanctified, to be delivered out of any

danger, must be that God may be honoured in these experiences, in

comparison of which our own glory and welfare should be nothing: `Not

to us, not to us,, &c.

But you will say, How shall we know that God,s glory is the utmost aim?

A deluded heart will pretend much.

I answer--You may discern it: (1.) By the work of your own thoughts.

The end is first in intention and last in execution, therefore the

heart worketh upon it. Now, what runneth often in the thoughts? When

you pray against enemies, do you please yourself with suppositions and

surmises of revenge, or hopes of the vindication of God,s name? So in

prayers for strength and quickening, do not you entertain your spirit

with whispers of vanity, dreams of applause, and the echoes and returns

of your own praise? or enchant your minds with the sweet music of

public acclamations? By these inward and secret thoughts the soul

falleth out after carnal success and advantage. (2.) By the manner of

praying--absolutely for God,s glory, but in all other things with a

sweet submission to God,s will: John xii. 27, 28, `Save me from this

hour; for this cause came I to this hour. Father, glorify thy name.,

Christ is absolute in that request, and so receiveth an answer. It is

enough to a gracious heart if God will glorify his own name. But now

carnal aims make the spirit impetuous and impatient of check and

denial. They are all for being saved from this hour. Rachel must have

children or die. When the heart is set upon earthly success, or

pleasure, or comfort, they cannot brook a denial. (3.) By the

disposition of your hearts. When prayers are accomplished, when we do

not ask for God,s glory, we abuse mercies to revenge, luxury, excess.

Lust is an earnest craver, but when it receiveth any comfort it

consumeth it in ease and pleasure. We deceive ourselves with notions.

The time of having mercies is the time of trial.

But how shall I do to get my ends right in prayer?

It is a necessary question; nothing maketh a man see the necessity of

the divine help and concurrence to the word of prayer so much as this.

To act for a holy end requireth the presence of the Spirit of grace;

supernatural acts need supernatural strength. It is true in these

inward productions `that which is of the flesh is flesh;, water cannot

rise higher than its fountain; bare nature aimeth at its own welfare,

ease, and preservation; therefore go to God; beg uprightness--it is his

gift as well as other graces. The help that we have from the Spirit is

to make requests kata` The'on, `according to the will of God;, or, as

it is in the original, `according to God., Rom. viii. 27; that is, to

put up godly requests for God,s sake. Besides, there should be much

mortification; that which lieth uppermost will be soonest expressed:

`Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh., God,s people

are ready in holy requests, because their hearts are exercised in them:

Ps. xlv. 1, `My heart inditeth a good matter,, &c. Worldly cares,

worldly sorrows, worldly desires, must have vent. Vessels give a sound

according to the metal they are made of. Hypocrites will howl for

carnal comforts. Beat away these carnal reflections when they rush into

your minds: Abraham drove the fowls away, Gen. xv. When you feel the

heart running out by a perverse aim, disclaim it the more solemnly:

`Not to us, not to us,, &c.

Obs. 3. That prayers framed out of a carnal intention are usually

successless. Prayers that want a good aim do also want a good issue.

God,s glory is the end of prayer and the beginning of hope, otherwise

we can look for nothing. God never undertook to satisfy fleshly

desires. He will own no other voice in prayer but that of his own

Spirit: Rom. viii. 27, `He that searcheth the heart knoweth the mind of

the Spirit., What is a fleshly groan? and what is a spiritual groan^? A

carnal aim expressed is but a supplication with a confutation; it is

the next way to be denied. Spiritual sighs and breathings are sooner

heard than carnal roarings: they that cannot ask a mercy well, seldom

use it well: in the enjoyment there is more temptation. Usually our

hearts are more devout when we want a blessing than when we enjoy it;

and therefore when our prayers are not directed to the glory of God,

there is little hope that when we receive the talent we shall employ it

to the Master,s use. Besides all this, prayers made with a base aim put

a great affront and dishonour upon God; you would make him a servant to

his enemy: Isa. xliii. 24, `Ye made me to serve with your iniquities.,

We would commit sin, and we would have God to bless us in it. It is

much you should be servants of sin, but that you should make God

administrum peccati, a fellow-servant, and yoke him with yourselves in

the same servility, it is not to be endured. Well, then, it teacheth us

what to do when our prayers are not granted; let us not charge God

foolishly, but examine ourselves: Were not our requests carnal? suppose

you prayed for quickening, and God left you to your own deadness, did

not your heart fancy your own praise? If for safety, you would live in

ease, in pleasure; if for an estate, you were pleasing yourself in the

suppositions of greatness and esteem in the world. O brethren! as we

mind success, let us not come to God with an evil mind; holy desires

have a sure answer, Ps. cxlv. 19, and x. 17.

Ver. 4. Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friend

ship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a

friend of the world, is an enemy of God.

Because they were so overcome with worldly lusts that their very

prayers and devotionary acts looked that way, he cometh to show the

danger and heinousness of these lusts. The arguments of this verse are

two--(1.) They will make you commit adultery; (2.) They will make you

enemies to God.

Ye adulterers and adulteresses.--This must be understood spirit ually,

as appeareth by the following words and the drift of the context, which

is to inveigh against those lusts and pleasures which inveigle the soul

and withdraw it from God. Now these are spiritual adulterers whom the

love of the world alienateth and estrangeth from the Lord. The metaphor

is elsewhere used, Mat. xii. 39, and xvi. 4, `This evil and adulterous

generation.,

Know ye not.--He appealeth to their consciences; it is a rousing

question. Worldly men do not sin out of ignorance so much as

incogitancy; they do not consider.

That the friendship of the world.--By e phili'a tou ki'smou he

understandeth an emancipation of our affections to the pleasures,

profits, and lusts of the world. Men study to please their friends, and

they are friends of the world therefore that seek to gratify worldly

men or worldly lusts, and court outward vanities rather than renounce

them; a practice unsuitable to religion. You may use the world, but not

seek the friendship of it. Those that would be dandled upon the world,s

knees, lose a friend of Christ. As to instance, in pleasing the men of

the world, Gal. i. 10, `If I yet please men, I were not the servant of

Christ., So for gratifying of worldly lusts; we may use the comforts of

the world, but may not serve the lusts and pleasures of it: that is a

description of the carnal state, Titus iii. 3.

Is enmity with God.--When you begin to please the world you wage war

against heaven, and bid open defiance to the Lord of hosts; the love of

God and care of obedience is abated just so much as the world

prevaileth in you. There is a like expression Rom. viii. 7, `The carnal

mind is enmity against God;, averse and adverse. So doth the world not

only withdraw the heart from God, but oppose him. A man can hardly

serve two masters, though of the same judgment; but God and the world

are opposite masters, they command contrary things: 1 John ii. 15, `If

any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him;, Mat. vi.

24, `Ye cannot serve God and mammon., They that match covetousness with

profession seek to reconcile two of the most unsuitable things in the

world.

Whosoever therefore.--General truths must be enforced by applicative

inferences, and so they fall directly upon the soul: Job v. 27, `So it

is, hear it, and know it for thy good.,

Will be the friend of the world.--Boulethe noteth the aim and serious

purpose. All do not find the world to favour them; do what they can,

`the world is crucified to them;, but they are not as Paul was,

`crucified to the world,, Gal. vi. 14. Therefore the scripture taketh

notice not of what is in the event, but the aim. Besides, the serious

purpose and choice discovereth the state of the soul; he is also

absolutely a worldly man that will be a friend of the world. So 1 Tim.

vi. 9, oi' boulo'menoi ploutein, `they that will be rich., In heavenly

matters the deliberate choice and full purpose discovereth grace: Acts

xi. 23, `That with purpose of heart they would cleave to the Lord.,

Therefore Christians should look to their purpose and aim. What is it?

What do you give your minds to? When a man setteth himself to grow

rich, to lay up treasures upon earth, he is a worldly man; as when he

giveth his heart and mind and whole man to do what God requireth,

whatever cometh of it, he is a true servant of the Lord. To this

purpose are those speeches of Solomon: Prov. xxiii. 4, `Labour not to

be rich;, that is, do not give up thy heart and endeavours to find out

and follow all ways to increase thy wealth and estate: so Prov. xxviii.

20, `He that maketh haste to be rich,, &c., hath set up that for his

purpose. Now this purpose of the soul may be known, partly by a

resolute carrying on the end without weighing the means and

consequences; partly by the diligence and earnestness of the spirit.

When the end is fixed, we are patient of all labour, but impatient of

check and disappointment.

Is the enemy of God.--Actively and passively; it maketh a man hate God,

and to be hated by God. Duty will either make us weary of the world, or

the world will make us weary of duty. The children of God have

experience of the one, and hypocrites of the other.

The points, besides those observed in the exposition, are these:--

Obs. 1. That worldliness in Christians is spiritual adultery. It

dissolveth the spiritual marriage between God and the soul; of all sins

it is most unsuitable to the marriage-covenant, the covenant of grace,

wherein God propoundeth himself to be `all-sufficient,, Gen. xvii. 1.

We have enough in God, but we desire to make up our happiness in the

creatures; this is plain whoring: Ps. lxxiii. 27, `Thou hast destroyed

all them that go a whoring from thee;, that is, those which sought that

in the world which is only to be found in God. There are degrees in

this whoredom. You know there may be adultery in affection when the

body is not defiled; unclean glances are a degree of lust. The children

of God may have some outrunning and straggling thoughts: when the devil

is at their elbows, the world may be greatened in their esteem and

imagination: `Happy is the people that is in such a case,, Ps. cxliv.

15; but they presently correct themselves, and return to the bosom of

God; yea, rather, `happy is the people whose God is the Lord., In

others there is a higher degree; they settle those affections upon the

world which are only due and proper to God, as their care, delight,

desire, fear, hope, which should be kept chaste and loyal to Jesus

Christ; yet there is still some profession. As a woman that is not

contented with one husband, and yet still retaineth the colour and

pretence of the first marriage: this is in hypocrites, who divide their

hearts between God and the world. There are others who plainly leave

the Creator for the creature, and prefer the world before God, the

profits and pleasures of it before communion with him in holy duties.

To let the world share with God is an evil, but to prefer the world

before God is an impiety. As a whorish wife preferreth every one before

her own husband, so do the profane, who live as professed prostitutes:

their love is wholly with drawn from God as a husband, and their

obedience from him as a lord: they `love pleasures more than God,, 2

Tim. iii. 4. Well, then, check worldly inclinations; when 3 r our

hearts are too passionately drawn forth to present comforts and

contentments, or when your thoughts are raised into too great

admiration of them, or when worldly ease and pleasure hindereth and

withdraweth you from duty, or are apt to prefer carnal satisfaction

before communion with God, remember at such time this is adultery. You

are not your own, but given up to God: 1 Cor. vi. 15, `Know ye not that

your bodies are members of Christ? And shall I take the members of

Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid., This love

is Christ,s; these admiring thoughts, these pains, time, care,

earnestness, they are all Christ,s; and shall I give that which is

Christ,s to the world? God hath fenced us against outward adultery by

fear and shame: some countries punish it with whipping, others with

death. There is baseness and danger also in spiritual adultery. There

is baseness; affections are impure, so far as they are let out upon

other things rather than God: shall I be an adulterer or an adulteress

to God? How will this expose me to the scorn of men and angels? At the

last day they will come pointing, as in Ps. lii. 7, `This is the man

that made not God his strength, but trusted in the abundance of his

riches!, This is a Gadarene, that loved his swine more than Christ,

that preferred a game at cards before communion with God, a cup, a

drunken meeting, before the house of God, &c. Spiritual harlots will

not be able to look good men and angels in the face. There is danger in

it too; God is a jealous God. Whoring under the law was punished with

death: `Every one that goeth a-whoring from thee wilt thou destroy.,

There is nothing provoketh the Lord so much as this, that base things

should be preferred before him.

Obs. 2. From that and adulteresses. The Syriac translation hath not

this word; the vulgar hath only adulteri, yet the Greek copies have it.

It is not usual in scriptures to speak to women; the speeches of the

apostles in their epistles are usually directed to men, therefore it is

the more notable. The note is, that women have special need to take

heed of worldly pleasures and lusts: `You adulterers and adulteresses.,

Whore is a name of reproach; you cannot endure it. Ah! be not whores

spiritually, doting too much upon outward pleasure and pomp. You are

loyal to your earthly husbands; ah! be so to Jesus Christ. Men,s hearts

are more usually distracted with worldly cares, but yours are apt to be

besotted with worldly pleasures; we usually call it softness and

effeminacy. The apostle speaks of some women that `wax wanton against

Christ,, 1 Tim. v. 11; that is, when they begin to renounce the inward

mortification of fleshly lusts. Remember you have a heavenly husband;

let not soft delicacy so corrupt your minds as to make you forget your

duty to him: you have a great many snares--your tenderness, others,

examples, &c.

Obs. 3. That to seek the friendship of the world is the ready way to be

God,s enemy. God and the world are contrary; he is all good, and the

world lieth in wickedness; and they command contrary things. The world

saith, Slack no opportunity of gain and pleasure; if you will be so

peevish as to stand nicely upon conscience, you will do nothing but

draw trouble upon yourselves. Now, God saith, Deny yourselves, take up

your cross, renounce the world, &c. The world saith, `Wilt thou take

thy bread, and thy water, and thy flesh, and give it unto men whom thou

knowest not whence they be?, 1 Sam. xxv. 11. But God saith, `Sell that

ye have, and give alms, provide bags that waste not,, &c. It were easy

to instance in several such contrarieties. We find by experience that

so far as we mingle with the world, so far are our hearts deadened and

estranged from God; and by the encroachment of worldly delights and

vanities upon the spirit, the love of God decayeth. It is a vain

conceit to think we can serve God and our lusts too. The world and

grace are incompatible; they may be together sometimes, as a rusty dial

may be right by chance. But you will be put to trial; and when God and

the world come in competition, you may see whose friendship you do

desire. When a worldly man must do the one or the other, you shall see

where his heart is; he will rather offend God than lose riches,

pleasures, or preferment: he is loath to be bound up by the curt

allowance of conscience and religion; and though he would gild all with

a pretence of respect to God, yet carnal reasons oversway, and he

taketh the world,s part against God. Well, now, you see the enmity

between God and the world. (1.) Think of it seriously, when you are

about to mingle with earthly comforts and delights, and can neglect God

for a little carnal conveniency and satisfaction; this is to be an

enemy to God; and can I make good my part against him? He is almighty,

and can crush you. What are our feeble hands to the grasp of

omnipotency? See Ezek. xxii. 14. And he is a terrible enemy `when he

whetteth his glittering sword,, Deut. xxxii. 41. Nay, if none of all

this were to be feared, the very estrangement from God is punishment

enough to itself. Shall I renounce the love and favour of God, and all

commerce and communion between him and me, for a little temporal

delight and pleasure? God forbid. (2.) Learn how odious worldliness is;

it is direct enmity to God, because it is carried on under sly

pretences; of all sins this seemeth most plausible. Usually we stroke

it with a gentle censure, and say, He is a good man, but a little

covetous and worldly, &c. That is enough to entitle him God,s enemy.

The world reckoneth sins, not by the inward contrariety to God, but by

the outward excesses and acts of filthiness; and therefore, because

covetous persons do not break out into acts foul and shameful, they

have much of the honour and respect of the world: Ps. xlix. 13, `Their

way is folly, yet their posterity approve their sayings;, that is,

praise and esteem such a kind of life. Sensual persons are like beasts,

and therefore the object of common scorn; but worldliness suiteth more

with carnal reason, and is a sin more human and rational: Ps. x. 3,

`They bless the covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth., The Lord abhorreth

them, but men bless them; for they do not measure sins so much by the

inward enmity, as by the outward excess. God,s hatred ariseth from his

own purity, but man,s from the external inconveniences of disgrace and

loss.

Ver. 5. Do ye think the scripture saith in vain. The spirit that

dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?

This scripture hath been much vexed with the several expositions of

those that have dealt in it, because it doth not easily appear of what

scripture or of what spirit the apostle speaketh. Two opinions are most

worthy of regard. Some interpret it of the Spirit of God, others of the

corrupt spirit of man. Those that refer it to the Spirit of God read it

with a double interrogation, thus: `Doth the scripture speak in vain?

doth the Spirit that dwelleth in us lust to envy?, And they interpret

it thus: Do the scriptures speak in vain to this drift and purpose to

which I have spoken to you? meaning the sentences last spoken, which

are everywhere scattered throughout the word: `Doth the Spirit that is

in us lust to envy?, that is, the Spirit of God, doth it lust in such a

carnal manner? Their reasons are three:--(1.) Because the sentence

supposed to be in the latter part of the text is nowhere found in

scripture, and therefore some are forced to fly to the shift of some

ancient book of piety now lost. (2.) The next is, because of that

phrase, `The Spirit which dwelleth in us,, which is most properly and

most usually applied to the Spirit of God, who is given to us that he

may dwell in us; but is not so proper to our corruption, which usually

is not called `a spirit,, or, at least, not `a spirit dwelling in us.,

(3.) The third is taken from the first clause of the next verse, `But

he giveth more grace;, which he being a relative, must have an

antecedent, and that is the Spirit of God here intended. These are the

arguments.

The other opinion, that referreth it to the wicked spirit of man,

expoundeth the place thus: `Doth the scripture say in vain?, that is,

it is not for nothing that the scripture saith: what doth it say? That

`the spirit dwelling in us;, that is, our corrupt nature. Some say

Satan--more probably the former--`lusteth to envy?, that is, is

mightily carried forth that way. To this opinion I do incline, and my

reason is, the easiness and commodiousness of the sense. The other is

more harsh and intricate: as also the suitableness of it with the scope

of the apostle, which is to prove that carnal lusts are natural to us,

and do not become him that would be a friend of God; those that are

wholly carried to evil cannot be his friends. And so both text and

context runneth smoothly.

But how shall we answer the contrary arguments?

I answer thus--(1.) The first is, that this saying, `The spirit that

dwelleth in us lusteth to envy,, is nowhere found in scripture. To

which I reply, that the sense of it is found in scripture, though not

the to` reton, the express words; and when scripture is quoted

generally, the sense is sufficient. The apostle, writing to Jews who

were versed in scripture, quoteth it generally, and at large. As also

doth Peter in many places, and so Paul: 1 Cor. xiv. 21, `In the law it

is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto

this people., So ver. 34, `Women are to be under obedience, as also

saith the law., Now these words are nowhere in terminis, but are the

drift of many scriptures. So Eph. v. 14, `Wherefore he saith, Awake

thou that sleepest,, &c., where there is a general citation. So here it

is the drift of many scriptures to speak of the corrupt nature of man,

and a wicked spirit dwelling in us; though I conceive there is a

special allusion to one place, as there is in all those other citations

mentioned; and the place alluded to here is Gen. viii. 21, `The

imagination of man,s heart is evil, only evil, and that continually.,

And though there be no mention of envy, yet with good reason the

apostle might apply a general place to his particular purpose. (2.) The

second argument is taken from the property of the phrases, spirit, and

kesen, dwelleth, or hath taken up his habitation in us; but this may be

very fitly applied to that natural and corrupt spirit which now we

have. I have observed, that it is usual in the scripture to call the

bent and strong propension of the soul, either to good or evil, spirit;

as `we have not received the spirit of the world,, 1 Cor. ii. 12. And

the phrase of dwelling in us is used by the apostle, and applied to

sin, Rom. vii. 17. Neither is there any emphasis in the word to cause

it to be peculiar to the gift of the Holy Ghost; for it only noteth

promiscuously any intimate abode. (3.) The third argument is taken from

the beginning of the next verse. I answer--If you render it but `it

giveth more grace,, it is referred to the scriptures; if `he giveth

more grace,, it is referred to God, mentioned in ver. 4. But we shall

examine that passage when we come to ver. 6.

The points are these:--

Obs. 1. Though sin be natural to us, it is not therefore the less evil.

It is the apostle,s argument against envy and lust, `The spirit that is

in us lusteth to it., Poison by nature is more than poison by accident.

We pity that which is poisoned, we hate that which is poisonous; as we

pity a dog that is poisoned by chance, but hate a toad that is

poisonous by nature. We use it as an excuse. We are sinners, and so are

all by nature. Ah! this is the greatest aggravation. So David, Ps. li.

5, `In sin was I born, and conceived in iniquity,, Lord, I have

committed adultery, and I have an adulterous heart and nature! We

should set against those sins with the more care, and be humbled for

them with the more grief, that are natural to us.

Obs. 2. From that doth the scripture say in vain? Yet it is nowhere in

the same terms and words. The scripture saith that which may be

inferred from the scope of it and by just consequence. Immediate

inferences are as valid as express words. Christ proveth the

resurrection not by direct testimony, but by argument, Mat. xxii. 32.

What the scripture doth import, therefore, by good consequence, should

be received as if it were expressed.

Obs. 3. Carnal persons make the scriptures speak in vain as to them: 2

Cor. vi. 1, `We beseech you, receive not the grace of God in vain;,

that is, the offers of the gospel. When the word of God hath not an

answerable effect, it is to us a vain and dead letter. Oh! do not let

the scriptures, by way of comfort, counsel, or reproof, speak in vain

to you. When you meet with any moving passage, ask within yourselves,

Wherefore was this spoken in the word of God? was it spoken in vain? or

shall I make it so? &c.

Obs. 4. From that the spirit that dwelleth in us. Some understand it of

Satan, as we hinted, `who worketh in the children of disobedience,,

Eph. ii. 2, but more properly of our own spirit, the bent of our carnal

hearts. Naturally we have all a wicked spirit that dwelleth in us. We

commit sin, as heavy bodies move downward, not from an impression

without, but from our own spirit and nature. Oh! be the more earnest to

partake of the divine nature, and be more watchful over yourselves.

Your own spirit is the cause of sin; inward concupiscence is the worst

enemy, James i. 14.

Obs. 5. From that pro`s phtho'non epipothei, lusteth to envy, or

desireth towards envy. A carnal spirit is strongly carried out in the

ways of sin; it desireth after it. Suspect such desires as are too

vehement; pantings after earthly matters come from lust.

Obs. 6. From that to envy. Natural corruption doth most of all bewray

itself by envy. We have it as soon as we come into the world, and it is

a hard matter to leave it ere we go out of it again; children suck it

in with their milk. [305] The devil first envied us the favour of God,

and ever since we have envied one another. The children of God are

often surprised. So Joshua, Num. xi. 29. So Peter envied John, as

excelling him in the love of Christ, John xxi. 20, 21. It is a sin that

breaketh both tables at once; it beginneth in discontent with God, and

endeth in injury to man; it is the root of hatred against godliness.

They that are at the bottom of the hill fret at those that are at the

top, and men malign what they will not imitate. Wicked men would have

all upon the same level. Abel,s sacrifice was better than Cain,s, and

therefore Cain murdered him. Man would have his own weaknesses lie hid

under the common defects; or else out of self-love, like the sun, he

would shine alone; and thence come outrages in the world: Prov. xxvii.

4, `Wrath is cruel, and anger outrageous; but who is able to stand

before envy?, The heat of anger is soon spent, but envy is a settled,

crooked malice, that doth but watch advantage to destroy.

Ver. 6. But he giveth more grace: wherefore he saith, God resisteth the

proud, but giveth grace to the humble.

But he giveth more grace.--Some read it giveth, applying it to the

scripture. It giveth grace, because it offereth it, and is a means in

God,s hand of working it. But I rather suppose it is to be applied to

God, for it is spoken in opposition to `the spirit in us that lusteth

to envy;, and so suiteth with the scope of the context, which is to

show, that a wordly spirit is contrary to God. This clause, as thus

applied, hath been severally expounded; but because the difference is

mostly in the formality of expression, and the senses be all pious and

subordinate one to another, it will not be amiss to improve them into

so many several observations.

Obs. 1. You may refer it to the context thus: `Our spirit lusteth to

envy; but he giveth more grace;, that is, we are envious, and God is

bountiful. It is usual in scripture to oppose God,s liberality to our

envy, his good hand to our evil eye, Mat. xx. 15. Damascene calleth God

a'phthonos, one without envy, because he is most liberal. The note is,

that an envious disposition is very contrary to God. God is for

communication, and we are for confinement. [306] We would have all

blessings within our line and pale; we malign the good of others, but

God delighteth. in it. This may make envy odious to us; we all affect

to be like God. Our first parents greedily swallowed that bait, `Ye

shall be as gods., We would be so in a cursed self-sufficiency, why are

we not so in a holy conformity? To set on this thought, consider--(1.)

God hath no need to dispense his blessings; we stand in need of one

another, the highest monarch of the meanest subject. God was happy

enough within himself before there was any creature: Acts xvii. 25. `He

needed nothing., The Trinity was not solitary; the persons solaced

themselves in one another before there was hill or mountain, Prov.

viii. 30. Now, for us to desire all good things inclosed, whose

happiness is dependent, and consisteth in a mutual communication, it

must be exceeding vile. (2.) It is not only an unlikeness to God, but

an injury to him; we would have him less good, and so do not only

accuse the wisdom of his dispensations, but would straiten the goodness

of his nature. Certainly, then, there is little of the Spirit of God

where there is such an envious spirit. Grace standeth in a conformity

to God, and therefore it is expressed by a `participation of the divine

nature,, 2 Peter i. 4. Grace is nothing else but an introduction of the

virtues of God into the soul. Now, God delighteth in `giving more

grace;, and therefore such as are not communicative and diffusive of

their good to others, or are all for an inclosure of blessings, or

cannot rejoice in the parts, services, or excellencies of others, have

nothing at all, or very little, of the nature of God in them.

Obs. 2. Another consideration of this clause is this: Our spirit is

strongly carried to envy, but God giveth more grace; that is, there is

enough in him to check sins that are most impetuous and raging. There

is enough in God to help the creature in its sorest conflicts. See Mat.

xix. 26, `It is impossible for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of

God; but with God all things are possible., Usually we measure

infiniteness by our last, and bring down divine attributes to the rate

of creatures, judging of God by our own scant ling; as if what is

impossible to our endeavours were so also to the divine grace: Zech.

viii. 6, `Because it is marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this

people, should it also be marvellous in my eyes? saith the Lord of

hosts., There is more in God than there can be in nature, and Satan is

not so able to destroy as Christ is to save. Well, then, when lusts are

strong, think of a strong God, a mighty Christ, upon whom help is laid.

You cannot cure your spirits of envy, pride, self-confidence, or

vainglory; but God `giveth more grace., Sense of weakness should not be

a discouragement, but an advantage. So it was to Paul; when he was weak

in himself, he was always most strong in Christ, 2 Cor. xii. 9, 10.

Usually we vex ourselves with idle complaints: `This is a hard saying,,

John vi. These are austerities which nature can never endure,

corruptions which we shall never overcome; and so are discouraged and

draw back. Oh! consider, though nature be not only envious, but doth

epipothein pro`s phtho'non, `lust to envy,, yet `he giveth more grace.,

If there were a will, you would not want power; the chiefest thing that

God requireth of the creature is choice and will: Isa. i. 19, `If ye be

willing and obedient,, &c. All God,s aim is to bring, you upon your

knees, and to take power out of the hands of his mercy.

Obs. 3. Another consideration is this: Though we are wicked and sinful,

God will make his grace abound the more; our spirit lusteth to envy,

and he giveth the more grace. Observe, God taketh occasion many times

to discover the more grace by our sinfulness. So Rom. v. 20, `Where sin

abounded, grace did much more abound., What a wise God do we serve,

that can make our sins abound to his glory! And what a good God, that

will take occasion from our wickedness to show the more grace! It is

some kind of claim, `Lord, I am a dog,, Mat. xv. 27; and if Christ died

for sinners, I am sure I can plead that `I am chief, of that number, 1

Tim. i. 15. If you have no other plea, offer yourselves this way to

God, and take hold of the dark side of the promises.

Obs. 4. Another consideration of this place may be this: Naturally it

is thus with us, but he giveth more grace; when you are renewed and

converted to the faith of Christ, you have another manner of spirit;

you are not carried by the old envious spirit that dwelleth in you, but

by a more gracious spirit which God hath given you. Observe, the old

spirit and the new spirit are quite different. You will be otherwise by

grace than what you were by nature. Conversion is discovered by a

change. Oh! what a sad thing it is when Christians are what they ever

were! You should have more grace; your word should be, ego non sum

ego--I am not I now; or nunc oblita mihi--these were my old courses;

or, as the apostle, 1 Peter iv. 3, `The time past may suffice to have

walked in the lusts of the flesh,, &c.

Obs. 5. But `he giveth more grace;, that is, more for better, as often

in the scriptures. If you would seek God in a humble manner, you would

be acquainted with richer matters; you would not so envy and contend

with one another about outward enjoyments. That which the world giveth

is not comparable to what God giveth; his is more grace. So John xiv.

27, `Not as the world giveth give I unto you., Blessings more

excellent! Here we cumber ourselves with much serving, but God giveth

more grace. Faith will show us greater things than these. The main

reason why men dote upon the world is because they are not acquainted

with a higher glory. Men ate acorns till they were acquainted with the

use of corn; a candle is much ere the sun ariseth. We have not a right

apprehension of grace till we can see it yieldeth us more than the

world can yield us. Creatures give us a temporary refreshing; the world

serveth its season; but grace a full and everlasting joy.

Wherefore he saith.--How cometh in this sentence? I answer--He applieth

it to his drift, which is to take them off from carnal pursuits, and to

press them to humble addresses to God; and therefore they do ill who

leave it out. As Erasmus, who thinketh it only noted at first in the

margin, and put into the text by some scribe. But to the points.

Obs. 1. God doth not only offer grace, but discover the way how we may

partake of it. Therefore `he saith, in scripture, or defineth the way

how we may apply ourselves to him. God is hearty and in good earnest in

the offers of grace; he not only offereth, but teacheth, nay, draweth,

John vi. 44, 45. Thus Christ discovereth the riches of his grace: `All

things are given me of my Father,, Mat. xi. 27; then offereth them,

`Come to me,, &c., ver. 28, then showeth the way, `Learn of me,, &c.,

ver. 29. Usually the soul sticketh at this. There is enough in Christ,

but how shall I do to obtain it? God will teach you, draw you; he is as

willing to give faith as to give salvation.

Obs. 2. Again, from that wherefore he saith. Those that would have

grace must take the right way to obtain it. Not only consider what God

giveth, but what be saith. God, that hath decreed the end, hath decreed

the means. That is the reason why we have not only promises in

scripture, but directions; it checketh those that would have the

blessing, but would not use the means. Most content themselves with

lazy wishes; vellent, sed nolunt, they would have grace, but lie upon

the bed of ease, and expect to be rapt to heaven in a fiery chariot, or

that grace should drop to them out of the clouds. God, that saith he

will give grace, saith something else--that you must be humble to

receive it.

Obs. 3. Again, from the apostle,s wherefore. It is an excellent art to

rank scriptures in their order, and to know wherefore everything is

spoken in the word, that we may suit absolute promises with

conditional, and put every truth in its proper place, according to that

analogy and proportion that they bear one to another; as James linketh

the general offers of grace with another promise, `He giveth grace to

the humble., It is good to know truth in its frame. There is a

compages, or sweet frame, in which all truths are joined by natural

couples and connections; as the curtains of the tabernacle were looped

to one another. Indistinct apprehensions do but dispose to error or

looseness. Truths awe most when we are sensible of that cognation or

kin by which they respect and touch one another: `Mary pondered these

sayings in her heart,, Luke ii. 19; the word is sullabousa, [307]

compared them one with another. A hint here and a hint there maketh men

loose and careless; as when absolute promises are not considered in the

analogy of faith. Absolute promises may be our first encouragement, but

conditional promises must be our direction; they are a plank cast out

to save a sinking soul, but these show us the way how to get into the

ark. Well, then, be not contented with sermon hints till you have

gotten a pattern of sound words, and can discern the intent of God in

the several passages of scripture, that you may rank them in their

order; as the apostle here showeth the reason why God saith `he giveth

grace to the humble.,

He saith.--Where doth God say so? Some difference there is about

referring this place to the right scripture from whence it is taken.

Some conceive it was a holy proverb or known sentence among the Jews.

But this cannot be. The phrase, he saith, seemeth to allude to some

passage of scripture. Some refer it to Ps. xviii. 27, `Thou wilt save

the afflicted people, and bring down the high looks:, but that is wide;

for humility here doth not imply a low, vile, and abject condition, but

a grace and disposition of the mind; and that place cited speaketh only

of saving the afflicted people of God. Many refer it to other general

places; but most probably it hath respect to Prov. iii. 34, where it is

said, `Surely he scorneth the scorners, and giveth grace unto the

lowly., The only doubt is how that `he scorneth the scorners, is here

rendered `he resisteth the proud., I answer It is done upon good

grounds: partly because scorning and contempt of others is an immediate

effect of pride; and partly because it is so rendered by the

Septuagint, antita'ttetai tois uperepha'nois. And the apostles in their

citations usually brought the words of that translation, because it was

much in use both among Jews and other nations. Some suppose James

alludeth to Peter, 1 Peter v. 5-8, for this is but an epitome of that

place, and written after it, and so he may assert the divine authority

of that epistle. But I rather rest in the former opinion.

God resisteth the proud, antitattetai, standeth in battle-array, or in

direct defiance and opposition against them: the proud man hath his

tactics, and God hath his anti-tactics. The word showeth that there is

a mutual opposition between God and the proud: they bring forth their

battalia against God, and God his battalia against them. And I do the

rather note it because in the Proverbs it is said, `He scorneth the

scorners., They slight God, and God slighteth them: `Who is the Lord

that I should fear him?, and `What is this Pharaoh?, They stand aloof

from others, and God from them: Ps. cxxxviii. 6, `He knoweth the proud

afar off., Just as they do others; [308] they ruin others to advance

themselves, and God ruineth them: God still counteracteth the proud.

The proud.--In the Proverbs it is the scorners. Scorning is a great

sign of pride: disdain of others cometh from overvaluing ourselves. God

hath made every man an object of respect or pity; it is pride that

maketh them objects of contempt, and in them their maker, Prov. xvii.

5. It is a description of wicked men to `sit in the seat of scorners,,

Ps. i. 1. It is a sin so hateful to God, that he taketh notice of

disdainful gestures; `Putting forth of the finger, in a scoff, Isa.

lviii. 9.

But giveth grace.--It is meant spiritually, of such help and grace

whereby they may overcome their carnal desires; carnal lusts cannot be

overcome but by the assistance of grace.

To the humble.--It is not taken for a vile and abject condition, but

for the disposition of the soul; and yet not for a moral humility, but

for a holy brokenness and contrition; as by proud, in a spiritual

sense, are meant stiff-necked and unhumbled sinners.

The main observations out of this latter clause, besides those hinted

in the explication, are these:--

Obs. 1. That of all sins God setteth himself to punish the sin of

pride, antitattetai. He abhorreth other sinners, but against the proud

he professeth open defiance and hostility. One asked a philosopher what

God was a-doing? He answered, Totam ipsius occupationem esse in

elevatione humilium, et superborum dejectione--that his whole work was

to lift up the humble and cast down the proud. It is the very business

of providence; the Bible is full of examples. This was the sin that

turned angels into devils; they would be above all, and under none, and

therefore God tumbled them down to hell. Noluit Deus pati

cohabitationem superbiae, as one saith, God could not endure to have

pride so near him. Then it wrecked all mankind when it crept out of

heaven into paradise. You may trace the story of it all down along by

the ruins and falls of those that entertained it. The time would fail

me to speak of all. Pharaoh, and Herod, and Haman, and Nebuchadnezzar,

are sad instances, and do loudly proclaim that all the world cannot

keep him up that doth not keep down his own spirit. Herod did but

endure the flatteries of others; he had on a suit of cloth of silver,

[309] and the sunbeams beating upon it, then the people cried, `The

voice of God, and not of man,, because the angels were wont to appear

in shining garments; now, because he rebuked them not, he was eaten up

of lice: see Acts xii. Nay, I observe God hath punished it in his own

people; there are sore instances of his displeasure against their

pride. `Uzziah,s heart was lifted up,, 2 Chron. xxvi. 16, and then

smitten of leprosy, and so died, apo` lupes kai` athumi'as, out of

grief and sorrow, as Josephus saith. David,s numbering the people, and

glorying in his own greatness, cost the lives of seventy thousand. So

Hezekiah, 2 Chron. xxix. 8, `Wrath was upon him, and all Judah and

Jerusalem., These judgments on pride are sure and resolved. A man,s

pride will surely bring him low, Prov. xxix. 23. If they do not visibly

light upon the first person, they overtake the posterity: Prov. xv. 25,

`The house of the proud shall be destroyed., All their aim is to

advance their house and family, but within two or three ages they are

utterly wasted and ruined. And I observe that judgments on pride are

very shameful, that God may pour the more contempt upon them: `After

pride cometh shame,, Prov. xi. 2; not only ruin, but shame. Herod in

his royalty eaten up with lice. Pharaoh is not assaulted with armies,

but with gnats and flies. Miriam smitten with leprosy, a nasty and

shameful disease. Goliath, the swelling giant, falleth by the cast of a

stone out of the sling of a ruddy youth.

What should be the reason of all this, that God should so expressly set

himself against pride? I answer--Because of all sins he hateth this

sin, Prov. xvi. 5. Other sins are more hateful to man, because they

bring disgrace, and have more of baseness and turpitude in them;

whereas pride seemeth to have a kind of bravery in it; but now the Lord

hateth it because it is a sin that sets itself most against him. Other

sins are against God,s laws, this is against his being and sovereignty.

Pride doth not only withdraw the heart from God, but lift it up against

God. It is a direct contention who shall be acknowledged the author of

blessing and excellency: `They set their heart up as the heart of God,,

Ezek. xxviii. 6. Babylon speaketh in the name and style of God, `I am,

and there is none beside me., So Nineveh, Zeph. ii. 15. And as it

riseth against his being, so against his providence. Pride setteth up

an anti-providence; it entertaineth crosses with anger, and blessings

with disdain, and citeth God before the tribunal of its own will. So

also it is the greatest enemy to God,s law; there is pride in every

sin. Sinning is interpretative confronting of God and `despising the

commandment,, 2 Sam. xii. 9. The will of the creature is set up against

the Creator. But the sin of pride is much more against the law of God;

it is a touchy sin, and cannot endure the word that reproveth it. Other

sins disturb reason, this humoureth it. Drunkenness is more patient of

reproof, conscience consenting to the checks of the word; but pride

first blindeth the mind, and then armeth the affections; it layeth the

judgment asleep, and then awakeneth anger. Besides, pride is the cause

of all other sins. Covetousness is the root of evil, and pride is the

soul of it. Covetousness is but pride,s purveyor. We pursue carnal

enjoyments that we may puff up ourselves in the possession of them; and

usually that which is pursued in lust is enjoyed in pride. It is but

the complacency of the soul in an earthly excellency: Hab. ii. 5, `He

is a proud man,, and therefore `enlargeth his desire as hell.,

Use 1. The use of all is, first, to caution us against pride. There are

two sorts of pride, one in the mind, and the other in the

affections--self-conceit and an aspiring after worldly greatness; both

are natural to us, especially the former. (1.) We are marvellous apt to

be puffed up with a conceit of our own excellency, be it in riches,

beauty, parts, or grace; the apostle, 1 John ii. 16, calleth it `pride

of life,, because it spreadeth throughout all the employments and

comforts of life. Other lusts are limited, either by their end, as

`lusts of the flesh,, to content the body; or by their instrument, as

`lusts of the eyes;, but pride is of a universal and unlimited

influence. It is `pride of life;, the whole life is but sphere enough

for pride. Those that have nothing excellent cannot excuse themselves

from fearing it. We many times find that men that have nothing to be

proud of are most conceited: bloaty spirits are soon puffed up, like

bladders filled with wind. We see it in our natures: man was never more

proud than since he was wretched and miserable. Pride came in by the

fall, and that which should take down the spirit hath raised it. But

much more have they that excel cause to suspect themselves; as rich

men: 1 Tim. vi; 17, `Charge them that are rich in this world that they

be not high-minded., It is hard to carry a full cup without spilling,

and not to lift up ourselves when we are raised up by God. Persons that

grow up into an estate out of nothing are most apt to be proud; partly

be cause not able to digest a sudden change; such happiness is a

strange thing to them, and therefore soon oversetteth the spirit;

partly because they look upon themselves as the makers of their own

fortunes: `Is not this great Babel which I have built?, Other men,s

estates descend upon them, but there is some concurrence of their

industry, and so they are more apt to `sacrifice to their drag, for the

fatness of their portion, Hab. i. 16. When you are thus apt to pride

yourselves in your present greatness, and entertain your souls with

such whispers of vanity, remember this is a sure prognostic of a sudden

fall. And as rich men are liable to this evil, so men of parts. Parts,

especially if exercised with public applause, are like a strong liquor,

it maketh men giddy and drunk with pride. It is hard to go steady when

a consciousness of parts within, and public acclamations without, like

violent winds, fill the sail. Knowledge of itself is apt `to puff up,,

1 Cor. viii. 2, especially when publicly discovered; therefore the

apostle saith that young preachers are prone to `fall into the

condemnation of the devil,, 1 Tim. iii. 6. Oh! consider God,s judgments

upon pride in parts. Staupicius was proud of his memory, [310] and God

smote it. We find nothing causeth madness so much as pride.

Nebuchadnezzar lost his reason and turned beast when he grew proud.

Many young men that were proud of their gifts have, by the just

judgment of God, lost all the quickness and smartness of them, and

quenched their vigour in fleshy and carnal delights. Remember, whatever

we have was given of grace; and if we grow proud of it, it will soon be

taken away by justice. Nay, not only men of parts, but of much grace

and mortification, may be surprised with pride; it once crept into

heaven, then into paradise; the best heart can have no security.

Christians are not so much in danger of intemperance and sensual lusts

as pride; it groweth by the decrease of other sins; and therefore pride

is put last, 1 John ii. 16, as being Satan,s last engine. They that are

set upon the pinnacles of the temple are in danger to be thrown down

this way. Paul was apt to grow proud of his revelations, 2 Cor. xii. 7.

In heaven only we are most high and most humble. A worm may breed in

manna; strong comforts, raised affections, and strange elevations, may

much puff up, and by gracious enjoyments we sometimes grow proud,

secure, self-sufficient, and disdainful of others, Rom. xiv. 10; but

this will cost you a shrewd decay. (2.) For the other part of pride,

aspiring after worldly greatness; by such fond pursuits you do but

engage God to oppose you. Many men mistake ambition, and think that

desire of great place is only unlawful when it is sought by unlawful

means; but to affect greatness is contrary to the rules of the gospel.

We should refer our advancement to the sweet invitation of providence,

and stay till the master of the feast bids us sit higher. In our

private choice we should be contented with a tolerable supply of

necessaries: `Whosoever exalteth himself,, &c., Luke xiv. 8, 9; not

whosoever is exalted. In the Olympic games the wrestler did never put

on his own crown and garland: Heb. v. 5, `Christ glorified not himself

as high priest, but was called of God as Aaron., When we do not stay

for the call of providence, it is but an untimely desire of promotion,

which either God crosseth, or else it proveth a curse and snare to us.

Use 2. The next use is, that we should not envy a proud person, no more

than we would a man upon the gallows; they are but lifted up that they

may be cast down for ever. We are apt to pity the drunkard, but envy

the proud: [311] it is Chrysostom,s observation. You had need pity them

too, for they are near a fall: Prov. xvi. 19, `Better be of a meek

spirit with the lowly than to divide the spoil with the proud;, that

is, better be of the depressed party than to cry up a confederacy with

those that grow proud upon their successes.

Use 3. Observe the instances of God,s displeasure against pride upon

yourselves, or those that are near you. Paul took notice of that thorn

that was in his flesh, `Lest,, saith he, `I should be exalted above

measure,, 2 Cor. xii. 7. So you may often say, This was an affliction

to correct and abate my pride, a prick at the bladder of my flatuous

and windy spirit. So on others related to you; near experiences do more

work upon us, and leave the greater impressions of awe: See Dan. v. 22,

`And thou, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou

knewest all this., God taketh it ill when we do not improve the marks

of vengeance upon our nearest friends: we see others how their gifts

are blasted for pride; children taken away for pride, estates wasted

for pride, and we do not lay it to heart.

Obs. 2. God,s grace is given to the humble. We lay up the richest wine

in the lowest cellars; so doth God the choicest mercies in humble and

lowly hearts. Christ did most for those that were most humble; as for

the centurion, `I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof

,, so for the Syrophenician woman, `I am a dog,, &c. There is

excellency enough in God; he requireth only sense of emptiness in us.

God loveth to make all his works creations; and grace worketh most

freely when it worketh upon nothing. It is not for the honour of God

that the creatures should receive aught from mercy till they are

brought upon their knees; the condition which he proposeth is, `only

acknowledge thine iniquities,, Jer. iii. 13. Lumps of unrelenting

guiltiness are as vessels closed up, and cannot receive grace; humility

fitteth a man to receive it. and maketh a man to esteem it. The humble

are vessels of a larger bore and size, fit to receive what grace giveth

out. You may learn hence why humble persons are most gracious, and

gracious persons most humble. God delighteth to fill up such; they are

vessels of a right bore. The valleys laugh with fatness when the hills

are barren; and the laden boughs will bend their heads, &c.

Ver. 7. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he

will flee from you.

The connection is illative; he applieth the former promise, and by a

just inference enforceth the duty therein specified: `Submit yourselves

therefore to God., But you will say, Wherein doth the force of the

reason lie?

I answer--1. It may be inferred out of the latter part of the sentence

thus: `God giveth grace to the humble, therefore do you submit

yourselves;, that is, do you come humbly, and seek the grace of God.

The note thence is:--

Obs. That general hints of duty must be particularly and faithfully

applied, or urged upon our own souls.

Doctrine is but the drawing of the bow, application is the hitting of

the mark. How many are wise in generals, but vain en dialogi'smois, in

their practical inferences! Rom. i. 22. Generals remain in notion and

speculation; particular things work. We are only to give you doctrine,

and the necessary uses and inferences; you are to make application.

Whenever you hear, let the light of every truth be reflected upon your

own souls; never leave it till you have gained the heart to a sense of

duty, and a resolution for duty. (1.) A sense of duty: `Know it for thy

good,, Job v. 27. If God hath required humble addresses, I must submit

to God; if the happiness and quiet of the creature consisteth in a

nearness to God, then `it is good for me to draw nigh to God,, Ps.

lxxiii. 28. Thus must you take your share out of every truth; I must

live by this rule. When sinners are invited to believe in Christ, say,

`I am chief,, 1 Tim. i. 15. (2.) A resolution for duty, that your souls

may conclude, not only I must, but I will: Ps. xxvii. 8, `When thou

saidst, Seek ye my face, my heart said, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.,

The command is plural, Seek ye; the answer is singular, I will. The

heart must echo thus to divine precepts. So Jer. iii. 22, `Return, O

backsliding children:, `Behold, we come, for thou art the Lord our

God.,

2. It may be inferred out of the former clause thus: `He resisteth the

proud, therefore submit yourselves;, that is, therefore let the Lord

have a willing and spontaneous subjection from you; and then the note

will be:--

Obs. The creature must be humbled either actively or passively. If you

have not a humble heart, God hath a mighty hand: 1 Peter v. 6, `Humble

yourselves under the mighty hand of God., He will either break the

heart or break the bones. You must judge yourselves, or else God will

judge you, 1 Cor. xi. 32. God hath made a righteous law; sin must be

judged in one court or another, that the law may not seem to be made in

vain. If, at the last day, when the judgment is set and the books are

opened, and sinners stand trembling before the white throne of the

Lamb, and you are conscious to the whole process, Christ should then

make you such an offer, `Judge yourselves, and you shall not be

judged,, with what thankfulness would you accept of the motion! and the

next work would be to inquire into your own hearts. Oh! consider, thus

it must be; we must judge or be judged, be humble or be humbled. It

were better to anticipate acts of vengeance by acts of duty. Pharaoh

and Nebuchadnezzar were humbled, Dan. iv. 34, but to their cost.

Passive humiliations are sore and deadly. It were better that we should

humble a proud heart than that God, in the threatening of scripture,

should humble our proud looks, and we should feel that which we would

not do. You will not judge yourselves; ah! but how terrible will it be

when the Lord cometh to judge us for all our hard speeches and ungodly

deeds! Jude 15. When justice taketh up the quarrel of despised mercy,

it will be sad for us; and then we shall know the difference between

God,s inviting and God,s inflicting.

Obs. But let us now go to the duty itself, submit yourselves to God.

Observe, those that would seek the friendship of God must submit to

him. He speaketh of getting in with God, which must be in a humble way.

There is an infinite distance between God and his creatures; we must

come with reverence. But we are not only creatures, but guilty

creatures, and therefore we must come with a holy awe and trembling.

I shall inquire, first, what this subjection is? The word hupotagete

signifieth to place ourselves under God, and so noteth the whole duty

of an inferior state. (1.) There must be a subjection to God,s will,

the whole man to the whole law of God. To submit to God is to give up

ourselves to be governed by his will and pleasure; oar thoughts, our

counsels, our affections, our actions, to be guided according to the

strict rules of the word. Usually here the work of conversion sticketh;

we are loath to resign and give up ourselves to the will of God. Some

commands of God, as those which are inward, are contrary to our

affections; others, as those which enforce duties external, are

contrary to our interests: but we must `take Christ,s yoke,, Mat. xi.

29. A main thing to be looked at in our first applications to God is

this, are we willing to give up ourselves to the will of God without

reservation? Can I subject all, without any hesitancy and reluctation

of thoughts, to the obedience of Christ? 2 Cor. x. 5. (2.) It implieth

humble addresses. Submit yourselves to God; that is, lay aside your

pride and stubbornness, humbly acknowledging your sins; come as lost,

undone creatures, lying at the feet of mercy. Ah! how long is it ere

our mouths are put in the dust! Lam. iii. 29, ere we can come and say

in truth of heart, If we be damned, it is just; if we be saved, it is

of much mercy. (3.) A referring ourselves to the disposal of God,s

providence: Acts xxi. 14, `The will of the Lord be done., It is a true

Christian speech. Discontent is plain rebellion; we would have our will

done, and not God,s; when we murmur, God and we contend; his will must

be done upon us, as well as by us. Thus you see there is a threefold

submission--of our carnal hearts to his holiness, our proud hearts to

his mercy, our stormy minds to his sovereignty, that we may be

obedient, humble, patient.

Secondly, I shall inquire in what manner this submission must be

performed? I answer--(1.) Sincerely; we must do his will, because it is

his will, intuitu voluntatis. God,s will is both the rule and the

reason of duty. So it is urged 1 Thes. iv. 3, `This is the will of God,

even your sanctification., So see 1 Thes. v. 18, and 1 Peter ii. 13.

This is enough, warrant enough, and motive enough: God will have it so.

Hypocrites do the matter of the duty, but they have other motives. This

is indeed to do a duty as a duty, when we do what is commanded because

it is commanded. (2.) Freely; subjection is best when it is willing. If

the beast came struggling and unwillingly to the altar, they never

offered it to their gods, but counted it unlucky. [312] Certainly the

true God looketh most after the ready mind: Ps. cxix. 60, `I made

haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments ,, without doubting,

disputing, consulting with flesh and blood. To offer Isaac was a hard

duty, and yet that morning Abraham was up early; see Gen. xxii. 1. (3.)

Faithfully, to the Lord,s glory, not to our own ends. The Christian

life must be unto God, Gal. ii. 19, according to God,s will, for God,s

glory. It was a testimony of Joab,s homage and fealty to David, that

when he had conquered Rabbath, he sent for David to take the honour.

The hardest task of the creature is to subject our ends to God,s ends,

as well as our ways to God,s will.

Thirdly, I shall inquire what considerations are necessary to urge this

duty upon the soul. Man is a stout creature, and we are apt to break

all cords and restraints. Our language is, `Who is lord over us?,

Therefore, for answer to this last question, consider--(1.) The

necessity of it: `Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God,, 1

Peter v. 6. It is a madness to contend with him that can command

legions. What are we to God? `Are we stronger than he?, 1 Cor. x. 22.

Who is so foolish as to stand out against the Almighty? Men fawn upon

them that have power. God can ruin us with a breath: Job iv. 9, `By the

blast of God they perish, by the breath of his nostrils they come to

nought., So with a beck or frown: Ps. lxxx. 16, `They perish at the

rebuke of thy countenance., This power we shall feel, if we do not

stoop to it. They are broken by the power of his providence, that are

not drawn by the power of his Spirit. God hath sworn: Rom. xiv. 11, `As

I live, saith the Lord, all knees shall bow to me;, that is, count me

not a living God if I do not make the creature stoop. Hearken to this,

you that stand out against the power of the word, can you stand out

against the power of Christ when he cometh in glory? Ezek. xxii. 14,

`Can your hands be made strong, or your hearts endure in the day that I

shall deal with you?, You whose hearts are stout against God, how will

your faces gather blackness and darkness before him, when you shall be

adjudged to that Tophet `whose burning is fire, and much wood, and the

breath of the Lord doth kindle it like a river of brimstone,? (2.) The

nobleness of it. Submission seemeth base, but to God it is noble. All

other subjection is slavery and vassalage, but this is the truest

freedom. Vain men think it a freedom to live at large, to gratify every

carnal desire; this is the basest bondage that may be, 2 Peter ii. 18,

Wicked men have as many lords as lusts. If conscience be but a little

wakened, they are sensible of the tyranny; they see it is ill with

them, and they cannot help it; they are drunkards, worldlings, unclean

persons, of a carnal and voluptuous spirit, and know not which way to

be otherwise. (3.) The utility and benefit of it. This will make

almighty power to be the ground of your hope, not your fear: Isa.

xxvii. 5, `Let them take hold of my strength, and be at peace with me.,

This submission is the high way to exaltation, 1 Peter v. 6. How do men

crouch for worldly ends, and admire every base person for secular

advantage! As Otho in Tacitus did, projicere oscula, adorare vulgus, et

omnia serviliter pro imperio--kiss the people, even adore the basest,

and all to make way for his own greatness. Ah! should we not rather

stoop and submit to the Lord? There is no baseness in the act, and

there is much glory in the reward.

Resist the devil.--What connection hath this precept with the former? I

answer--It may be conceived several ways:

1. Thus: If you will humbly submit to God, you must look to resist

Satan; and the note is:--

Obs. That true obedience findeth much opposition by the devil. Since

the fall a godly life is not known by perfection of grace so much as by

conflicts with sin. Satan is still busiest there where he hath least to

do. Morality is a still way, that putteth us to little trouble. Pirates

do not use to set upon empty vessels, and beggars need not fear the

thief. Those that have most grace feel most trouble from Satan. He

envieth they should enjoy that condition and interest in God which

himself hath lost. The devil is loath to waken those that are in his

own power: `When the strong man keepeth the house, all the goods are in

peace,, Luke xi. 42. But for the godly, he `desireth to winnow them as

wheat,, Luke xxii. 32. Sometimes he vexeth and buffeteth them with sad

injections, at other times with carnal temptations. We cannot appear

before God, but `he is at our right hand ready to resist us,, Zech.

iii. 1. We cannot set upon a duty, but he suggesteth lazy thoughts,

carnal counsels. Well, then, you cannot judge yourselves forsaken of

God because tempted by Satan: no brother in the flesh but hath had his

share, 1 Peter v. 9. Such conflicts are not inconsistent with faith and

piety. He adventured upon Christ himself after he had a testimony from

heaven, Mat. iv. Paul was troubled with one of Satan,s messengers, 2

Cor. xii. 7. And the best are exercised with the sorest conflicts, When

the thief breaketh into the house, it is not to take away coals, but

jewels.

2. The connection may be conceived thus: If you would submit to God,

you must beware of those proud suggestions wherewith Satan would puff

up your spirits. The note is:--

Obs. That one of Satan,s chief temptations is pride. Therefore, when

the apostle speaketh of submission, he presently addeth, `resist the

devil., By this Satan fell himself; therefore it is called `the

condemnation of the devil., That is the cause for which the devil was

cast out of heaven. He would fain have more company, and draw us into

his own snare. It is a bait soon swallowed, it is natural to us. Our

parents catched at that, `Ye shall be as gods., He offered to tempt

Christ himself to a vainglorious action. Certainly we all desire to be

set on high pinnacles, though we run the hazard of a fall. We had need,

then, to be the more watchful against such thoughts and insinuations.

Places liable to assault have usually the greatest guard. And we may

admire the wisdom of God, who can overcome Satan by Satan. Satan,s

messenger wherewith Paul was buffeted was to cure his pride, 2 Cor.

xii. 7.

3. It may be the occasion of the direction in this place was only thus:

He having told them what submission is required, he would also tell

them what resistance is lawful. You must submit to God, but not to

Satan. The scriptures, that they may speak with clearness and

distinction, use thus to make exception of necessary duties. So 1 Cor.

xiv. 20, `In malice be ye children, but in understanding be ye men;, so

Rom. xvi. 19, `I would have you wise concerning that which is good, but

simple in what is evil., Which are speeches much suiting with this of

the apostle: You must submit, and yet resist, &c.

Obs. 1. But to the words; resist the devil. Observe, instead of carnal

lusts, he mentioneth Satan. The apostle doth not say, `resist sin,, but

`resist Satan., Observe, that Satan hath a great hand and stroke in all

sins. Survey the pedigree of sin, and you shall see it may call the

devil father. Carnal desires are called `his lusts,, John viii. 44. And

it is said, `Whatever is more is ek ponerou, from the evil one,, Mat.

v. 37; that is, from the devil. Giving place to anger is, in the

apostle,s language, `giving place to Satan,, Eph. iv. 26, 27. Survey

the iniquities of every age, and is not Satan,s hand in all this?

Because our first parents brought death into the world by his

suggestion, as also because of the act of Cain, he is called `a

murderer from the be ginning,, John viii. It is said of Judas,s treason

against Christ, John xiii. 2, `The devil put it into his heart., So too

Ananias, Acts v. 3, `Why hath Satan put it into thy heart to lie?, So 1

Chron. xxi. 1, 1 Satan provoked David to number the people., So Mat.

xvi. 23, `Get thee behind me, Satan., The heathen, who understood not

the operation of the devil, thought all our conflicts were against

internal passions. Now the apostle is clear that we fight not only

against lusts and carnal desires, `but spiritual wickednesses in high

places, and principalities, and powers,, &c., which argueth the fight

to be the more sore. Sometimes the devil beginneth the temptation,

sometimes we. He began with Judas; he `put it into his heart, by the

injection and immission of evil thoughts. At other times, our own

corruption working freely, the devil may adjoin himself. As Zanard

speaketh of the outward power of the devil over tempests; sometimes he

may raise the matter, at other times, the matter being prepared, Satan

may adjoin himself, and make the tempest more impetuous. Well, then,

all sin being from the devil, as we defy him, let us `defy his works

`and lusts too. We defy Satan as the pursuivant of divine justice, but

we honour him as head of the carnal state. We love his lusts, and so

call him father, and keep the crown upon his head. Many rail on him,

and yet honour him. Though he be a proud spirit, he careth not for

praise or dispraise. All his aim is at homage and obedience; so he may

engross our spiritual respects, other things do not move him. As Christ

loveth not a glavering respect when we violate his laws, so Satan is

not exasperated with ill language. His policy is to blind the mind, and

carry on his kingdom covertly in the darkness of this world. Every

sinner is really the devil,s drudge.

Obs. 2. Again, from the nature of the duty pressed, that it is the duty

of Christians to resist Satan. The point is of great use in the

Christian life, and a subject in which many men of note and eminency in

the church of God have travelled. But you know under the law rich men

were to leave their gleanings for the poor; therefore we may come and

glean up something after the reapers. Possibly, as Boaz did for Ruth,

they might let fall some handfuls, Ruth ii. 16, of purpose for others,

diligence and industry. I shall endeavour to open four things:--

1. The commerce between Satan and a sinner, and how he cometh to

insinuate his temptations.

2. What it is to resist him, the purport and intent of this great duty.

3. The way and means of maintaining this war and conflict.

4. The most persuasive arguments and motives to engage us to the

battle.

1. First, To begin with the first thing proposed; that the devil hath a

great hand in all sins, we cleared before. Over wicked men he hath

almost as great a power as the Spirit of God over holy men. The same

words are used to imply the efficacy of Satan and the influence of the

Spirit; God `worketh in us,, and Satan `worketh in the children of

disobedience,, Phil. ii. 13, energein; Eph. ii. 3, energountos. The

only difference is, the Spirit,s works are creations; they suppose and

need no matter within. The Spirit, by a sweet and yet strong power, can

compel the soul to assent or consent; but not Satan; [313] his

advantage lieth in our own wickedness; we do not resist him; he may

solicit, but not compel. [314] The Spirit of God giveth `a new heart,,

Ezek. xxxvi. 26; Prov. xxi. 1; but Satan hath a strong operation upon

the wills and understandings of men by their consent. He worketh indeed

by way of imperious suggestion, but without any violation and

enforcement of man,s will: upon the godly he worketh by way of

imposture and deceit, upon the wicked by way of imperious command and

sovereignty. He doth not only put into the heart such fancies and

conceits as may stir up sensual and worldly lusts, but also such as may

blind the spirit and understanding. Satan, that stirreth up some to

uncleanness, stirreth up others to error and blasphemy; therefore it is

said, 2 Thes. ii. 9, that antichrist,s `coming is after the working of

Satan in all deceivableness., The communications of spirits are

insensible and imperceptible. It is true we are most sensible of his

force when tempted to bodily lusts, because they do most of all

affright conscience, discompose reason, and oppress the body; and

because between every temptation and sin there is an intervening

explicit thought to which the soul is conscious; but insinuations of

error are more silent and plausible. Satan sorteth every spirit with a

proper bait; though he doth not know the heart, yet, being of a

spiritual nature and essence, he can the more easily insinuate with our

understanding and affections. The scriptures everywhere intimate that

great height of understanding and policy which is in the evil spirits;

therefore we read of their `snares,, 2 Tim. ii. 26; `methods,, Eph. vi.

11;, devices,, noe'mata, 2 Cor. ii. 11: all which words imply a great

deal of cunning and dexterity, which is much increased by experience

and observation: he `considered Job,, Job ii. 5. They observe and

consider us, and know how to suit the bait, partly by supposition and

conceit, as imagining by what corrupt aims most men live; partly by

external signs; they observe our prayers, discourses, passions, the

motions of the bodily spirits; can interpret the silent language of a

blush, a smile, a frown, a look, the glance of a lustful eye, the gait

and carriage of the body. Now, to work upon us, they use sometimes the

ministry and subserviency of men, as our nearest friends; so he made

use of Peter to Christ, Mat. xvi. 23; or of cursed deceivers, 2 Cor.

xi. 15. Sometimes he maketh use of our own bodies; by the outward

commotion of the humours he stirreth up to revenge, uncleanness,

passion, and all sensual lusts; and therefore you had need keep the

body in a good frame, that the humours of it be not armed against your

souls. Sometimes by presenting the object, as he dealt with Christ,

representing the world,s glory to him in a map or land scape; so he

stirreth up lust by the eye: 2 Peter ii. 14, `Eyes full of adultery;,

in the original, moichali'dos, `of the adulteress., Objects are first

presented, then he causeth them to dwell upon the fancy, till the heart

be ensnared. Sometimes through the immission of thoughts, through the

help of fancy: this must needs be one way; how should the devil else

tempt to despair, or to spiritual sins, or blind the mind by carnal

imaginations and conceits, and obstinate prejudices against the truth?

And these thoughts, once immitted, may be continued into a discourse or

dispute, and the devil, guessing at the answer, may come on with a

reply; therefore we find that he setteth on Christ with new

temptations, because he had received so full an answer.

2. Secondly, The next question is to show what it is to resist him. I

answer--(1.) Negatively, we must not fear him; the devil hath no

enforcing power, but only a persuading sleight. Distrustful fear giveth

him advantage. We are to `resist him steadfast in the faith,, 1 Peter

v. 10. And again, we must not `give place to him,, Eph. iv. 27. Anger

may make way for malice; and when the first risings of sin are not

grievous, the accomplishment of it is not far off. (2.) Positively; so

we must manifest our resistance, partly by refusing to commune with

him. Sometimes he must be checked with a mere rebuke and abomination;

as when the temptation tendeth to a direct withdrawment from obedience,

it is enough to say, `Get thee behind me, Satan,, and to chide the

thought ere it be settled; so Ps. xi. 1, `How say ye to my soul, Flee

as a bird to yonder mountain?, He abominateth the motion; as if he had

said, Avaunt, evil thoughts! &c. Sometimes we must oppose gracious

reasons and considerations; as when the temptation hath taken any hold

upon the thoughts, and corruption riseth up in the defence of the

suggestion, this is called a `withstanding in the evil day,, and a

`quenching of his fiery darts,, Eph. vi. 13-16.

3. Thirdly, The next thing is the way and means of maintaining this war

and conflict; not by crossing yourselves, spitting at his name and

mention, but by the graces of God,s Holy Spirit. I shall mention the

chiefest. There is--(1.) Faith, 1 Peter v. 10. You had need of faith,

that you may overcome mystically, by taking hold of the victory of

Christ; and morally, that we may reflect on the glorious^ recompenses

that are appointed for them that stand out in time of trial, and the

spiritual assistances that are at hand to encourage us in the fight and

combat. Faith is necessary every way; it is called `the shield,, Eph.

vi. 13. The shield covereth the other parts of the armour; so doth

faith confirm the other graces when assaulted, by borrowing help, by

drawing them forth upon high encouragements, &c. (2.) Prayer; never

cope with a temptation alone, but strive to bring God into the combat:

`Making prayer and all supplication in the spirit,, Eph. vi. 16. By

spirit he meaneth the heart or soul; when you are assaulted, lift up

the spirit in holy groans to God. (3.) Sobriety, 1 Peter v. 8. We had

need be watchful, to take heed to every lust and every distemper; and

we had need be sober too in the use of all comforts, creatures,

businesses. For I suppose by sobriety the apostle meaneth a moderation

of our affections in worldly things, which is necessary to this

purpose, all temptations being insinuated under the baits of pleasure,

honour, profit, &c., and therefore a heart drowned in the world is soon

overcome. (4.) Watchfulness; those that carry gun powder natures about

them had need take care not only of fiery darts, but of the least

sparks. God is soon offended; therefore we must walk `with fear and

trembling,, Phil. ii. 12; and our hearts are soon overcome, and

therefore we had need be watchful, looking to what cometh in, lest it

prove a temptation, and to what goeth out, lest it be found a

corruption. In the fight we should have an eye to victory, and in the

victory to the fight again. (5.) Sincerity; the apostle speaketh of

`the girdle of truth,, Eph. vi. 14. A double-minded man is his own

tempter, and unsettled souls do but invite Satan to take part with

their own doubts and anxious traverses. The mixture of principles, like

civil wars in a country, makes us a prey to the common enemy.

4. Fourthly, The most persuasive arguments to engage us in this fight

and warfare: I shall but touch upon them. Consider the necessity.

Either you must resist him, or be taken captive by him; there is no

middle course; you can make no peace with him but to your own harm; to

enter into league with Satan is to be overcome: he now tempteth,

hereafter he will accuse. [315] Satan flattereth the creature; the

snares of sin will at length prove chains of darkness. We look at the

trouble of resistance, the sweetness of victory will abundantly

recompense it. Usually we mistake in the traverses of our minds; we

reckon upon the sweetness of sin, and the trouble of resistance, and so

create a snare to ourselves. The right comparison is between the fruit

of sin and the fruit of victory. We have often had experience what it

is to be overcome; let us now make trial how sweet victory will be.

Nothing discovereth the power and comfort of Christianity so much as

the spiritual conflict. Men that swallow temptations, and commit sins

without trouble and remorse, no wonder that they are so cold and dead

in the profession of religion, that their evidences for heaven are

always so dark and litigious; they never tried the truth and power of

grace, nor tasted the sweetness of it; the spiritual combat, the

victories of Christ, are riddles and dreams to them. Besides all this,

consider the hopes of prevailing. Satan is a foiled adversary; Christ

hath overcome him already. All that is required to the victory is a

strong negative, No, no; make him no more reply. To resist him, not to

yield to him, is the only way to be rid of him. You have a promise,

`Resist, and he shall flee from you., Christ hath foiled the enemy, and

he hath put weapons into your hands that you may foil him. He trod upon

this old serpent when `his heel was bruised, upon the cross; Gen. iii.

15; only he would have you set your feet upon his neck: Rom. xvi. 20,

`And the God of peace shall tread Satan under your feet shortly., You

need not doubt of help; if Satan be `a roaring lion., Christ is `the

lion of the tribe of Judah, to resist him; if Satan be an `accuser.,

Christ is an `advocate:, there is `the Spirit of God, to strengthen us

against the suggestions of `the evil spirit,, and the good angels wait

upon us, Heb. i. 14, as well as the bad do molest us. Consider the

spectators of the combat; thou maintainest God,s cause in his own

sight; Christ and the good angels are looking upon thee, how thou dost

acquit thyself in the battle. Ahasuerus said of Haman, `Will he force

the queen before my face?, So, wilt thou commit adultery in the

presence of thy Spouse? and yield to Satan when Christ and all the

blessed saints and angels stand as witnesses of the conflict? Do not

fear being deserted; when thou art in Satan,s hands, Satan is in God,s

hands. Jesus Christ himself was tempted, and he knoweth what it is to

be exposed to the rage of a cruel fiend; and therefore `he will succour

those that are tempted,, Heb. ii. 18, iv. 15. They that have been ill

of the stone will pity others when racked with that pain and torture:

Israel was a stranger, and therefore to be kind to strangers. Christ,s

heart is entendered by his own experience; ever since he grappled with

Satan, he is full of bowels to all that are infested by him.

And he will flee from you.--Here is the promise annexed as an

encouragement to the duty. But you will say. How is it to be

understood? Doth Satan always fly when he is resisted? The children of

God by sad experience find that he reneweth the battle, and prevaileth

sometimes by the second or third assault. I answer--(1.) Every denial

is a great discouragement to Satan; sin is a `giving place,, Eph. iv.

27. He is like a dog that standeth looking and waving his tail to

receive somewhat from those that sit at table; but if nothing be thrown

out, he goeth his way. [316] So doth Satan watch for a grant, as

Benhadad,s servants did for the word brother. He looketh for a

passionate speech, an unclean glance, gestures of wrath and discontent;

but if he findeth none of these, he is discouraged. (2.) After a denial

he may continue to trouble thee. Jesus Christ was assaulted again and

again after a full answer; nay, after all it is said, Luke iv. 13, `He

went away from him for a season., Therefore Peter biddeth us always

watch, 1 Peter v. 8. (3.) If we continue our resistance, Satan will

surely be a loser. A Christian hath the best of it; though he repeat

his assaults a thousand times, he can never overcome you without your

consent; and though the conflict put you to some trouble, yet it

bringeth you much spiritual gain, more sensible experiences of the

virtue of Christ, a more earnest trust; as dangers make children clasp

about the parent more closely. Besides, it is honour enough to foil him

in each particular assault, though usually a Christian doth not only

come off with victory; but triumph, and Satan doth not only not

prevail, but flee from us.

Ver. 8. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your

hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded.

He cometh again to the main thing in question, the success of humble

addresses to God, showing we shall not want the divine help, if we do

but make way for it. God is never wanting to us till we are first

wanting to ourselves. We withdraw our hearts from God, and therefore no

wonder if we do not feel the effects of his grace. All the world may

judge between God and sinners, who shall bear the blame of our wants

and miseries, providence or our own hearts. If `the foolishness of man

pervert his ways,, there is no cause why we should `fret against God,,

Prov. xix. 3.

Draw nigh to God.--You may look upon the words as spoken to sinners or

to converts.

First, To sinners, or men uncalled; and then the sense is `draw nigh to

God,, that is, seek him by faith and repentance;, and he will draw nigh

to you,, that is, with his grace and blessing. Thence observe:--

Obs. 1. That every man by nature needeth to draw nigh to God. Drawing

nigh implieth an absence and departure: we are `estranged from the

womb,, Ps. lviii. 3. As soon as we were able to go we went astray. In

Adam we lost three things--the image of God, the favour of God, and

fellowship with God. As soon as man sinned, God speaketh to Adam as

lost: `Adam, where art thou?, Non es ubi prius eras, as Austin glosseth

thou art not where thou wert before. So when Christ would resemble our

apostate nature, he doth it by a prodigal,s going `into a far country,,

Luke xv. 14. And the apostle giveth the reason how we came to lose the

fellowship as well as the favour of God, when he thus describeth the

natural estate of the Gentiles, `alienated from the life of God,, Eph.

iv. 18. We are strangers to God,s life, and therefore no wonder if we

have lost his company. Trees do not converse with beasts, nor beasts

with men, because they do not live the life of each other. Sense must

fit the trees to converse with beasts, and reason the beasts to

converse with men, and grace must fit men to converse with God. There

is a distance, you see. Now men alienate themselves more and more,

partly by their affections, and partly by their practices. By their

affections; they care not for God, desire not his company: Job xxi. 14,

`Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways., Fallen

man is grown obstinate, little worse [317] than the devil. The devils

said, `Depart from us; art thou come to torment us before our time?,

Mat. viii. God,s presence is their torment. Men care not to hold

communion with him, because of a hatred to his ways; they wish the

annihilation and destruction of his being. It is a pleasing thought to

carnal spirits to suppose that if there were no God they might let

loose the reins to vile affections. So also by their practices. All

sins divide between God and the soul: [318] Isa. lix. 2, `Your

iniquities have separated between you and God., Sin maketh us shy of

his presence; guilt cannot endure a thought of the judge; and it maketh

God offended with us. How can a holy nature delight in an impure

creature? And as sin in the general doth thus, so there are some

special sins that separate between God and the soul; as pride: Ps.

cxxxviii. 6, `The proud he knoweth afar off., God standeth at a

distance, and will have no communion with a proud spirit. So

creature-confidence and self-satisfaction, that keepeth us off from

God; we stand at a distance, as if we had enough of our own: Jer. xvii.

5, `Cursed is the man that maketh flesh his arm, departing from the

living God., The nearest union is wrought by faith, that maketh the

soul stay in him; and the greatest separation when we go to other

confidences, for then there is a plain leaving of God. Well, then,

consider your condition by nature--aliens from God. That you may resent

it the more, consider the cause and the effects of it. (1.) The cause.

The heart is set upon sin, and therefore estranged from God: Col. i.

21, `Alienated, and enemies in your minds by evil works;, or it may be

rendered, `by your minds in evil works;, mente operibus malis intenta,

that is, because the mind is set upon sin. Likeness is the ground of

love. [319] There being such a disproportion between us and God, we

delight not in him. So Job xxi., `Depart from us;, why? `for we desire

not the knowledge of thy ways., We do not love holiness, and therefore

do not love God. What a madness is this, to part with God for sin! If

you will not be saints, be men; be not devils; they cannot endure God,s

presence upon that ground. (2.) The effects of it. You that fly from

God as a friend, you will find him an enemy; you may depart from him as

a friend, you cannot escape him as an enemy. It is a sweet passage that

of Austin, [320] Te non amittit nisi qui dimittit: et qui te dimittit

quo fugit, nisi a te placato ad te iratum? You that cannot endure the

presence of God, or a thought of him, where will you go from him? Ps.

cxxxix. 6, `Whither shall I flee from thy presence? In heaven thou art

there; in hell thou art there,, &c. Where will you go? Jer. xxiii. 23,

`Am I God at hand, and not a God afar off?, God is here, and there, and

everywhere; you will find him wherever you go. Surely then it is better

to draw near to him as a friend than to run from him as an enemy.

Obs. 2. A great duty that lieth upon the fallen creature is drawing

nigh to God. I do not mean to handle the duty at large: I shall only

open three things:--

1. How God and the creature may be said to be near one to another, or

to draw nigh. God,s special presence is in heaven, and we are on earth;

and his general presence is with all the creatures, and so `he is not

far from any one of us,, Acts xvii. I answer--It is to be understood

spiritually; we draw nigh unto him non vestigiis corporis, sed animo,

not by the feet of the body, but the soul. Spirits may have converse

with one another though at a distance. Now God,s children are with him

in their thoughts, in the affections and dispositions of their souls.

Their poli'teuma, `their business and negotiation is in heaven,, Phil.

iii. 20; `Their heart and their treasure is there,, Mat. vi. 20, 21.

Their desires are there; the world is but a larger prison. But it is

more especially meant of their communion with God in duties, wherein

their souls and their prayers are `lifted up, to him, Acts x. 4; and he

is said to come down to meet them, Isa. lxiv. 5. And also it noteth the

continual intercourse that is between God and them in all their ways.

The first epistle of John was written to this purpose, `That they might

have fellowship and communion with the Father and the Son,, 1 John i.

4.

2. How is this effected and brought about, since we cannot endure the

thought of God? The question is necessary. This was the great design of

heaven, to find out a way to bring man into fellowship again with his

maker; and God hath found out a `new and living way `by Christ, and

therefore he is said to be `the way to the Father,, John xiv. 6. And

the main intent of his incarnation and death was `to bring us to God,,

1 Peter iii. 18. To bring strangers and enemies together is a mighty

work. But how doth Christ effect it? I answer--(1.) Partly by doing

something for us--satisfying God,s justice, and `bearing our sins in

his body upon the tree;, otherwise guilt could have no commerce with

wrath, stubble with devouring burnings: `God is a consuming fire,, and

we are as `stubble fully dry., Now Christ is a screen drawn between us:

[321] the divine glory would swallow us up, but Christ,s flesh is a

veil that abateth the edge and brightness of it, Heb. x. 19, 20. (2.)

Partly by doing something in us. Christ,s work in bringing a soul to

God is not ended upon the cross; he giveth us the graces of his Holy

Spirit, which fit us for communion with God. The principal are

these:--Faith, which is nothing else but a coming to God by Christ for

grace, mercy, and salvation: Heb. x. 22, `Draw nigh by the assurance of

faith., Unbelief is a going off from God, Heb. iii. 12, and Zeph. iii.

2; and faith a coming to him. Then love, the grace of union. By desire,

it maketh us go out to God; by delight it keepeth us there: the one is

the thirst, the other the satisfaction of the soul. Love runneth out

upon the feet of desire, and resteth in the bosom of delight. Then

holiness: `God wall be sanctified in those that draw nigh to him,, Lev.

x. 3. Holy hearts are fittest to deal with a holy God, otherwise we

should not endure God, nor God us. Then fear, by which the soul walketh

with God, and is near to him: there where the thoughts are, there we

are spiritually. Of wicked men it is said, `God is not in all their

thoughts;, but the godly always keep God in their eye: Acts ii. 25, `I

foresaw the Lord always before me., Fear still keepeth them in his

company. Then humility; because of our distance and guilt we cannot

come to God unless we come humbly and upon our knees: Ps. xcv. 6, `Come

let us worship and bow down, and kneel before the Lord our maker;, that

is the fittest posture in approaches to God: God `will dwell with the

humble,, Isa. lvii. 15. Now all these graces, being exercised in the

conversation, or in holy duties, where the addresses to God are more

direct, make the soul near to him.

3. The last question is, What special acts doth the soul put forth when

it draweth nigh to God? The answer may be given you from what was said

before. There must be an act of faith in our wants; by faith we must

see that in God which we stand in need of in sense. Fear must be acted

in all our ways, keeping us in God,s eye: persons loose and regardless

are far from God: `Walk before me,, &c., Gen. xvii. 1. Then love and

humility must be acted in holy duties. Drawing nigh doth chiefly imply

humble and fervorous addresses; when you come naked to God, as the rich

man that will clothe you; hungry to God, as the bountiful man that will

feed you; sick to God, as the physician that will cure you; as servants

to your Lord, as disciples to your master, as blind to the light, as

cold to the fire, &c. The creatures addresses are best when they begin

in want and end in hope, when there is a rare mixture of humility and

confidence; and love there must be in every duty, for God must be

sought as well as served.

Well, then, let us all mind this duty. Sin is a departing from God,

grace a returning. Draw nigh to him, make out after the comforts and

supports of his presence: the way is by Christ, but you must resolve

upon it; I must, and I will: Ps. xxvii. 8, `Thy face, Lord, will I

seek;, there must be a care to bring the soul to this resolution. Mark

that place, Jer. xxx. 21, `I will cause him to draw near and approach

to me, saith the Lord; for who is this that engageth his heart to draw

near to me?, that is, by my Spirit I will comfort them. But will you

engage your hearts? Out of a conviction of the necessity and excellency

of the duty, issue forth a practical decree: David doth, Ps. lxxiii.

28, `It is good for me to draw near to God.,

Object. There is one doubt in the text which must be cleared before we

go further, and that ariseth from the phrase used, `draw nigh to God,,

as if it were in our own power. The old Pelagians abused this place;

and the Rhemists in their notes say, that free-will and man,s own

endeavour is necessary in coming to God, and that man is a cause of

making himself clean, though God,s grace be the principal. Usually two

things have been built upon this place:--(1.) That the beginning of

conversion is in man,s power; (2.) That this beginning doth merit or

increase further grace from God; for, say they, God will not draw near

to man ere he do first draw near to him; therefore, before special

grace the beginning of conversion must be in man, and upon this

beginning God will come in.

Sol. I answer--(1.) This place and the like showeth not what man will

do, but what he ought to do. We left God ere he left us; therefore, we

should be first in returning, as we were first in forsaking: the

wronged party may in justice tarry for our submission; but yet, such is

the Lord,s kindness, that he loveth us first, 1 John iv. 19. (2.)

Precepts to duty are not measures of strength: there is no good

argument a mandato ad effectum, from what ought to be done to what can

or shall be done. These things are expressed thus for another purpose:

to show God,s right, to convince the creature of weakness, to show us

our duty, that man,s endeavour is required, and that we should do our

utmost, to convince us wherein we have failed, &c. (3.) These precepts

are not useless; to the elect they convey grace. God fulfilleth what he

commandeth: evangelical commands carry their own blessing with them;

for, by the co-working of the Spirit, by this means they are stirred up

and made to draw near to God. Towards others they are convincing, and

show us our obstinacy and contumacy; we will not come to God, and lie

at the foot of his sovereignty, saying, O Lord, thou hast said, Turn to

me, and I will turn to you: `Turn us and. we shall be turned; draw us

and we shall draw near to thee,, Jer. xxxi. 18. Men pretend cannot; the

truth is they will not come, hungry to the table, thirsty to the

fountain; they will not lie at God,s feet for grace: so that those

precepts convince the reprobate, and leave them without excuse. I shall

conclude all with that sweet saying of Bernard, Nemo te quaerere

potest, nisi qui prius invenerit; vis igitur inveniri ut quaeraris,

quaeri ut inveniaris; potes quidem inveniri, non tamen praeveniri--none

can be aforehand with God; we cannot seek him till we have found him;

he will be sought that he may be found, and found that he may be

sought: it is grace that must bring us to grace; and the stray sheep

cannot be brought home unless it be upon Christ,s shoulders.

2. Secondly, The next consideration of the words is, as they respect

Christians already converted and called; and so the sense is, draw more

near to God every day in a holy communion, and you shall have more

grace from him. The note is:--

Obs. That gracious hearts should always be renewing their accesses to

God by Christ. So 1 Peter ii. 5, `Coming to Christ as a living stone;,

always coming to him in every duty, in every want. This maintaineth and

increaseth grace, and maketh your lives sweet and comfortable, Drawing

nigh to God is not the duty of an hour, or in season only at first

conversion, but the work of our whole lives.

And he will draw nigh to you; that is, he will make us find that he is

near to us by his favour and blessing. You have the like promise, Zech.

i. 3, `Turn unto me, and I will turn unto you., So Mal. iii. 7, `Return

unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts.,

Obs. 1. Observe, that the way to have God to turn to us in mercy, is to

turn to him in duty. This is the standing law of heaven; God will not

vary from it; it is the best way for God,s glory, and for the

creatures, good. Mercies are most sweet and good to us when we are

prepared for them by duty. Do not divide then between mercy and duty.

Expectations in God,s way cannot be disappointed. The prophet saith,

Hosea x. 11, `Ephraim is an heifer that is taught, and loveth to tread

out the corn,, but not to break the clods. The mouth of the beast that

treadeth out the corn was not to be muzzled; in that work they had

plenty of food. The meaning--Ephraim would have blessings, but could

not endure the yoke of obedience. We are apt to lie upon the bed of

ease, and securely look what God will do, but do not stir up ourselves

to what we should do.

Obs. 2. God will be near those that are careful to hold communion with

him. See Ps. cxlv. 18, `The Lord is nigh to all that call upon him, io

all that call upon him in truth., Nigh to bless, to comfort, to

quicken, to guide, to support them. Let it encourage us to come to God,

yea, to run to him; we are sure to speed. The father ran to meet the

returning prodigal, Luke xv. 18. He will prevent us with

loving-kindness: `When they call I will answer, when they cry I will

say, Here am I,, Isa. lviii. 9. What have you to say to me? what would

you have from me? Here am I to satisfy all your desires. Nay, elsewhere

it is said, Isa. lxv. 24, `Before they call, I will answer,, &c. When

they do address themselves to seek God, he is nigh to counsel, to

quicken, to enlighten, to defend; ready with blessing ere your

imperfect desires can be formed into a request. So Ps. xxxii. 5, `I

said, I will confess, and thou forgavest,, &c. As soon as David had but

conceived a repenting purpose, he felt the comfort of a pardon.

Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, &c.--From the connection of this

precept with the former you may observe:--

Obs. That unclean persons can have no commerce with God. You must be

holy ere you can draw nigh to him; conformity is the ground of

communion: Mat. vi. 9, `Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall

see God., So Josh. xxiv. 19, `You cannot serve the Lord, for he is an

holy God,, &c. Without holiness God cannot endure our presence; he

`will not take the wicked by the hand,, Job viii. 20. And we cannot

endure his presence: `The sinners in Zion will be afraid,, Isa. xxxiii.

14. Well, then, when you would have free converse with God, come with a

holy heart; there is special purgation required before worship. The

Israelites were to wash themselves when they heard the law, Exod. xix.

And David saith, Ps. xxvi. 6, `I will wash mine hands in innocency: and

so compass thine altar, O Lord., He hath respect to the solemn washing,

which God had appointed for such as came to the altar, Exod. xl. Again,

if you would have sweet converse with God in your ways, walk holily;

the Spirit of God loveth to dwell cleanly. See Ps. xxiv. 3, 4, `He that

hath clean hands, and an holy heart, shall stand in his holy hill.,

Generally it was the custom of the eastern countries to wash before

worship. The very heathen gods would be served in white, the emblem of

purity.

Cleanse your hands.--It noteth good works; as pureness of heart

implieth faith and holy affections. Thus it is often taken in

scripture, as Job xvii. 9, `The righteous shall hold on his way, and he

that is of pure hands shall grow stronger and stronger., Therefore

washing the hands was a sign of innocency, as Pilate did in the matter

of Christ. Thus the apostle Paul biddeth us, 1 Tim. ii. 8, to `lift up

holy hands without wrath and doubting., So God telleth the Israelites,

Isa. i. 15, 16, `Your hands are full of blood; wash you, make you

clean,, &c. When we come to empty the fountain of goodness, we must not

do it with impure hands. The hands in all these places are put

synecdochically for the whole body, and all the external organs of the

soul, because they are principally employed in the accomplishing of

many sins, as in bribes, rapine, lust, fights, &c.

Obs. Observe, that the Lord hath required not only holy hearts, but

holy hands. The goodness of your hearts must appear in the integrity of

your conversations. When men,s actions are naught, they pretend their

hearts are good. Is there no evil in the hand? The heart must be pure

and the way undefiled, that we may neither incur blame from within nor

shame from without; and when sin is once committed, the hand must be

cleansed as-well as the heart. It is in vain to pretend repentance and

washing the heart, when the hand is full of bribes or ill-gotten goods,

and no restitution is made.

Ye sinners.--In this first clause he speaketh to men openly vicious,

such as were tainted with the guilt of outward and manifest sins; so

the word sinners is used in this place, as elsewhere, where it is put

in definitely. So John ix. 31, `The Lord heareth not sinners;, that is,

men of a corrupt life. So Mary Magdalene is called `a sinner,, [322]

Luke vii. 37, that is, openly profane. So, `He eateth and drinketh with

sinners,, Mat. xi. 9, and Luke xv. 2. Now the chief work of open

sinners is to cleanse the hands, or reform the life, that by such

representations they may be beaten off from the fond presumption of a

good heart whilst the life is scandalous.

Purify your hearts.--He speaketh this, partly because in this latter

clause he dealeth with hypocrites, whose life is plausible enough,

their main care should be about their hearts; partly because all cometh

out of the heart.

Obs. Observe, if you would have a holy life, you must get a clean

heart. True conversion beginneth there; spiritual life, as well as

natural, is first in the heart. See 1 Peter ii. 11, 12, `Abstain from

fleshly lusts . . . having your conversations honest., First mortify

the lusts, then the deeds of the body of sin. If you would cure the

disease, purge away the sick matter, not only stop the flux of the

humours; lest sin return again, cast salt into the spring: Isa. lv. 7,

`Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts,,

&c. Mark, not only his way or course of life, but his thoughts, the

frame of his heart; the heart is the womb of thoughts, and thoughts are

the first issues and out-goings of corruption: Mat. xv. 19, `Out of the

heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries,, &c. First the thoughts,

then the practices. Well, then, they are foolish and vain men that are

over-industrious about the outward man, washing the outside of cups and

platters, Mark vii., altogether for dressing up a garb and pretence of

religion. That which God looketh after and loveth is `truth in the

inward parts,, Ps. li. 6. God will easily find us out under our

disguise, as the prophet did Jeroboam,s wife. Be not careful merely of

honour before the people, but of your hearts before God; and let

conscience be dearer to you than credit. Many are sensible of failings

in the carriage, because they betray and expose us to shame; you should

be as sensible of distempers in the heart; lusts must not be digested

without regret and remorse, no more than sins.

Ye double-minded, di'psuchoi.--The word signifieth `of two hearts,, or

`two souls., An hypocrite hath `an heart and an heart,, which is odious

to God; they halt between God and Baal, and deny the religion which

they profess; their thoughts are divided, and their affections hover

always in a doubtful suspense between God and the world. See the notes

on chap. i. 8.

Ver. 9. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned

into mourning, and your joy into heaviness.

He now prescribeth them another remedy against their carnal affections

and practices; it is proposed with the more earnestness, because of the

calamity then ready to fall upon the people and nation of the Jews.

Be afflicted, talaiporesate. What is the meaning? Must we draw

affliction and unnecessary troubles upon ourselves? I answer--(1.) It

must be understood of some commendable afflicting ourselves; and

therefore must either imply that our corporal afflictions and

distresses ought to be borne patiently. `Be afflicted;, that is, if God

bring it upon you, bear it, be content to be afflicted; it is our duty

to be what God would have us to be; let your will be done when the

Lord,s is. Or else, (2.) Know your misery, be sensible of it; it is

some happiness to know our misery. Man, in a proud obstinacy, choketh

his grief and stifleth conviction. Or else (3.) It noteth compassion

and fellow-feeling of others, sorrows. A member is sensible of pain as

long as it holdeth the body: Heb. xiii. 3, `As being in the body,, &c.

A pinch or wound in the arm discomposeth the whole body; members will

have a care of one another. Or else, (4.) And so most properly to the

context, humbling and afflicting the soul for sin; sorrow seemeth to be

made for that purpose and use.

Obs. Observe, if we would not be afflicted of God, we should afflict

ourselves for sin. Voluntary humiliations are always best and sweetest;

they please God best, and they do us most good. God is most pleased

then. Christ was `wounded with one of the spouse,s eyes,, Cant. iv. 9.

The angels rejoice at the creatures, repentance, Luke xv. 7. Some say

there shall be godly sorrow in heaven, because there will be memory and

remembrance of sins in heaven, and because it is rather a perfection

than an oppression of nature. But that is a strain beyond elah; [323]

there all `tears are wiped from our eyes., But, however, it is pleasing

to heaven, to God, and angels; and then these self-afflictings do us

most good. Voluntary mournings prevent enforced. `Blessed are they that

mourn, for they shall be comforted,, Mat. v. 4, that do it freely, and

of their own accord. It is one of the attributes of God, `he comforteth

those that are cast down,, 2 Cor. vii. 6. You see it preventeth misery;

if not, it comforteth in misery. This mourning hath always a joy going

along with it. Chrysostom observeth that the greatest mourner in Israel

was the sweet singer in Israel. A Christian is never more truly joyful

than after, yea, in godly sorrow. True conviction of sin is caused by

`the Comforter,, John xvi. 8. There is consolation mixed with it.

Besides, it is of great profit to the soul. The rain maketh the ground

flourish; and melted metals are fit to receive any stamp. `By the

sadness of the countenance the heart is made better,, Eccles. vii. 3.

It is bitter physic, but it procureth health. Holy tears are the sponge

of sin; a hard heart must be soaked, and a filthy heart must be washed

in this water. We are most considerate when most pensive. Besides all

this, the issue and end of it is very sweet. God will `revive the

spirit of the humble, and restore comfort to the mourners,, Isa. lvii.

15. Well, then, be afflicted; it is a hard duty, but of great profit.

Make your sorrow to draw water for the sanctuary; affections, like the

Gibeonites, must not be abolished, but kept for temple uses.

And mourn and weep.--Why so many words to one purpose? The whole verse

and the next is of the same strain. I answer--(1.) It is a hard duty,

and needeth much enforcement.

Obs. 1. Flesh and blood must be much urged to acts of sorrow. They are

painful to the body, and burdensome to the mind^ Frothy spirits love

their pleasure and ease: `The fool,s heart is in the house of mirth,,

Eccles. vii. A loose, garish spirit doth not love to converse with

mournful objects, or to be pressed to mourning duties. It showeth how

instant and earnest we should be in pressing such duties as these. Oh!

`weep,, `mourn,, `be afflicted., It is one of the fancies now in

fashion, men would be altogether honeyed and oiled with grace; the

wholesome severities of religion are distasted. Some that would be

taken for Christians of the highest form are altogether prejudiced

against such doctrines as this is, and think we are legal when we press

humiliation. How may the poor ministers of the gospel go to God, and

say as Moses did, Exod. vi. 12, `The children of Israel have not

hearkened unto me, how then shall Pharaoh hear me?, Lord, the

professors will not brook such doctrine as this is, how shall we hope

to prevail with the poor, blind, carnal world? Certainly it is very sad

that that which was wont to be a badge of profaneness men should now

adopt it into their religion; I mean, scoffing at doctrines of

repentance and humiliation.

Obs. 2. It is a necessary duty; those that will be Christians must look

to mourn. The Spirit descended in the form of a dove, to note both

meekness and mourning. Christian affections will be tender. God,s glory

cannot be violated, but your heart will even bleed if it be right: Ps.

cxix. 136, `Rivers of tears run down mine eyes, because thy law is made

void., When sins are common, your souls will `weep sore in secret

places,, Jer. xiii. 17. If afflictions light on God,s heritage, you

will have a fellow-feeling, Rom. xii. 15. Nay, there will be not only

occasions offered without, but within. Your own sins, your own wants.

Your sins: Lam. v. 16, `Woe is us, for we have sinned., Times shall

come when you shall have occasion to mourn like the doves of the

valleys. Oh! woe the time that ever I sinned against God! Your wants

and needs: all gracious supplies are to be fetched out this way. The

disciple is not above his Lord. `By prayers, and tears, and strong

cries,, &c., Heb. v. 7. His requests were uttered with deep sighs.

Christ, that shed his blood, did also shed tears; and if he were `a man

of sorrows,, certainly we must not be men and women of pleasures. Well,

then, do not call mourning melancholy. The world dealeth perversely

with the children of God; they provoke their sorrow, and then upbraid

them with it; your sins and injuries give them occasion to mourn, and

then you blemish the holy profession, as if it were mopishness and

melancholy. Those tears that you see upon the eyes of God,s children

are either shed for their own sins or yours. If for yours, you should

not upbraid them, but bear them company; mourn with these doves of the

valleys. If for their own, `a stranger doth not intermeddle with their

joys., The sun shineth many times while it raineth: there may be joy in

their hearts whilst there are tears in their eyes. Again, it serveth to

press us to this duty: better be a `mourner in Zion, than a `sinner in

Zion., The mourners were marked for preservation. Though it be a duty

against the heart and hair, yet imitate those holy ones of God that

`watered their couches with tears,, Ps. vi. 6, that wished `their heads

to be fountains of water,, Jer. ix. 1. It is likely you will come short

of them, but high aims and attempts in duty will do you no hurt. He

that shooteth at the sun, though he come far short, will shoot higher

than he that aimeth at a shrub; it is best to eye the highest and

worthiest examples. Again, it showeth how little of a Christian is

found in them that are strangers to godly sorrow, that bathe and steep

their souls in fleshly delights. Christ was `a man of sorrows,, and the

Spirit is a `mourning dove., I confess some Christians are of a sadder

temper than others; the Spirit acteth with difference and variety; in

some more mournfully, in others more raisedly. Some men,s lives are

spent in the silence of meditation, others in the heat of service, in

doing and suffering for God. The one makes use of Christ,s love, like

holy Niobes, to dissolve and melt away their souls in tears; the other

to quicken themselves to action and more resolution for God. But

certainly every Christian is of tender bowels, and they will find

frequent occasions of mourning; and unless we be well humbled, we can

hardly do well or suffer well.

Obs. 3. The next reason of this multiplication of words is to show that

we must continue and persevere in it. We would soon turn over our hard

lesson, and love not to dwell upon sad thoughts; therefore the apostle

returneth the duty again and again to our care: `Be afflicted,, and

then `mourn,, and then `weep., Sorrow doth not work till it be deep and

constant, and the arrows stick fast in the soul. David saith, `My sin

is ever before me,, Ps. li. 3. We must be held to it; slight sorrows

are soon cured. Mourning is a holy exercise, by which the soul is every

day more and more weaned from sin, and drawn out to reach after God.

Well, then, it checketh those that content themselves with a hasty

sigh, and a little blowing upon the matter: judge you, is this being

afflicted and mourning and weeping? Check such a vain heart as would

presently run out into the house of mirth again. But you will say,

Would you have us turn Heraclites, to be always weeping? I answer--(1.)

True it is that sorrow befitteth this life rather than joy. Now we are

`absent from the Lord,, under the burden of a `vile body, and vicious

affections; it is our pilgrimage; we have only a few `songs., God,s

statutes, Ps. cxix. 54. The communion that we have with God in

ordinances is but little. Grace is mixed with sin, faith with doubts,

knowledge with ignorance, and peace with troubles. Now `we groan., Rom.

viii. 23. We are waiting and groaning for a full and final deliverance.

We are as they that `pass through the valley of Baca,, Ps. lxxxiv. 6;

the Septuagint read dakru'on, tears. (2.) There are some special

seasons and occasions of mourning, as chiefly in the time of God,s

absence: `When the bridegroom is gone, then shall they mourn,, Mat. ix.

15; when we have lost the comforts and refreshings of God,s presence,

or the quickenings of his Spirit. The absence of the sun maketh the

earth languish; when you have lost the shine of his countenance, you

should cry after him. So in times of great guilt, public or personal:

`Deep calleth on deep, and floods to floods;, the deluge of sins upon

the flood of holy tears. So in times of great distempers, and the

growing of carnal lusts. The persons to whom the apostle speaketh were

envious, proud, covetous, ambitious, and he biddeth them `weep and

mourn,, &c. Salt water and bitter potions kill the worms; so doth

bitter weeping fleshly lusts: the exercises of repentance are the best

means for the mortifying of carnal desires. So in times when judgments

are threatened. Thunder usually causeth rain; and threatenings should

draw tears from us. So in times of calamity, when judgments are

actually inflicted: Isa. xxii. 12, `Then the Lord called to sackcloth,

and baldness, and ashes., So also in times of great mercies, it is a

fit season to remember our unkindness; the warm sun melts: she wept

much, because she was pardoned much, Luke vii. 38, with 47. When Christ

had washed her soul with his blood, she washed his feet with her tears.

Let your laughter be turned into mourning.--He meaneth their carnal

rejoicing in their outward comforts and possessions, they being gotten

by rapine and violence, as in the context. Observe hence:--

Obs. 1. That it is a good exchange to put away carnal joy for godly

sorrow; for then we put away a sin for a duty, brass for gold; yea, we

have that in the duty which we expected in the sin, and in a more pure,

full, and sweet way. God will give us that in sorrow which the world

cannot find in pleasure; serenity, and contentment of mind. When the

world repenteth of their joy, you will never repent of your sorrow, 2

Cor. vii. 10. Solomon saith, Prov. xiv. 13, `The end of that mirth is

heaviness., Worldly comforts in the issue and close grow burdensome;

but who ever was the sadder for the hours of repentance? Job `cursed

the day of his birth,, but who ever cursed the day of his new birth? In

this exchange of laughter for sorrow, you give that which is good for

nothing for that which is useful to your souls. Eccles. ii. 2, 3, `I

have said of laughter, thou art mad;, that is, it bringeth forth no

solid comfort or profit. When we turn our laughter into mourning, God

will turn our mourning into laughter: John xvi. 20, `Ye shall be

sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy., Out of these salt

waters God breweth the wine of spiritual consolation. It is the curse

of wicked men that their joy will be `bitterness in the issue:, their

wine proveth at length to be like `the gall of asps;, a cup of deadly

drink to their conscience. Well, then, be not prejudiced against godly

sorrow. Planctus lugentium are better then plausus theatrorum, the

saddest duties are sweeter then the greatest triumphs, and the worst

and most afflicted part of godliness is better than all the joys and

comforts of the world. It is better to have your good things to come,

than here: Luke xvi. 21, he lived in jollity, but his good days were

past. Do not measure things by the present sweetness, but by the future

profit; that which droppeth honey may prove wormwood. See Luke vi. 25,

`Woe unto you that laugh now, for you shall weep,, &c.

Obs. 2. That an excellent way to moderate the excess of joy is to mix

it with some weeping. He speaketh to men drunk with their present

happiness, and his drift is to awaken them out of their sense less

stupor. The way to abate one passion is to admit the contrary: in

abundance there is danger; therefore in your jollity think of some

mournful objects. Nazianzen reporteth of himself that this was his

practice, when his mind was likely to be corrupted with happiness, tois

thre'nois sungi'gnomai, &c., to read the Lamentations of Jeremiah,

[324] and to inure his soul to the consideration of matters sad and

mournful. It was God,s own physic to Belshazzar, in the midst of his

cups to bring him to think of his ruin by a handwriting upon the wall.

Well, then, when your mountain standeth strong, think of changes; evils

come upon us unawares when we give up our hearts to joy. The secure

carnalist would not so much as suppose a possibility of his death that

night, Luke xii. 19. Better it was with Job, chap. iii. 25, `The evil

which I greatly feared is come upon me., The cockatrice killeth us not

if we see it first.

And your joy to heaviness.--In all the context he noteth them as

carnal, and as glorying in oppressing one another; such a joy and

laughter is intended by which secure sinners please themselves in their

present success, putting off all thoughts of imminent judgments.

Obs. That prosperous oppression is rather matter of sorrow than joy to

us. You laugh now, but God will laugh hereafter when your calamities

and fears come, Prov. i. 20, Ps. xxxvii. 12, 13. Wicked men and carnal

oppressors have never so much cause to be humbled as when they are

prosperous; it is but a sure pledge of their speedy ruin. Now you

despise others, scoff at the servants and ways of God; you puff, and

the children of God sigh; see Ps. xii. 5. Oh! how will you hang the

head when the scene is changed, and you are become objects of public

scorn and contempt, and the children of God in a holy admiration shall

say, as those in the prophet, `Where is the rage of the oppressor now?,

Isa. li. 13. Oh! that men would awaken conscience, and say, I am

a-laughing and triumphing; have I not more cause to howl and mourn? &c.

Ver. 10. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift

you up.

The apostle goeth on inculcating and pressing the same duty upon them;

and lest they should rest in external exercises, he useth a word which

more properly implieth the inward acts of the soul. Observe, from the

context:--

Obs. It is not the outward expressions that God looketh after in

mourning, but the humble heart. God, that is a spirit, doth not reckon

so much of bodily exercise. Tears, and cries, and beating of the body

may all be counterfeit, or else done without a principle of grace; and

many times there may be inward humiliation where a dry brain doth not

yield tears. Godly sorrow doth not always keep the road, and vent

itself by the eyes. Papists place much in tears and afflicting the

body. The spirit-work is the more difficult; old wine and old bottles

may well agree together, but not new wine and old bottles. Duties that

require much spirit and soul-acts are too strong for weak men. I allude

to Christ,s expression concerning spiritual fasting, Mat. ix. 15, 16.

Old carnal hearts cannot endure the rigour of such spiritual duties.

Well, then, in your first duties see that ye do not only mourn and

weep, but humble your souls. When ye confess sins, it is not words and

tears that God looketh after, but a deep shame and feeling of the evil

of your natures, iniquities of life, and defects in obedience. When you

pray, look not so much at the outward heat and vehemency: the bodily

spirits being agitated, there will be much contention and earnestness

of speech; but see that the soul do reach forth after God by the

tendency of holy ardours and desires. In the confessing of public sins,

it is not the exact enumeration, apt language, but zeal for God,s

glory, compassion for others, good, holy desires of promoting

righteousness, which the Lord looketh after. Ashes and sackcloth are

nothing to the work of the soul: Isa. lviii. 5, `Will you call this a

fast, or an acceptable day to God?, &c.

In the sight of the Lord.--The like passage is in 1 Peter v. 6; but

there it is `Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God,, &c. That

expression implieth a motive or consideration to enforce the duty, but

this in our apostle the sincerity of it. Observe hence:--

Obs. 1. That duties are then truly done when they are done as in God,s

sight. The dread and reverence of God maketh the heart more sincere; so

James i. 27, `Pure religion and undefiled before God,, &c.; so 1 Peter

iii. 21, `The answer of a good conscience towards God,, &c. In the

presence of God would you make such an answer? So Ps. cxix. 168, `I

have kept thy testimonies, for all my ways are before thee;, there was

David,s motive. Well, then, in all duties of worship remember that you

are before God; there is a broad and pure eye of glory fixed upon you.

You have to do with God, that `telleth man his thought,, that

discerneth your spirits better than you do yourselves. That is a right

address which is described, Acts x. 33, `We are all here present before

God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God., Here we come

to pray, to hear, to humble ourselves before God. The soul will have a

double advantage by such thoughts; the work will be more spiritual, and

more pure and up right. More spiritual: I am not to be humbled before

man, but before God. `Man looketh on the outward appearance, but God on

the frame of the heart,, 1 Sam. xvi. 7. Will this satisfy God? `Is it

such a fast as he hath chosen?, Isa. lviii. 5. So also more pure and

upright. Whatever a man doth to God, he will do it for God,s sake:

religious duties will be performed upon reasons of religion, not for

custom and company, but for God, to God.

Obs. 2. The sight of God is an especial help to humiliation. The soul

becometh humble by the true knowledge of God and ourselves: Job xlii.

6, `Mine eye seeth thee, therefore I abhor myself in dust and ashes.,

When he had a glorious apparition of God he vanished into nothing in

his own thoughts. The stars vanish when the sun ariseth; and our poor

candle is slighted into a disappearance when the glory of God ariseth

in our thoughts. We see our wants in God,s fulness; the ocean maketh us

ashamed of our own drop; and we see our vileness in God,s majesty. What

is the balance dust to a mountain, and our wickedness in comparison of

God,s holiness? Elijah wrapt his face in a mantle ^when God,s glory

passed before him, 1 Kings xix. 13. So Isaiah crieth out, `I am undone,

I am undone, a man of polluted lips,, when God showed him his glory,

Isa. vi. 5. Upon any apparition of God to the faithful they were filled

with a fear because of their own weakness and corruption. Well, then,

it directeth us how to be humble in our addresses to God; get as large

and comprehensive thoughts of him as you can; see his glory, if you

would know your own baseness. Men are slight in duties, because they

have low thoughts of God. They offered the Lord `a corrupt thing,,

because they did not consider he was `a great king,, Mal. i. 14. The

elders that saw God in his glory, `fell down upon their faces,, Rev.

vi.

And he shall lift you up.--What doth this promise imply? I answer--It

is meant of any kind of happiness and felicity; either deliverance out

of trouble: `The Lord heareth the desires of the humble,, Ps. x. 17;

advancement in the world to honour, or any outward dignity: Prov. xxix.

23, `A man,s pride shall bring him low, but honour shall uphold the

humble in spirit., Though places of advancement be slippery, yet the

humble shall be continued and upheld. So for advancement in grace or

glory: Mat. xviii. 4, `Whosoever shall humble himself as a little

child, the same shall be greatest in the kingdom of heaven;, that is,

have most grace and glory. Learn hence:--

Obs. That submission and humility is the true way to exaltation. It is

often repeated in the gospel: `He that humbleth himself shall be

exalted, and he that exalteth himself shall be abased;, see Luke xiv.

11; Mat. xxiii. 12. We are all by nature proud, and would be exalted;

the way to rise is to fall. God gave us a pattern of it in Jesus

Christ. First, `He emptied himself, and humbled himself to the death of

the cross; wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name

above all names,, Phil. ii. 5-9. Well, then, would you have

deliverance? humble yourselves. The lion spareth the prostrate prey.

Omnipotence will not be your terror, but protection. Would you have

grace? see more of God. He that is in the low pits seeth stars in the

daytime. Would you have your outward station firm? the Lord will uphold

the humble. Would you have the comforts of the Spirit and the

preferment of grace? the Lord will `revive the spirit of the humble,,

Isa. lvii. 15. You are God,s second heaven: `I will dwell with the

contrite spirit., The world looketh upon humility as the way to make us

contemptible; when we stoop, we think every one will tread upon us. You

see in the vote and sentence of the promises it is the way to be

exalted either in the favour of God or men. Lastly, out of all we may

be encouraged to wait upon God with a holy humility and confidence in

our low estate: Job xxii. 29, `When men are cast down thou shalt say,

There is a lifting up; and he shall save the humble person., When all

thy affairs `go to decay, thou mayest bear up on these hopes. In Peter

it is, 1 Peter v. 6, `He shall lift thee up in due time., Wait God,s

leisure, and the promise shall surely be fulfilled; only be humble, not

only morally, but graciously. Gracious humiliation is a deep sense of

our misery and vileness, with a desire to be reconciled to God upon any

terms.

Ver. 11. Speak not evil of one another, brethren. He that speaketh evil

of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and

judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the

law, but a judge.

Here the apostle cometh to dissuade them from another sin, of which he

had impleaded them guilty before, and that is detraction and speaking

evil of one another.

Speak not evil of one another, brethren, me katalaleite allelon, speak

not one against another. The word implieth any speaking which is to the

prejudice of another, be it true or false; the scripture requiring that

our words should suit with love as well as truth. Note hence:--

Obs. That speaking evil of one another doth not become brethren and

Christians. A citizen of Sion is thus described: Ps. xv. 3, `He

backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doth evil to his neighbour, nor

taketh up a reproach against his neighbour., So there is an express

law: Lev. xix. 16, `Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer

among the people., Rokel, saith Ainsworth, [325] signifieth a merchant

or trafficker up and down with spices; thence the word rakil, there

used for one that wandereth from place to place uttering slanders as

wares. These pedlars will be always opening their packs, Thus I have

heard of such and such a one, &c.; these were not to be suffered in

Israel. There are several kinds of evil-speaking: they may be all

ranked under two heads--whispering and backbiting. Whispering is a

privy defamation of our brother among those that think well of him;

backbiting is more public, before every one promiscuously. Now both may

be done many ways, not only by false accusations, but by a divulging of

their secret evils, by extenuating their graces, by increasing or

aggravating their faults, and defrauding them of their necessary excuse

and mitigation, by depraving their good actions through the supposition

of sinister aims; by mentioning what is culpable, and enviously

suppressing their worth. It were easy to run out upon this argument,

but I contain myself. Well, then, if all this misbecometh brethren, do

not give way to it in yourselves, nor give ear to it in others. (1.) Do

not give way to it in yourselves; nature is marvellously prone to

offend in this kind, therefore you must lay on the greater restraints,

especially when the persons whom you would blemish profess religion:

Num. xii. 8, `Were you not afraid to speak against my servant, against

Moses?, Mark the pa'thos, or emphasis of that expression: What! against

my servant? against Moses? You should be afraid to speak against any

one, much more against those whom God hath a mind to honour. This is

the devil,s proper sin; he is `the accuser of the brethren,, Rev. xii.

10. He doth not commit adultery, break the Sabbath; these are not laws

to him; but he can bear false witness, dishonour parents, accuse the

brethren; and yet what more common amongst us? John Baptist,s head in a

charger is a usual dish at our meals. When men,s hearts are warm with

wine and good cheer, then God,s children are brought in, like Samson

among the Philistines, to make them sport. Oh! consider, God will

surely recompense this into your bosoms; either in this life--`They

that judge are judged,, Mat. vii. 1; men are bold with their names,

because they were not tender in meddling with others; or in the life to

come, without repentance. It is said of the wicked, Ps. lxiv. 8, `Their

own tongue shall fall upon them., How unsupportable is the weight of

the sins of this one member! (2.) Do not give way to it in others: your

ears may be as guilty as their tongues; therefore such whisperings

should never be heard without some expression of dislike. Solomon

commendeth a frown and the severity of the countenance: Prov. xxv. 23,

`As the north wind driveth away rain, so doth an angry countenance a

backbiting tongue., They are discouraged when they do not meet with

compliance. David would not have such to dwell in his house, Ps. ci. 5.

Certainly our countenancing them draweth us into a fellowship of the

guilt. Now if we must not receive these whispers against an ordinary

brother, much less against a minis ter; there is express provision for

the safety of their repute and credit: `Against an elder receive not,,

&c., 1 Tim. v. 19; partly because men are apt to hate him that

reproveth in the gate, and so they are liable to be traduced; partly

because men in office are most observed and watched, see Jer. xx. 12,

and Ezek. xxxiii. 30; and partly because their credit is of most

concernment for the honour of the gospel: therefore we should not

easily hear those that are `talking of them by the walls and doors of

the houses,, as it is in the prophet.

For he that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother.--In

that word judgeth the apostle showeth what their censuring amounted to,

a usurping of God,s office, and a passing sentence upon their brethren;

and also what kind of evil-speaking he principally intendeth; that is,

for things merely indifferent, as observation of days, meats, and the

like, see Rom. xiv. 3, 4. Observe hence:--

Obs. That censuring is a judging: you arrogate an act of power which

doth not belong to you. When you are advanced into the chair of

arrogance and censure, check yourselves by this thought, Who gave me

this superiority? The question put to Moses may well be urged, in the

behalf of our wronged brethren, to our souls: `Who made thee a judge

over us?, Exod. ii. 14. Paul useth the same disuassion, Rom. xiv. 4,

`Who art thou that judgest another man,s servant?, &c.

Speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law.--How can this be?

Several ways may this sentence be made good. I shall name the

principal.

First, Every sin is a kind of an affront to the law that forbiddeth it;

for, by doing quite contrary, we do in effect judge the law not fit or

worthy to be obeyed. As, for instance, in the present case, the law

forbiddeth rash judgment, and speaking evil one of another; but the

detractor approveth that which the law condemneth, and so in effect

judgeth the law to be not good or equal. From hence observe:--

Obs. That sin is a judging of the law. It is said to David, 2 Sam. xii.

9, `Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do

evil in his sight?, In the rage of his lust David looked upon it as a

slight law. Observe it when you will, you will find that in sinning

there are some implicit evil thoughts by which the law of God is

disvalued and disapproved; we think it unworthy, hard, or envious, or

unequal. Those wretches speak out that which is the silent language of

every sinful action: Ezek. xviii. 25, `The ways of the Lord are not

equal, the ways of the Lord are not equal., The heart of man is by

nature obstinately and vehemently set upon lust, revenge, censuring;

therefore, in all these cases, we are most apt to think the law of God

hard and injurious to the liberty of man, and that God hath dealt

enviously with our natures to deny them the pleasures which we so

strongly pursue. This was the devil,s first insinuation against God, he

seeketh to work Adam into hard thoughts of God,s restraint: Gen. iii.

5, `God knoweth, that in the day ye eat thereof, your eyes shall be

opened., And still it is Satan,s great policy to represent God as a

hard taskmaster, and to make us think evil of the law; therefore Paul

seeketh to prevent such thoughts, when the law checked his lusts and

brought him into a sense of inevitable misery: Rom. vii. 12, `The law

is holy, and the commandment just and good;, but was that good which

caused death to him? Yes, saith he, I look upon it still as a rule of

right; it is I am carnal, my heart is wicked, &c. Well, then, you see

how to make sin odious; it is a despising of the law, a speaking evil

of the law; it slighteth that rule which it violateth.

Secondly, They were wont, in that age to condemn one another for things

indifferent, merely upon their own will and sense, without any warrant

and sentence from the word, as you may see, Rom. xiv. Now this was a

kind of condemning of the law, as if it were not full and exact enough,

but needed to be pieced up by man,s institutions.

Obs. Observe, that to make more sins than God hath made, is to judge

the law. You imply it to be an imperfect rule: men will be wise beyond

God, and bind others in chains of their own making. It is true there is

an `obedience of faith,, by which the understanding must be captivated

to God, but not to men; to the word, not to every fancy. There is a

double superstition, positive and negative; the one when men count that

holy which God never made holy, the other when men condemn that which

God never condemned. They are both alike faulty; we are not in the

place of God; it is not in our power to make sins or duties: `Touch

not, taste not, handle not,, were the ordinances and precepts of false

teachers, Col. ii. 21. There are three things exempted from man,s

judicatory--God,s counsels, the holy scriptures, and the hearts of men.

We should not dogmatise and subject men to ordinances of our own

making, press our own austerities and rigorous observances as duties.

Justice and wisdom is good, but to be `just overmuch,, or `wise

overmuch,, is stark naught, Eccles. vii. 15, 16; that is, to be just or

wise beyond the rule. Man is a proud creature, and would fain make his

morosity a law to others, and obtrude his own private sense for

doctrine. It is usual to condemn everything that doth not please us, as

if our magisterial dictates were articles of faith. We must not come in

our own name, but judge as the word judgeth, or else we judge the word.

The Lord grant we may consider it in this dogmatising age, wherein

every one crieth up his private conceit for law, and men make sins

rather than find them!

Thirdly, You may conceive it thus: They might discommend and censure

others for that which the word approved and allowed, and so did not so

much condemn private persons as the law itself. If you take in this

consideration, the note will be:--

Obs. That to plead for sins, or to asperse graces, is to judge the word

itself. Thus you set the pride of corrupted wit against the wisdom of

God in the scriptures: `Woe be to them that call good evil, and evil

good; that put light for darkness, and darkness for light; that put

bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter,, Isa. v. 20. Usually thus it is

in the world; grace meeteth with calumny and sin with flattery. Open

and gross sins are the more gently stroked, because they have the hap

to go away under a good name: drunkenness is good fellowship, censure

is conference and good discourse, error is new light, rebellion is zeal

of public welfare; but grace hath, the hap to suffer under some ill

resemblance. As they were wont to deal with Christians in the primitive

times, to put them in bearskins, and then to bait them, so graces are

miscalled and misrepresented, and then hooted at. The law saith, Be

zealous, be peaceable, &c., but in the world,s reckoning zeal is fury,

peaceableness and holy moderation is time-serving and base compliance;

pressing humbling doctrine is legalism, &c. Thus do many deceive

themselves with names; but do not you judge the law in all this? The

law saith, Sitting at the wine all day is drunkenness, and you call

this good fellowship, &c.

But if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge;

that is, when thou exercisest such a rash superiority over the law,

thou dost clearly exempt thyself from obedience and subjection to it.

Observe hence:--

Obs. Those that judge the word, no wonder if they be given over to the

disobedience of it. It is done grossly by those that either deny the

divine authority of the scriptures, or accuse it, as the Papists do, as

an uncertain rule, or examine all the doctrines of it by their private

reason, or the writings and precepts of men, &c. And it is done more

closely by those that come to judge the word, rather than to be judged

by it. It is true, we have a liberty to examine, but we should not come

with a mind to cavil and censure. The pulpit, which in a sense is God,s

tribunal, should not be our bar. The matter delivered must be examined

by scripture modestly and humbly, but we must not despise and slight

God,s ordinance, and come hither merely to sit judges of men,s parts or

weaknesses. This is the ready way to beget an irreverent and fearless

spirit. And then when men lose their awe and reverence, their restraint

is gone, and they grow loose, or desperately erroneous. God will punish

their pride with some sudden fall. Look to your ends, Christians; you

will find a great deal of difference between coming to hear and coming

to censure. If you come with such a vain aim, see if you get anything

by a sermon but matter of carping, and see if that do not bring you to

looseness, and that to atheism. Usually this is the sad progress of

proud spirits. First preaching is censured, not examined, then the

manners are tainted; then the word itself is questioned, and then men

lose all fear of God and man.

Ver. 12. There is one lawgiver, that is able to save and to destroy:

who art thou that judgest another?

He persisteth in the same argument. God the lawgiver is the only judge;

and who art thou that thou invadest or usurpest his office?

There is one lawgiver.--But you will say, We can name many others,

Lycurgus, Zaleucus, Solon, &c., many who had also potestatem vitae et

necis, power of life and death, and many now that make and dispense

laws. How is this sentence true? I answer Grotius supposeth the apostle

intendeth Christ by this expression, in opposition to Moses, as arguing

against those that would continue the use of the ceremonies, and

observe difference between days and meats, &c. Now saith he, we in the

Christian church have but one lawgiver, Christ, and not Moses. These

must not be yoked and coupled together. But this is too argute, and

offereth too much force to the context. More probably, then, he

meaneth--(1.) That there is but one absolute and supreme lawgiver,

whose will is the rule of justice. Others are directed by an external

rule, and prudent considerations of equity and safety, and therein they

are but as God,s deputies and substitutes, either in church or

commonwealth: 2 Chron. xix. 6, `Ye judge not for man, but for the Lord;

the Lord is with you in the matter of judgment., (2.) In spiritual

things none else can give laws to the conscience. In external policy

the laws and edicts of men are to be observed. But he speaketh of the

internal government of the conscience, where God alone judgeth by the

word; for he speaketh against those that in indifferent things would

set up their own will as a rule of sin or duty. Observe:--

Obs. That God alone can give laws to the conscience. So Isa. xxxiii.

22, `The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our

king; he will save us., Take them in a spiritual sense, and the words

are exclusive: God, and no other, our only judge, our only law giver,

&c. God only knoweth the conscience, and therefore God only must judge

it, and give laws to it. God only can punish the conscience for sin,

and therefore he only can make a sin. It is the privilege of his word

to `convert the soul,, Ps. xix.

Object. There may be an objection framed against this doctrine out of

Rom. xiii. 5, where it is said, `Wherefore ye must be subject, not only

for wrath, but for conscience, sake., So that men,s commands seem to

oblige the conscience.

Sol. I answer--They do in a sort, but not in that order and manner that

God,s do. (1.) Not directly and immediately, but by the intervention of

God,s command. As a Christian is bound to perform all civil duties upon

reasons of religion, we are bound in conscience, though human laws

under that quatenus do not bind conscience. So 1 Peter ii. 13, `Submit

yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord,s sake., It is God,s

command that bindeth my conscience to observe man,s. So Eccles. viii.

2. `I counsel thee to keep the king,s commandment, and that in regard

of the oath of God;, that is, not only for fear of men, but chiefly for

wronging thy conscience towards God. (2.) Not so universally and

unlimitedly. I must obey God intuitu voluntatis, upon the bare sight of

his will; but I must examine the laws of men, whether they be just,

equal, suiting with charity and public safety; and in many cases active

obedience must be withheld. Peter and the apostles said, Acts v. 29,

`We ought to obey God rather than men., Many such cases there are; but

now towards God conscience is bound, though it can see no reason for

it, no good from it. (3.) Not so absolutely. Whatever God commandeth, I

am bound to do it even in secret, though it be to my absolute

prejudice; but now submission to man may be performed by suffering the

penalty, though the obedience required be forborne; and in some cases a

man may do contrary in private, where the thing is indifferent, and

there is no danger of scandal and contempt of authority. Well, then,

hear no voice but God,s in your consciences, no doctrines in the church

but Christ,s. When they brought in foreign doctrines, it is said, they

`did not hold the head,, Col. ii. 19. No offices, institutions, and

worship must be allowed but such as he hath appointed. Antiquity

without scripture is no sure rule to walk by. We must not look what

others did before us, but what Christ did before them all. [326] So not

the authority of the church; she is `the pillar and ground of truth,, 1

Tim. iii. 15, sensu forensi non architectonico; that is, to hold forth

Christ,s mind, as a post doth a king,s proclamation. Some power the

church hath in rites of decency, and expediency, and order, by virtue

of that general canon, 1 Cor. xiv. 40 (though that text carrieth the

face of a restraint rather than an allowance, and doth not so much

enlarge as moderate church power, as I have elsewhere cleared), but in

the main matters the church can only declare laws, not make them; and

though in matters indifferent she can direct to what is suitable to

order and decency, yet those directions should be so managed that they

do not take away the nature of the thing; and though Christian liberty

be restrained, it must not be infringed. It is the injury of antichrist

to usurp an authority over the church of God; and this is the very

spirit of antichristianism, to give laws to the conscience. Calvin

[327] saith, Men would have us more modest than to call the Pope

Antichrist; but as long as he doth exercise a tyranny over the

conscience, we shall never give over that term; nay, we shall go

further, saith he, and call those members of antichrist that take such

snares upon their consciences. The setting up another lawgiver is

properly antichristianism; for then there is one head set against

another, and human authority against divine. It is Paul,s character of

antichrist: 2 Thes. ii. 4, that `he as God sitteth in the temple of

God;, that is, making himself absolute lord of consciences, bringing

them to his obedience, working them to his advantage.

Who is able to save and to destroy.--It noteth God,s absolute power to

do with man either temporally or spiritually as he pleaseth. This power

is everywhere given to God: Deut. xxxii. 39, `See now, that I, even I,

am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound,

and heal; and there is none able to take out of my hand., So 1 Sam. ii.

6, and Isa. xliii. 13. Note hence:--

Obs. 1. That absolute supremacy becometh none but him that hath

absolute power. The power of magistrates is limited by the will of God,

because they depend upon him, and can do nothing but as they are

enabled and authorised by him, John xix. 11.

Obs. 2. God hath an absolute and supreme power on men, and can dispose

of them according to his will and pleasure. And therefore we must--(1.)

Keep close to his laws with more fear and trembling; there is no

escaping this judge, 1 Cor. x. 22. Eternal life and eternal death are

in his disposal, Mat. x. 28. (2.) Observe them with more encouragement;

live according to Christ,s laws, and he is able to protect you: Ps.

lxviii. 20, `Our God is the God of salvations, and to him be long the

issues of death., He can save his people, and he hath many ways to

bring his enemies to ruin. Your friend is the most dreadful enemy; he

`hath the keys of death and hell,, Rev. i. 18. (3.) Be the more humbled

in case of breach of his laws. Oh! what will you do with this lawgiver,

who, with the rebuke of his countenance, can turn you into hell? see

Ezek. xxii. 14. Have you courage and strength enough to withstand God?

What will you do with him that is `able to save and destroy?, Wool

overcometh the strokes of iron by yielding to them. There is no way

left but submission and humble ad dresses. He may be overcome by faith,

but not by power: Isa. xxvii. 5, `Take hold of his strength, and you

may make peace with him., By humble supplications you may `prevail with

God as princes.,

Who art thou that judgest another? that is, what a distance is there

between thee and God! what a sorry judge to him! You have the same

question, Rom. xiv. 4.

Obs. It is good to shame pride with the consideration of God,s glory,

and our own baseness. He is `able to save and to destroy;, but `who art

thou?, &c.

Ver. 13. Go to now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into

such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain.

Having formerly spoken against those that contemned the law, he now

speaketh against those that contemned providence, promising themselves

a long time in the world, and a happy accomplishment of their carnal

projects, without any sense or thought of their own frailty, or the

sudden strokes of God. In this verse he doth, as it were, personate

them, and give a most accurate representation of their thoughts.

Go to now, a'ge nun.--The vulgar readeth Ecce, as if it were i'dou, see

now, do you do rightly? But we render it better. It is a phrase that

provoketh them to consideration, as awakening the attention of

conscience, or as citing them before the presence and tribunal of God.

[328] The same adverb is used chap. v. 1. From this opening of the word

observe:--

Obs. That if we would know the evil of our actions, it is good to use

reviews and reflecting thoughts. We sin and go on in sin because of

incogitancy. There should be wise consideration aforehand to prevent

the sin, and faithful recollection to prevent the going on in sin. God

complaineth, Jer. viii. .6, `No man saith, What have I done?, This

recollection citeth the soul before three bars:--(1.) Conscience; (2.)

God,s eye; and (3.) God,s throne or tribunal. It rouseth up the light

of conscience by comparing the action or speech with a principle of

reason, or the word, as in the present case, thus:--Am I Lord of future

events, that I do so confidently determine or define them? Do those

things hang on my will? Is my life or actions in mine own power? It

draweth the soul into the presence of God thus: Would I have the

jealous God, that disposeth of human events and successes, to take

notice of such speeches? So before God,s judgment seat thus: Would I

defend such actions or speeches before the tribunal of God? Will these

carnal deliberations endure the severe search and trial of the great

day? Thus should you in all cases review your actions, and, as the

prophet saith, `Behold your way in the valley,, Jer. ii. 23.

Ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, &c.--By

an imitation he reciteth the speeches or thoughts of the Jewish factors

or merchants. Now we will go to Alexandria, or to Damascus or to

Antioch, which were the places of their usual traffic. Observe hence:--

Obs. 1. That carnal hearts are all for carnal projects. Thoughts are

the purest offspring of the soul, and do discover the temper of it. Men

are according to their devices. See Isa. xxxli. 6, 7, `Liberal men

devise liberal things., Carnal men are projecting how to spend their

days and months in buying and selling and getting gain. The fool in the

Gospel is thinking of enlarging his barns, and plucking down `his

houses and building greater, Luke xii. 17, 18; this engrosseth all his

thoughts. One apostle describeth .such men thus, `Minding earthly

things,, Phil. iii. 19. Another thus, `Having an heart exercised with

covetous practices,, 2 Peter ii. 14; that is, with earnest contrivances

how to promote their gain and earthly aims. A gracious heart is for

gracious projects, how they shall be more thankful, Ps. cxvi. 12; how

more holy, more useful for God, more fruitful in every good work; `what

they shall do to inherit eternal life., Oh! consider, this is the

better care, that more suiteth with the end of our creation and the

nature of our spirits. We were sent into the world, not to grow great

and pompous, but to enrich our souls with spiritual excellences, &c.

Obs. 2. Again you may observe, that carnal men send out their thoughts

to forestall and fore-enjoy their contentments ere they obtain them. It

is usual with men to feed themselves with the pleasure of their hopes.

Sisera,s mother,s ladies looked through the lattice, pleasing

themselves in the thought of a triumphant return, Judges v. Thoughts

are the spies and messengers of the soul; hope sendeth them out after

the thing expected, and love after the thing beloved. When a thing is

strongly expected, the thoughts are wont to spend themselves in

creating images and suppositions of the happiness of enjoyment. If a

poor man were adopted into the succession of a crown, he would please

himself in the supposition of the future honour and pleasure of the

kingly state. Godly men, that are called to be `co-heirs with Christ,,

are wont to pre-occupy the bliss of their future estate, and so do in a

manner feel what they do but expect. So also do carnal men charm their

souls with whispers of vanity, and feed themselves with the pleasant

anticipation of that carnal delight which they look for; as young heirs

spend upon their hopes, and riot away their estate ere they possess it.

Well, then, look to it; it is a sure note of fleshliness when the world

runneth so often in your thoughts, and you are always deflowering

carnal contentments by these anticipations of lust and sin; and you

have nothing to live upon, or to entertain your spirit withal, but

these suppositions of gain and pomp, and the reversion of some outward

enjoyment.

Obs. 3. Again, you may observe their confidence of future events: `We

will go, and continue there a year,, &c. Note thence, that carnal

affections are usually accompanied with, certainly much encouraged by,

carnal confidence. They are doubly confident: of the success of their

endeavours, `We will get gain;, of the continuance of their lives, `We

will continue there a year., Lust cannot be nourished without a

presumption of success: when men multiply endeavours, they little think

of God, or of the changes of providence: it is enough to undo lust to

suppose a disappointment; besides, when there is such a presence of

means, we ascribe little to the highest cause. First the world stealeth

away our affections, and then it intercepteth our trust; there is not

only adultery in it, James iv. 4, but idolatry, Eph. v. 5. It is not

only our darling, but our god; and that is the reason why worldly men

are always represented as men of a secure presumption; as Luke xii. 9,

`Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; eat, drink, and be

merry;, so Job xxix. 18, `I shall die in my nest, and multiply my days

as the sand;, so in that apocryphal passage, Ecclus. xi. 19, `I have

found rest, and will eat continually of my goods; and yet he knoweth

not what time shall come upon him., They think now they have enough to

secure them against all chances. Well, then, look to your confidence

and trust; when you are getting an estate, is your expectation founded

in faith or lust? When you have gotten an estate, where lieth the

assurance of your contentment? in the promises, or your outward

welfare?

Obs. 4. Again, from that to-day or to-morrow, and we will tarry there a

year. Carnal men are not only confident of present, but future welfare,

which argueth an heart stupidly secure, and utterly insensible of the

changes of providence: Isa. lvi. 12, `To-morrow shall be as this day,

and much more abundant;, Ps. xlix. 11, `Their inward thought is that

their houses shall continue for ever., Men love to enjoy their carnal

comforts without interruption, thought of death, or change. Every day

is as a new life, [329] and bringeth sufficient care with it; we need

not look out for so long time. But worldly men, in their cares, do not

only provide for the morrow, but the next year; in their possessions do

not only please themselves in their present happiness, but will not so

much as suppose a change.

We will continue there, poie'somen--we will factor it there. He chiefly

instanceth in trading, and accommodateth his words to the merchant,s

profession, because too often and too sensibly are these carnal

thoughts, hopes, and confidence found in merchants and men versed in

worldly trading; though he intendeth to speak against all sorts of men

that undertake anything in the confidence of their own wisdom and

industry, without the leave and blessing of providence. Therefore

observe hence:--

Obs. 1. From the letter of the place, that merchants are very liable to

thoughts and discourses savouring of carnal presumption and confidence.

In their bourses and exchanges they are always talking of wares, and

gain, and traffic, without any thought of God: Hosea xii. 7, `He is a

merchant; the balances of deceit are in his hand;, in the original, `he

is a Canaanite., Canaan,s posterity, upon whom the curse fell, was most

happy in this course of life; [330] and being driven out of the land by

the Israelites into the maritime towns, they were most famous for

navigation. It is your ordinary calling to go from place to place; take

God along with you wherever you go. Of all men you should be most

cautelous: in your commerce be mindful of God and of yourselves; of God

s providence and your own frailty, that you neither be too much in the

world, nor too confidant of your own industry.

Obs. 2. From the scope of the whole verse, that it is a vain thing to

promise ourselves great matters without the leave of providence. To

say, `We will go,, `we will do thus and thus,, it is vain; for we are

not lords of our lives, nor lords of our own actions: Ps. xxxi. 15, My

times are in thy hand;, so Prov. xxvii. 1, `Boast not thyself of

to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth., To-day we

are, and to-morrow not: we cannot tell what may be in the womb of the

next morning. So for our actions: `Their works are in the hand of God,,

Eccles. ix. 1. The performance of them, and the success of them; we

need counsel and a blessing. The prophet speaks of it as of a known

case, Jer. x. 23, `O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in

himself; it is not in the sons of men to direct their steps., But when

do men promise themselves great matters without the leave of

providence? I answer--Many ways: the principal are these--(1.) When

they undertake things without prayer. You may speak of success when you

have asked God,s leave: Job xxii. 28, `Acquaint thyself with God, then

thou shalt decree a thing, and it shall be established., (2.) When they

are too confident of future contingencies and events, without any

submission and reservation of the will of God, and boast upon mere

human likelihoods: see Exod. xv. 11; and Judges, v. 28 30; so 1 Kings

xx. 10, 11, `The gods do so to me, and more also, if the dust of

Samaria suffice for handfuls for all the people; and the king of Israel

said, Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast as he that putteth

it off., He would plunder Samaria so bare that he would not leave any

dust there; but God disappointed him. (3.) When men,s endeavours are

set up in God,s stead, we think all dependeth upon the course of

sublunary causes, and so neglect God. (4.) When men promise themselves

a time to repent hereafter. [331] Many think within themselves, I will

follow my pleasure and profits, and then spend my old age in a devout

and retired privacy; first build, and trade, and bustle in the world,

and adjourn God to the aches and dull phlegm of their age. Foolish man

decreeth all future events as if all were in his own hands. Well, then,

in all cases remember God; it is useful for princes and men employed in

counsels for public welfare. How often do they prove unhappy because

they do not seek God! We should ask counsel of the oracle before we

take it from one another. The heathens saw a need to begin with God.

[332] So for soldiers; how soon is a battle turned! It is not for you

to say, `I will pursue, I will overtake,, &c. Solomon saith, `The

battle is not always to the strong,, Eccles. ix. So for traders; you

must not say, I will send out a ship and get gain: how often are carnal

presumptions checked! So for Christians; do everything in the name of

the Lord Jesus; you cannot believe, repent when you will, nor pray as

you will. Samson was mistaken when he said, `I will go forth and shake

myself as at other times., The natural exercise of your faculties, and

the divine assistances of grace, do all hang upon God,s good pleasure.

Ver. 14. Whereas ye know not what shall be upon the morrow. For what is

your life? It is even a vapour, that appear eth for a little time, and

then vanisheth away.

Having discovered their carnal presumption, he now disproveth it by two

arguments:--(1.) The casualties of the next day; (2.) The uncertainty

of their own lives. Both which give a notable check to such fond

confidence.

Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow.--As if he had said,

You talk of a long time, and you know not what shall happen the next

day. Every day bringeth new providences and events with it. But you

will say, Is it simply unlawful to provide for the morrow, or for time

to come? I answer--No; Solomon biddeth us learn of the ant, Prov. vi.

6-8, `Consider her ways, and be wise; she provideth her meat in summer,

and gathereth her food in harvest;, so Prov. xxx. 25. It is but a wise

foresight to secure ourselves against visible inconveniences. Joseph is

commended for laying up food in the cities against the years of famine,

Gen. xli. 35. And it was the practice of the apostles to lay up in

store for the brethren at Jerusalem against the famine foretold by

Agabus, Acts xi. 29. Only remember this must be done with caution; such

provision must not arise from distrust, or a thought prejudicial to the

care of providence, Mat. vi. 30. It must not hinder us from the great

care of our lives, provision for heaven, Mat. vi. 35. It must be with

submission to God. God may soon disappoint all; and after we have

caught in hunting, we may not roast.

For what is your life? It is even a vapour.--Brevity of life is set

forth by many comparisons in scripture: by the flower of the field,

Isa. xl. 6, 7; by the wind, Job vii. 7; a leaf before the wind, Job

xiii. 25; by a shadow, Job xiv. 2. There is a heap of similitudes, Job

ix. 25, `Now my days are swifter than a post; they flee away, and see

no good; they pass away as swift ships; as the eagle hasteth to the

prey., The word useth the more similitudes, that by every fleeting and

decaying object we might be remembered of our own mortality; as also to

check those proud desires which are in man of an eternal abode and

lasting happiness in this life. In that place of Job there is a

monument of man,s frailty set forth in all the elements: go to the

land, and there is a post; go to the sea, and there is a swift ship;

look to the air, and there is an eagle. The heathen poets are much in

deciphering the frail estate of man. �schylus saith, man,s life is

ka'pnou ski'a, the shadow of smoke; and Pindarus, ski'as o'nar, the

dream of a shadow. The similitude used here is that of a vapour. It

were to trifle to show the resemblance in other things; it is brought

only to show the swift passage of it, and because man,s life is but a

little warm breath tunned in and out by the nostrils; a narrow passage,

and soon stopped, Isa. ii. 22.

Observe out of the whole verse two points:--

Obs. 1. That we have no assurance of our lives and comforts, and the

events of the next day. It is a common argument; heathens are much in

it. [333] Well, then, let every day,s care be enough for itself, and

live every day as the last day. Petrarch telleth of one who, being

invited to dinner the next day, answered, Ego a multis annis crastinum

non habui--I have not had a morrow for these many years. And Ludovicus

Capellus telleth us of one Rabbi Eleazer, that advised men to repent

but one day before their death, that is, presently; it may be the next

before the last. It is a sad thing to promise ourselves many years, and

to have our souls taken away that night; to measure out our time and

years by our carnal projects, and of a sudden we and all our `white

thoughts perish,, [334] Ps. cxlvi. 4. Godly men wait for their change;

upon others it cometh unexpected. It is observable, that of bad men it

is said their souls are not resigned, but `taken away,, Job xxvii. 8,

`What hope hath the hypocrite, when God shall take away his soul?, So

Luke xii. 20, `This night shall they take away thy soul., Wicked men

would dwell longer in the body; their carnal projects are never at an

end, but of a sudden God cometh and snatcheth away their souls.

Obs. 2. Man,s life is very short; it is a vapour that soon appeareth

and disappeareth, dispersed as soon as raised: Ps. xxxix., `Surely

every man walketh in a vain show., Though they toss to and fro, yet the

whole course of their lives is but as a flying shadow; a little spot of

time between two eternities. Austin doubteth whether to call it a dying

life or a living death. [335] (1.) This checketh those that pass away

their time rather than redeem it; prodigal of their precious time, as

if they had too much of it. Our season is short, and we make it

shorter. It is time for all of us to say, `The time past is more than

enough to have wrought the wills of the flesh,, 1 Peter iv. 3, or as it

is, Rom. xiii. 11, `It is high time to awake out of sleep,, &c., which

was the scripture that converted Austin. (2.) If life be short, then

moderate your worldly cares and projects; do not cumber yourselves with

too much provision for a short voyage. The ship goes the swifter the

less it is burdened; men take in too much lading for a mere passage.

(3.) Be more in spiritual projects, that you may lay up a foundation

for a longer life than you have to live here; do much work in a little

time. Shall we lose any part of that which is so short? or in a short

life make way for a long misery? The apostle saith, 2 Peter i. 13, `I

will put you in remembrance, knowing that shortly I must put off this

tabernacle., We are all shortly to divest ourselves of the upper

garment of the flesh; let us do all the good that we can. Christ lived

but thirty-two years, or thereabouts; therefore he `went about doing

good, and healing every sickness, and every disease., Ministers pack

their matter close when they have but a little time; so should you; you

have but a short time, be the more diligent.

Ver. 15. For ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do

this or that.

Having disproved their confidence, he proceeded to rectify it by

pressing them to a holy and reverent remembrance of God,s providence

and their own frailty.

For ye ought to say, If the Lord will.--Here a doubt ariseth. Must we

always of necessity use this form of speech, or such an express

exception and reservation of providence? I answer--(1.) It is good to

accustom the tongue to holy forms of speech; it is a great help: the

heart is best when there are such explicit and express exceptions of

providence: `If the Lord please,, `If the Lord will,, `If it please the

Lord that I live., A pure lip becometh a Christian, that they may be

distinguished by their holy forms, as others are by their oaths, rotten

speech, and unholy solicitations. Besides, it is useful to stir up

reverence in ourselves, and for others, instruction. Such forms are

confessions of divine providence and the uncertainty of human life.

(2.) The children of God use them frequently: 1 Cor. iv. 19, `But I

will come unto you shortly, if the Lord will;, so 1 Cor. xvi. 7, `I

must tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit;, so Rom. i. 10,

`Making request, if by any means I might have a prosperous journey to

come unto you;, so Phil. ii. 19, `I trust in the Lord Jesus to send

Timothy to you shortly., The children of God know that all their goings

are ordered by the Lord; therefore they often use these reservations of

his will and power. See also Gen. xxviii. 20, and Heb. vi. 3. (3.) The

very heathens, by the light of nature, were wont to use these forms

with some religion, and would seldom speak of any purpose of theirs

without this holy parenthesis. Plato bringeth in Alcibiades asking

Socrates how he should speak, [336] he answereth, Before every work

thou must say, If God will. The Greek su`n theo, [337] by the leave or

blessing of God, was commonly used in the beginning of every

undertaking. What was the practice of the oriental nations, with the

story in Bensira, you may see in Gregory,s `Observations on some

Passages of Scripture,, cap. 20. And for the story of the great Turk,s

murdering one of his Bassas for mentioning a confident purpose without

any reservation of God,s pleasure, you may see it in Lorinus and

Salmeron on this place. (4.) When we use these forms, the heart must go

along with the tongue: common speeches, wherein God,s name is used, if

the heart be not reverent, are but profanations. It is Austin,s [338]

counsel, Do you learn to have in your hearts what every one hath in his

tongue: the speeches are common, but the signification is useful. (5.)

It is not always necessary to express these forms: though there must be

always either implicitly or expressly a submission to the will of God,

yet we cannot make it a sin. to omit such phrases. The holy men of God

have often purposed things to come, and yet not formally expressed such

conditions; as in the third epistle of John, ver. 10, `Wherefore when I

come, I will remember his deeds;, and Rom. xv. 24, `Whensoever I take

my journey to Spain, I will come to you,, &c., and in other places.

Obs. All our undertakings must be referred to the will of God; not only

sacred, but civil actions. Our journeys must not be undertaken without

asking his leave; as Jacob, Gen. xxviii. 20 and xxiv. 12, `O Lord God

of Abraham thy servant, send me good speed this day., No wonder, if

this be neglected, that you meet with so many cross accidents; they do

not come from your hard luck, but your profane neglect. But what is it

to submit all our actions to the will of God? I answer--(1.) To measure

all our actions by his revealed will, that is the rule of duty; we can

look for no blessing but upon those ways that suit with it. There must

be a submission to his secret will, but first a conformity to his

revealed will. Lust hath its thele'mata, its wills, Eph. ii. 2; but we

are to serve the will of God till we fall asleep, Acts xiii. 36. (2.)

We must the more comfortably undertake any action when we see God in

it: Acts xvi. 10, he gathered that God had called him to Macedonia. So

when we see God, in the sweet means and course of his providence, or by

inward instinct, guiding and leading us, we may with more encouragement

walk in the way that he hath opened to us. (3.) When in our desires and

requests we do not bind the counsels of God: Mat. xxvi. 39, `Not my

will, but thine be done., In temporal things we must submit to God,s

will, both for the mercy, the means, and time of attainment. Creatures,

that cannot ascribe to themselves, must not prescribe to God and give

laws to providence, but must be content to want or have as the Lord

pleaseth: if anything succeed not well, the Lord would not; that is

enough to silence all discontents. (4.) We must constantly ask his

leave in prayer, as before was urged. (5.) We must still reserve the

power of God,s providence, `If the Lord will,, `If the Lord permit.,

God would not have us too carnally confident; it is good to inure the

soul to changes. Two things we should often consider to this purpose,

and they are both in the text:--(1st.) The sovereignty and dominion of

providence: the Lord can blast your enterprise, though managed with

never so much wisdom and contrivance; he can nip it in the bud, or

check it in the very article of execution; and I have observed that

usually God is very tender of his honour in this point, and usually

frustrateth proud men that boast of what they will do, and conceive

unlimited purposes, without any thought of the check they may receive

in providence. It is a flower of the imperial crown of heaven, and the

bridle that God hath upon the reasonable creature, to dispose of the

success of human affairs; therefore herein God will be acknowledged:

Prov. xvi. 9, `A man,s heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth

his steps., Man designeth, but the execution dependeth wholly upon

God,s will and providence. In peremptory resolutions there is a contest

between us and heaven about will and power; therefore in such cases the

answer of providence is more express and decisive to the creature,s

loss, that God may be acknowledged as Lord of success, and the first

mover in all means and causes, without whom they have no force and

efficacy. (2d.) Consider the frailty and uncertainty of your own lives;

our being is as uncertain as the events of providence. If we live and

God will, are the exceptions of the text, and do imply that there must

be a sensible impression of our own frailty, as well as of the

sovereignty of providence, that the heart may the better submit to God.

It is said, Ps. cxlvi. 4, `His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his

earth; in that very day his thoughts perish., Frail men are full of

thoughts and projects; this they will do, and that they will do; go to

such a city, promote their interests by such an alliance, gain so much

by such a purchase, and then they will raise up some stately fabric

which shall continue their name and memory to succeeding generations,

and all this because they do not mind the earth which they carry about

them, and how soon the hand of providence is able to crumble it into

dust. Certainly man will never be wise till he is able to number his

days, and doth sufficiently possess his soul of the uncertainty of his

abode in the world, Ps. xc. 12.

Obs. We shall live, and do this or that.--Mark! it is not enough that

God suffer us to live, but he must also by the same will suffer us to

do or act. The point is, that God,s will concurreth not only to our

lives, but actions. We may live, and yet not be able to do anything for

the promotion of our designs: for if God suspend his concurrence, the

creatures cannot act, at least not with any Cowardliness and success,

which quite crosseth the doctrine of the heathen philosophers. Seneca

said, Quod vivamus, deorum munus est; quod bene vivamus, nostrum--that

we live, it is by the benefit of the gods; that we live well, it is of

ourselves. So Tully: Judicium hoc omnium mortalium est, &c.--this is

the judgment of all men, that prosperity is to be sought of God, but

wisdom to be gotten by ourselves. But in the scriptures we are taught

otherwise, not only to seek success of God, but direction; he giveth

abilities to perform, and a blessing when the action is finished.

Without the efficacious as well as permissive will of God, `we can do

nothing; he must give us life, and all things necessary to action. We

must not only look up to him as the author of the success, but the

director of the action. It is by his conduct and blessing that all

things come to pass. Our very counsels and wills are subject to the

divine government, and he can turn them as it pleaseth him, Prov. xxi.

1; and therefore we must not only commit our ways to his providence,

but commend our hearts to the tuition of his Spirit. In short, all

things are done by his will, and must be ascribed to his praise.

Ver. 16. But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is

evil.

Here the apostle cometh to charge more closely their arrogant

presumption of outward success upon their consciences, especially it

being aggravated by professed acknowledgment and avowing of it, against

the threatenings of the word.

But now ye rejoice in your boastings.--It is not easy to define of what

boastings the apostle meaneth. The persons to whom he wrote are

charged, chap, ii., with glorying in their riches, and afterward for

bearing up upon a mere profession of godliness, and glorying in their

supposed religion; after that he chargeth them with glorying in a

presumption of wisdom, manifested in their censorious insultations over

the failings of others, chap. iii.; and now, last of all, for their

glorying in their carnal hopes, or fond prognostications of the success

of their own endeavours, as if their lives and actions were in their

own power, and exempted from the dominion and government of providence.

Probably all these may be intended, for the apostle,s expression is

plural, alazonei'ais, `ye glory in your boastings;, though I conceive

the latter is principally intended, their avowing their confidence,

notwithstanding the many threatenings which were ready to be executed

upon them. For, though the apostle,s doctrine be of general use, and at

all times we must conceive our purposes with submission to the will of

God, yet his chief drift is to check the security, carelessness, and

carnal confidence of their hearts, judgments now approaching, and the

happiness of the Jewish affairs running low, even to the bottom and

dregs. For you shall see in the beginning of the next chapter he

presently ringeth them a loud peal of threatenings, and representeth

the avenging judge as at the door, or at hand, to recompense their

iniquities. Now, because they would justify their confidence, yea,

glory in it, what sad thoughts soever others had of the times, he

saith, `Ye rejoice or glory in your boastings.,

Such rejoicing is evil; that is, though you think it a brave

confidence, yet certainly it is but a carnal security. He saith no more

of it, but it is evil, because they defended it as good; it is evil, as

coming from an evil cause, pride, and wretched security; it is evil in

its own nature, as being an outbraving of the word; it is evil in its

effects, as hindering you from good, and putting you upon traffic and

aspiring projects, when you should more solemnly mind humbling duties,

and `be afflicted, and weep, and mourn,, &c., as is pressed before,

ver. 9. And this I conceive is the mind of the apostle in this verse,

which is usually passed over by interpreters slightly, without that

necessary regard which should be had to the scope of the context and

epistle. Note hence:--

Obs. 1. That such is the degeneration of human nature, that it doth not

only practise sins, but glory in them. Man fallen is but man inverted

and turned upside down; his love is where his hatred should be, and his

hatred where his love should be; his glory where his shame should be,

and his shame where his glory should be. Many count strictness a

disgrace, and sin a bravery. The apostle saith, Phil. iii. 19, `They

glory in their shame., It cometh to pass some times through ignorance;

men mistake evil for good, and so call revenge valour or resolution,

and prosperity in an evil way the blessing of providence upon their

zealous endeavours, and presumptuous carelessness a well-built

confidence. God charged it upon his people that they had made great

feasts of rejoicing when they had more cause to mourn: Jer. xi. 15,

`The holy flesh is past from thee; when thou dost evil, then thou

rejoicest., Usually, by our fond mistakes, thus it is we are blessing

and praising God when we have more cause to humble and afflict our

souls. Sometimes it is through stupidness and sottishness of

conscience; when men have worn out all honest restraints, then they

rejoice in evil, and delight in their perversities, Prov. ii. 14. The

drunkards think there is a bravery in their strength to pour in wine,

and can boast of the number of their cups; the soaken adulterer of so

many acts of uncleanness; the swearer thinketh it the grace of his

speech to interlard it with oaths; and proud persons think conceited

apparel is their best ornament. Good God! whither is man fallen! First

we practise sin, then defend it, then boast of it. Sin is first our

burden, then our custom, then our delight, then our excellency.

Obs. 2. That we have no cause to rejoice or glory in our carnal

confidence. It seemeth to come from a generous bravery, but indeed from

lowness and baseness of spirit. It is but a running away from evil, not

a mastering of it. Men dare not lay it to heart, because they know not

how to fortify themselves against it. Faith and true confidence always

supposeth and prepareth for the worst, but hopeth the best: it meeteth

the adversary in open field, and vanquisheth it. The fool in the Gospel

durst not think of his death that night, Luke xii. 16, 17, &c. This is

the baseness of carnal confidence, to put off trouble when it cannot

put it away; and however it scorn eth the threatening, it feareth the

judgment, and are so ill provided to bear it that they durst not so

much as think of it.

Ver. 17. Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to

him it is sin.

In this verse the apostle taketh off the prejudice and cavil whereby

his admonition might be slighted and evaded. They might reply, We have

no need to be taught such a plain lesson; we know that life is short,

and that God,s providence governeth all things. Do you, saith the

apostle, know all this? then you are the more obliged to subject your

desires to his will and pleasure, which he proveth by this general

rule. There is nothing difficult in the words but that to him it is

sin, auto hamartia estin, that is sin indeed; there is more of the

nature of sin, there is more of the effects of sin, which he shall find

in his own conscience, and in hell torments, and God,s judiciary

dispensations. Like sayings you have elsewhere: see John ix. 41, and

xv. 22. But you will say then, Are those that sin out of ignorance

wholly free from sin? I answer--No. For (1.) Sins of ignorance are

sins, though more remissible, 1 Tim. i. 13, though not so highly

punished, Luke xii. 47. God,s law was once impressed upon our natures,

and we are obliged to all that was written upon Adam,s heart. (2.)

Affected ignorance rendereth us highly culpable, 2 Peter iii. 5, when

men shut the windows, and resist the light; for then they might know,

but would not. Out of this verse observe:--

Obs. 1. That it is not enough to know good, but we must do it also.

Gifts in the mind, without a change in the heart, will not stead you.

Often we find that men of much knowledge are apt to be enslaved by

their appetites, the lower and more brutish faculties; and though they

be orthodox, yet are unmortified; keen against errors, but indulgent to

vices. Oh! consider, you should add to knowledge temperance, 2 Peter i.

5, otherwise what will it avail you? Others are ignorant of God in

their minds, and you deny him in your lives. Others question the truth

of religion, and you deny the power of it. Besides, it serveth to check

slighting thoughts of a plain truth. We are apt to say, I know this

enough already. Ah! but do I practise it? Is not this a new hint from

God to convince me of my negligence? Surely God seeth I do not live up

to this knowledge, therefore the same truth, this common truth, is

returned to my mind, &c.

Obs. 2. Sins of knowledge are most dangerous. They are more sins than

others, as having more of malice and contempt in them. There is more

contempt both of the law of God and of God,s kindness. See Mat xi. 20.

It is a sign you love sin as sin; for when you know what it is you

adventure upon it. Besides, sins against knowledge have more of the

marks of God,s vengeance upon them. In the reprobate they are punished

with great despair and horror of conscience. See Prov. v. 11-14. Or

with hardness of heart. Iron oft heated and oft quenched groweth the

harder. It is just with God to punish contempt of light with obduracy,

or with madness against the truth. The most moral heathens were the

sorest persecutors, as Severus, Antoninus, &c. This is sensibly and

clearly discerned in apostates, [339] who are carried on with most

wilful malice against the truths which they once professed: Hosea v. 2,

`The revolters are profound to make slaughters., Forward professors

turn violent persecutors. They would fain quench the light shining in

their own bosoms. Alexander, once a disciple, but he `made shipwreck of

the faith,, 1 Tim. i. 20; and he is the man that must set on the

multitude against Paul: [340] Acts xix. 33, `The Jews drew out

Alexander, and he beckoned with the hand., The same man is intended;

for he dwelt at Ephesus, as we learn by both the epistles to Timothy.

Now the Jews set him up as the fittest accuser of Paul. He knew his

doctrine, and he must appear to turn all the blame of the uproar upon

the Christians. Once more we read of this Alexander as a desperate

enemy of the truth, 2 Tim. iv. 14. Certainly the rage and malice of

such men is the greater because of the abundance of their light which

they have renounced. No vinegar so tart as that which is made of the

sweetest wine: Prov. xxviii. 4, `They that forsake the law praise the

wicked;, that is, do not only commit sin, but approve it in others.

Still they are the most violent and for ward men. Sometimes God giveth

them up to sottishness. See Rom. i. 21-23. It is very notable, and it

doth exceedingly verify the apostle,s observation, that the most

refined and civil heathens (who are presumed to have most light) were

given up to the most beastly errors about the nature of God, [341] as

the Romans and Grecians worshipped fevers and human passions, deam

cloacinam--every paltry thing for God; whereas the Scythians and more

barbarous nations worshipped the thunder, the sun, things terrible in

themselves; which plainly discovereth God,s just judgment in `darkening

their foolish heart,, because they were not `thankful in the

improvement of light received. But the greatest displeasure of God

against sins of knowledge is declared hereafter in the torments of

hell, where the proportions of everlasting horrors do rise higher and

higher, according to the several aggravations of sin, Luke xii. 48.

Thus God punisheth sins of knowledge in the reprobate; but his own

children do also perceive the difference between these and other sins.

Nothing breaketh the bones and scourgeth the soul with such a sad

remorse as sins against light. This broke David,s heart: Ps. li. 6,

`Thou hadst put knowledge in my inward parts., He had committed

adultery against checks of conscience, and the watchful light of his

inward parts, &c. I might speak much more upon this argument, but that

I only intend hints. Concerning the danger of sins of knowledge you may

see more in Mr Thomas Goodwin,s treatise called `Aggravations of Sins

of Knowledge,, whose judicious observations being so full and express,

I shall presume to add no more.

Obs. 3. Sins of omission are aggravated by knowledge, as well as sins

of commission. The apostle saith, `To him that knoweth to do good, and

doeth it not,, &c. Usually in sins of commission natural light is most

working, because there is an actual disturbance, by which the free

contemplation of the mind is hindered; and because foul acts bring more

shame and impress more horror than bare neglects; yet to omit a duty

against knowledge may be as bad as to tell a lie against knowledge. The

rule is positive, enforcing duty, as well as privative, forbidding sin;

and according to the knowledge of it, so is the obligation. Oh! that we

might be more conscientious in this matter, and be as tender of

omitting prayer against light, and neglecting to meditate and examine

conscience against light, as we are of committing adultery against

light!

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[290] Qu. `plundering,?--ED.

[291] Arist. Ethic.

[292] `Ex cupiditatibus odia, dissidia, discordiae, seditiones, bella

nascuntur.,--Tullius de Finibus, lib. i.

[293] `Quibus proprium stipendium sufficere debere praecepit, militare

utique non prohibuit.,--Aug. Epist. 5 ad Marcellinum. Et alibi: `Nisi

justa bella suscipi possent, responderet iis, arma abjicite, militari

deserite,, &c.--Aug. contra Faustum, lib. xxii. cap. 74.

[294] `Hoc et ratio doctis, et necessitas barbaris, et mos gentibus, et

feris natura ipsa praescripsit, ut omnem semper vim quacunque ope

possent, a corpore, a capite, a vita sua propulsarent.,--Cic. Orat. pro

Milone.

[295] `Quem discordiae, quem caedes civium, quem bellum civile

delectat, eum ex numero hominum, ex finibus humanae naturae

exterminandum puto.,--M. Tull. Cic. Philip. 13.

[296] Therefore Alexander was called Totius orbis praedo--the public

robber of the world.

[297] `Libera me a malo homine, a meipso.,

[298] `A quatenus ad omne valet consequentia.,

[299] Arist. Rhet.

[300] `Novis semper cupiditatibus occupati, non quid habeamus, sed quid

petamus, inspicimus; non in id quod est, sed quod appetitur

intenti.,--Seneca de Benif., lib. iii. cap. 3.

[301] `Anthropos en phu'sei zoon poli'tikon.,--Arist. Pol., cap. 1.

[302] `Flectere, si nequeo superos,, &c.

[303] See Dr Kinet,s Apology for the Virgin Mary, lib. ii. cap. 15, et

alibi passim.

[304] `Effice quicquid novisti nomini tuo honorificum.,--Junius in

locum.

[305] `Vidi zelantem parvulum,, &c.--August.

[306] `Tri'a estin, en hois diaphe'ron estin o Theo`s, en idio'teti

zoes, periousi'a duno'meos, kai` to me` dialei'pein eupoiein tou`

anthro'pous.,--Themistius.

[307] So in both editions. The word is, however, tmba'llousa. The

author,s argument is not affected by the mistake.--ED.

[308] `Magnum miraculum! altus est Deus; erigis te, et fugit a

te.,--August.

[309] `Entha tais pro'tais ton eliakon akti'non epibolais o a'rguros

katauga'stheis thaumasi'os epe'stilbe, marmai'ron ti` phobero`n kai`

tois eis auto`n ateni'zousi phrikodes.,--Josephus.

[310] See Melchior Adamus in Vita Staupicii.

[311] `Aso'tous apokalousi dustucheis, philoti'mous kai` philodo'xous

epainousin os la'mprous,, &c.--Chrysost. Orat. 65 de Gloria.

[312] `Observatum est a sacrificantibus, ut si hostia quae ad aras

duceretur fuisset vehementer reluctata, ostendissetque se invitam

altaribus admoveri, amoveretur, quia invito deo eam efferri putabant;

quae vero stetisset oblata, hanc volenti numini dari

existimabant.,--Macrobi., Saturn. lib. iii.

[313] `Infirmus hostis est qui non potest vincere nisi

volentem.,--Hieron. ad Demetriadem.

[314] `Diabolus suadere et sollicitare potest, cogere omnino non

potest; non enim diabolus cogendo sed suadendo nocet, nec extorquet a

nobis consensum sed petit.,--Aug. lib. v. Hom. 12.

[315] Ho peira'zon, Mat. iv. 1, with Rev. xi. 10, kate'goros, `The

accuser of the brethren.,

[316] `Quemadmodurn canis assistens mensae, si viderit hominem

vescentem, subinde aliquid eorum quae in mensa sunt ipsi projicientem,

manet assidue: quod si semel atque iterum sic astitit ut discesserit

nihil adeptus, protinus abstinet, veluti qui jam frustra et incassum

assistat; itidem et diabolus jugiter nobis inhiat; si quod blasphemum

verbum ipsi ceu cani projiciamus, hoc accepto rursus aggreditur; quod

si perseveraveris gratias agere, jugulaveris illum fame celeriterque

abegeris.,--Chrys. Hom. 3, de Lazaro.

[317] Qu. `Better,?--ED.

[318] `Peccata elongant uos voluntate, non loco.,

[319] `Phi'lon kaloumen omoi'on omoi'o kat' arete`n.,--Plato de Leg. 8.

[320] Lib. iv. Confess., cap. 9.

[321] `Absque cruore Domini nemo appropinquat Deo.,--Hieron.

[322] The belief that the `woman which was a sinner, was Mary Magdalene

seems to have been entertained by all the English writers of the

seventeenth century.--ED.

[323] The highest note in the old musical notation.--ED.

[324] Naz. Orat. 13.

[325] See Ainsworth in Lev. xix. 16.

[326] `Non attendendum quid alii ante nos fecerint, sed quid Dominus,

qui ante omnes.,--Cyprian Epist. de Eucharist.

[327] Calvinus in locum.

[328] `Illud a'ge est formula citationis ad tribunal Dei; sic non nemo

in locum.,

[329] `Singulos dies singulas vitas puta, et quotidie demitur aliqua

pars vitae; hunc ipsum quem vivimus diem cum morte dividimus.,--Seneca.

[330] See Samuel Bochartus his Phaleg, the second part.

[331] `Audies plerosque dicentes, a quinquagesimo in otiuin secedam,

sexagesimus annus ab officiis me demittet; et quam tandem longioris

vitae praedam accipis? Quis ista sicuti disponis ire patiatur?,--Seneca

de Brevitate Vitae.

[332] `A Jove principium.,

[333] `Nemo tam divos habuit faventes crastinum ut possit sibi

polliceri.,--Seneca.

`Prudens futuri temporis exitum

Caliginosa nocte premit Deus.,--Horat.

[334] So in both the first and second editions. Probably `our whole

thoughts.,--ED.

[335] `Nescio an dicenda sit vita mortalis, an vitalis mors.,--Aug.

Confess., lib. i.

[336] `Alla` pos chre` le'gein; cui respondete: o`ti ea'n theo`s

ethe'le.,--Plato in Timaeo.

[337] See Brissonius de Formulis, lib. i. pp. 68, 69.

[338] `Discite habere in corde, quod habet omnis homo in lingua, quod

vult Deus hoc agat: ipsa lingua popularis est plerunqne, sed doctrina

salutaris.,--Aug. in Psal. xxxii. Conc. i.

[339] `Apostatae sunt maximi osores sui ordinis.,

[340] See Grotius in Acts xix. 33.

[341] See Despaigne,s New Observations on the Creed, about the

beginning.

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CHAPTER V.

VER. 1. Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for the miseries which

shall come upon you.

Before I come to the particular verses of this paragraph, it will be

necessary to premise somewhat concerning the persons to whom it is to

be referred; for it seemeth strange that any should be so vile under

the Christian name and profession as to oppress and persecute their

brethren, and that even to death; in these times of persecution, to

`condemn and kill the just,, and `draw them before the judgment-seats,,

&c. Briefly, then, though the main of the epistle concern the godly,

and the principal intent be their instruction and comfort, yet he

taketh occasion many times to speak to the ungodly and unconverted

amongst them. The ancient holy seed was now upon the dregs, guilty of

oppression, injury, and all manner of profaneness; and because these

lived dispersed, and intermingled with the godly and those that were

gained to the Christian faith, he taketh occasion to divert and direct

his speech to them. That you may not look upon this as an uncertain

conjecture, give me leave to produce my grounds and reasons.--(1.) I

may argue from the inscription of the whole epistle `to the twelve

tribes, promiscuously, without any express mention of their holy

calling or faith, which is usual in the other apostolical epistles.

(2.) From the common and civil form of salutation, chai'rein, greeting:

the apostles, writing to Christians, do solemnly wish them `grace and

peace,, &c. (3.) From the style, which is more rousing and pressing

than usual, as intended for the awakening of secure sinners, or persons

carnal. (4.) The last verses of the epistle seem to intimate that much

of his scope was to convert unbelievers; see James v. 19, 20. (5.) Here

he plainly speaketh to rich wicked men, though the truth is, not so

much for their sakes as the sake of the godly, to encourage them

to-patience. For I like Calvin,s judgment well, that these six verses

are not so much an admonition as a denunciation, wherein the apostle

doth not so much direct them what to do, as foretell what should be

done to them, that the godly might be encouraged to the more patience

under their oppressions; for that the apostle inferreth plainly, ver.

7. I have been long in prefacing, but I hope you will judge it

necessary, it conducing much not only to the opening of this paragraph,

but of many other places in the epistle. From the whole we may learn:--

Obs. That we must not so altogether mind believers, but that we must

give unbelievers their portion, [342] terror to whom terror belongeth,

as well as comfort to whom comfort. Christ,s sermon chiefly aimed at

the disciples, profit, but yet there are many lessons for the

multitude: Mat. v. 1, 2, `Jesus, when lie saw the multitude, called his

disciples, and taught them;, the disciples in the people,s hearing; and

so intersperseth many things that are of a general use and profit.

Go to now, a'ge oun.--The phrase we opened before; it is a kind of

asciting or calling them to the throne of God,s judgment.

Ye rich men, o`i plousioi--He doth not threaten rich men simply, but

such as are afterwards described, carnal rich men, such as were drowned

in pleasures, puffed up with pride, worldly, wicked, oppressive; and

though he use the word rich, yet the threatening is appliable not only

to those that abuse their wealth, but also their greatness, public

place, authority, power, as to princes, judges, magistrates, and their

officers. Because the apostle speaketh indefinitely, ye rich men,

something is notable.

Obs. That it is hard to possess riches without sin. Riches are called

`the mammon of unrighteousness,, Luke xvi. 9, because they are usually

possessed by wicked men, `the men of God,s hand., Ps. xvii. 14; and

because they are most adored and admired by wicked men; and because

they are often gotten by unrighteous dealing, and hardly kept without

sin. It is a hard matter to have them and not to be hindered from

heaven by them, Mat. xix. 24; not to grow proud, sensual, injurious,

carnal, and worldly. We see the beasts, as boars and bulls, when they

are full and in good plight, grow man-keen and fierce; so do men wax

insolent in the midst of their abundance. Well, then, do not covet

riches so much, or please yourselves in the enjoyment of them, but look

to your hearts with the more care; it is an easy matter to offend in

the midst of outward fulness. A long coat .will soon be draggled and

turned into a dirty rag, and a short will not cover nakedness; the mean

is best. See Agur,s choice, Prov. xxx. 9; when he saith, `Give me not

riches,, he addeth, `lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the

Lord?, There is no condition of life begetteth insolency and contempt

of God so much as a luxurious fulness. But you will say, What would you

have us do? throw away our estates? I answer--No; but (1.) Prize them

less; when you possess them, let them not possess you. Shall I value

unrighteous mammon, the portion of the men of God,s hand? No; let me

have `the favour of God,s people,, Ps. cvi. 4, 5, and cxix. 132. A man

cannot know love and hatred by all that is before him. Riches are given

to the good, lest they should be thought evil; to the bad, lest we

should think them the only and chiefest good. [343] (2.) Do the more

good; duties recovered out of the hand of difficulty are the more

commendable: `Make you friends of the unrighteous mammon,, Luke xvi. 9.

It is usually the matter of sin; do you make it the matter of duty. The

more liable we are to sin in any estate, the more commendable every way

is the duty of it. (3.) Seek God the more earnestly for grace; in a

full estate you need it much. It is not simply and absolutely

impossible for a rich man to go to heaven. Poor Lazarus resteth there

in the bosom of rich Abraham. [344] God can loosen the heart from the

world, so as riches shall be no impediment to hinder you from heaven.

Whatever difficulties we are told of in the way to heaven, they serve

only to make us despair of our own strength and abilities, Mat. xix.

26.

Weep and liowl, klausate ololuzontes, weep howling. The first word is

proper to the sorrow of man, or the reasonable creatures, and so it

noteth the height of the calamity; it would be such as would make them

`howl like wolves of the evening., Howling is a sign of great grief;

nature overburdened striveth to give it vent by loud complaints. {Some

observe an allusion; they that had lived after the manner of beasts,

like hounds and wolves, are here bidden to howl like beasts; but this

may be a strain of wit. That inquiry is most necessary and solid,

whether this be spoken here by way of counsel or commination. Some

think it spoken by way of counsel, as if he would have them prevent

their judgments by godly sorrow.

Obs. The truth is, this is the way to escape judgments, when we mourn

for them before they come. After great showers the air is clear. It is

better weep and howl in a way of duty, than in a way of judgment. There

will be weeping and howling hereafter, but it will be to no purpose.

`Cast him into utter darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of

teeth., But I rather look upon it as a threatening and denunciation of

judgment, than an advice or invitation to repentance. Partly because it

is usual with the prophets to utter their threatenings in an imperative

and commanding form, especially when they would note the sureness of

judgments, as if already come; as here, weep, howl. And the prophets do

so to check their present security and jollity to whom they speak. See

the 15th and 16th chapters of Isaiah, and Jer. xlviii. 36, &c. Partly

because our apostle seemeth to cut off all hope from them: `For the

miseries that shall come upon you,, not `lest miseries shall come upon

you,, Partly because his main drift is to speak to the poor Christians,

that they might be the more patient under the oppression of these great

men, by showing that their prosperity should not always last. Observe

hence:--

Obs. 1. That many that frolic away their days have more cause to weep

and howl. `Go to now,, &c., that is, you are merry and voluptuous, and

dream of nothing but golden days, without the least thought of the

miseries that are hastening upon you. After fine weather cometh a

storm, and when the wind is still, the great rain falleth. They that

were to go first into captivity had their merry banquets, Amos vi., the

first seven verses. Well, then, learn that they are not most happy who

have least trouble, but who have least cause.

Obs. 2. Again, you may observe from the pressing of the rich to howl,

and his endeavour to wean them from their jollity, `Go to now,, &c.,

that riches and outward enjoyments are a sorry ground of rejoicing.

This is a joy that may end in sorrow; the rich are called to howling.

When rich men are troubled, we ask what such a man should ail? The

barbarous Irish ask why they mean to die? But the judgment of God and

the world are contrary; `his thoughts are not as your thoughts,, Isa.

lv. 8. The world thinketh that none have more cause to rejoice, and God

that none have more cause to mourn. Well, then, look to the ground of

your rejoicing: Ps. xciv. 19, `In the midst of my sad thoughts thy

comforts delight my soul., Christians should look to the rise of their

contentment, and be sure their comforts be such as flow from God. What

a difference is there between David and the carnal fool in the Gospel!

David biddeth his soul be merry upon this ground, `God is the light of

thy countenance,, Ps. xlii. 5. And the fool saith, `Soul, eat, drink,

and be merry., Upon what ground?--`thou hast goods laid up for many

years,, Luke xii. 19.

Obs. 3. Again, from that weep and howl. Nothing but woe to them, as if

they were past hope and counsel, and only left to terror and

threatening. He had said, Go to now before to the ambitious

traffickers, James iv. 13, but he instructeth them, and only

threateneth these. Rich sinners are most incurable. [345] The reason

is, prosperity begetteth security: Hosea xii. 8, `And Ephraim said, I

am become rich, I have found me out substance; they shall find no

iniquity in me that were sin., Because they were rich, they were not

sensible of their civil crafts and subtleties. Besides, these are

seldom faithfully reproved; and when they are, are most unwilling to

bear a reproof; they storm at it, as if their greatness should bear

them out: Jer. v. 5, `I went to the great men, but they had dissolved

the bands, and wholly broken off the yoke., The meaning is, they had

cast off all manner of respect and subjection to the law of God. Well,

then, you that have great estates, beware of these two things--security

in sin, and storming at the reproofs of sin. Salvian, in his fourth

book `De Gubernatione Dei,, saith that he could not speak against the.

vices of great men, but one or other of them would be objecting, there

he meant me, he hit me; and so storm and fret. Alas! as he replieth, it

is not we speak to you, but your own consciences; we speak to the

order, but conscience speaketh to the person. [346]

For the miseries that shall come upon you, talaiporiais tais

upe`rchomenais.--But what are these? Partly sore afflictions in this

life, partly hell torments in the life to come; both may be understood.

(1.) The temporal miseries which lighted up Jerusalem, Christ foretold

them, Luke xix. 43, 44; and they came to pass about some forty years

after his ascension--see Josephus, lib. vi., vii.; as also the

calamities which everywhere attended the people of the Jews wherever

they were scattered, especially in Alexandria, a city in which the Jews

were two parts of five, [347] yet were they ransacked, and by the

command of Flaccus forced into a strait place of the city, without

sustenance, food, or fresh air, where they were not able to stir one

for another, and if any straggled abroad, they were knocked down and

slain; many were smoked and choked to death in a fire, where they

wanted fuel to burn them outright. Thirty-eight of their counsellors

and rich men were sent for, dragged through the streets, scourged to

death, &c. This may be intended in part. (2.) Hell torments, which are

indeed miseries to come; the other are but `the beginning of sorrows,

to what Dives or the rich man in the Gospel felt in the flames. See

Luke xvi. 24. From all observe:--

Obs. That sore miseries and judgments shall come upon wicked rich men:

`Howl, ye rich men, for the miseries,, &c. Thou shalt not be miserable

as a murderer or a fornicator (as Salvian glosseth), but as a rich man,

because thou hast ill used thy wealth, at least not employed it for

God,s glory. [348] See what a strain of threatenings there is against

rich men, Luke vi. 24, 25, `Woe unto rich men, for you have received

your consolation: woe unto you that are full, for you shall hunger: woe

unto you that laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep,, &c. So Isa. v.

8, `Woe to them that join house to house and field to field, that they

may be placed alone in the midst of the earth., It is notable that in

both these places words that do merely imply riches are used, though

the worldly man be in tended, that placeth all his delight, love, care,

confidence, and glory in his riches. To rich men much is committed;

they have more opportunities and obligations to do good than others,

and yet usually have least hearts, and therefore they are called to a

more severe account in this world and the world to come. Sometimes in

this world God reckoneth with them; in all changes rich men have the

greatest proportion of calamity. The winds shake the tallest cedars

most sorely. God loveth to bear down the strong oaks, Amos ii. 9. But

in the world to come they come sadly to know what it is to have a

portion only in this world. God will not give you a double heaven. Oh!

who would for a temporal heaven adventure an eternal hell! Oh! then, if

there be any worldly, wicked, rich man that heareth me this day, `Go to

now, weep and mourn for the calamities that are coming upon you., You

will say, We do no hurt with our wealth. Ay! but what good do you do?

`Your garments are moth-eaten,, and your money rusted; you are wretched

and worldly, negligent in religion, careless to lay out your substance

for good uses; and `to him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to

him it is sin., So also the poor may learn hence not to envy worldly

pomp and glory. A little with righteousness is a greater blessing, and

a pledge of more; all their great treasure bringeth but a trouble and a

curse. See Ps. xxxvii. 16, `A little that a righteous man hath is

better than the riches of many wicked., Your little may bring you more

comfort than if all their store were cast into one heap, and bestowed

upon you. So Prov. xv. 16, `Better is a little with the fear of the

Lord, than great treasure, and trouble therewith., These are principles

that are only relished by men of a mortified and contented mind.

Ver. 2, 3. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments moth-eaten.

Your gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall be a

witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have

heaped up treasure together for the last days.

Here the apostle cometh particularly to discover their sin, and the

reason of God,s judgment. The method is observable; he first

threateneth, and then cometh particularly to convince. Note hence:--

Obs. That every solemn threatening must be accompanied with sound

conviction. This headeth the arrow, and maketh it enter. Every woe must

have a for, Mat. xxiii., otherwise men will not care for terrible

words. Such brutish thunder becometh a Mahometan dervis, rather than a

preacher of the gospel. The success of our work dependeth upon

evidence, and `the demonstration of the Spirit,, 1 Cor. ii. 4.

Your riches are corrupted, your garments moth-eaten, your gold and

silver is cankered.--It is observable that he speaketh of all kinds of

wealth. `Your riches are corrupted;, that is, corn, and wine, and oil,

all things subject to corruption. `Your garments are moth-eaten;, that

is, silks, clothes, linens, and all such kinds of wares. Then, by the

`rust of gold and silver,, he intendeth the decay of all kinds of

metals. Now by these circumstances the apostle doth--(1.) Evince their

sin; that they would hoard up their goods and money, and suffer them to

be eaten up by moths and rust, and so to be corrupted or perish,

without any profit at all, rather than lay them out for good uses, the

supply of the poor, and public commodity. (2.) Up braid their folly;

that they were such fools to place their confidence in that which is of

so perishing and frail a nature as to be eaten out by rust and moths.

(3.) The apostle may produce these circumstances as the first pledges

of God,s displeasure against them, and the preface and introduction of

the curse upon their hoards and treasures, in that they were defaced or

destroyed by moths, wet, or rust. Out of the whole, observe:--

Obs. 1. That sordid sparing is a sure sign of a worldly heart.

Covetousness is all for keeping; as the fool in the Gospel talked of

`laying up in his barns,, Luke xii. 18. Those that are enamoured, will

not part with their pictures of desire, and let their darling go out of

sight; that which God would have communicated and laid out, they are

all for keeping and laying it up. God gave us wealth, not that we

should be hoarders, but dispensers. The noblest act of the creature is

communication to others, necessities; but a covetous man doth not

dispense to his own; a spiteful envy keepeth him from the supply of

others, and a carnal esteem from sparing to himself. Seneca calleth

covetous men chests. [349] We think them men, and they are but coffers;

who would envy a trunk well stored? Well, then, beware of `withholding

more than is meet,, Prov. xi. 24, of a delight in hoarding; it is a

sure note that the world has too much of your heart.

Obs. 2. Keeping things from public use till they be corrupted or

spoiled is sordid sparing. When you lay them not out upon God, or

others, or yourself, you are justly culpable. The word for money is

chrema, which signifieth use; you abuse it when you make it ktema, a

possession; then you were as good have so many stones as so many

treasures. It is against the ordination of God and the common good of

human societies. Scourge your souls with remorse for this baseness.

Your meat putrifieth when many a hungry belly wanteth it; your clothes

are eaten of moths, which would cover the nakedness of many a poor soul

in the world; your money rusteth, which should be laid out for public

defence. The inhabitants of Constantinople would afford no money to the

Emperor Constantinus Palaeologus when he begged from door to door for a

supply for the soldiers; but what was the issue? the barbarous enemy

won the city and got all. The like story there is of Musteatzem, [350]

the covetous caliph of Babylon, who was such an idolater of his wealth

and treasures that he would not dispend anything for the necessary

defence of his city, whereupon it was taken, and the caliph famished to

death, and his mouth, by Haalon, the Tartarian conqueror, filled with

melted gold.

Obs. 3. Covetousness bringeth God,s curse upon our estates. He sendeth

corruption, and the rust, and the moth. There is nothing gotten by

rapine or tenacity, by greedy getting, or close withholding. Not by

greedy getting; when men will snatch an estate out of the hands of

providence, no wonder if God snatch it away again; ill gains are

equivalent to losses: Micah vi. 10, `Are there yet the treasures of

wickedness in the house of the wicked?, that is, have they them still?

Not by undue withholding; it draweth man,s curse and God,s too upon us:

see Prov. xi. 26, `He that withholdeth corn, the poor shall curse him;

but blessing shall be upon the head of him that selleth it., God can

easily corrupt that which we will not bestow, and cause a worm to breed

in manna. Certainly there is a `withholding that tendeth to poverty,,

Prov. xi. 24. Well, then, learn the meaning of that gospel riddle, that

he that will save must lose, and the best way of bringing in is laying

out.

Obs. 4. There is corruption and decay upon the face of all created

glory. Riches corrupted, garments moth-eaten, gold and silver cankered.

It is madness to set up our rest in perishing things: Prov. xxiii. 5,

`Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not?, It is not only

against grace, but reason; confidence should have a sure and stable

ground. Well, then, take Christ,s advice, Mat, vi. 19, 20, `Lay not up

treasures upon earth, where moth and rust do corrupt,, &c. We are apt

to seek treasures here, but the moth and the rust checketh our vanity:

these are like treasures of snow, that melt in our fingers. So Luke

xii. 33, `Provide yourselves bags that wax not old, a treasure in the

heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, or moth

corrupteth., A man should look after a happiness that will last as long

as his soul lasteth. Why should we, that have souls that will not

perish, look after things that perish in the using? These things pass

away, and the lust of them also, 1 John ii. 17. Time will come, when

the world will not relish with us; when we are about to leave the

world, then we complain how it hath abused us.

Obs. 5. From the diversity of the terms, moth, corruption, canker, note

that God hath several ways wherewith to blast our carnal comforts.

Sometimes by the moth, sometimes by the thief, by rust or robbery; they

may either rot, or be taken from us. Well, then, let the greater awe be

impressed upon your thoughts. Usually we look no further than the

present likelihoods. Sometimes God can arm the fire, sometimes a great

wind, and anon the Sabeans: Job hath messenger upon messenger, chap. i.

There is nothing keepeth the heart so loose from earthly comforts as

the consideration of the several ways they may be taken from us: this

evinceth our near dependence upon God, and the absolute dominion of

providence.

And the rust of them shall be a witness against you.--It is usual in

scripture to ascribe a testimony to things inanimate against the

unthankful and wicked. As to the gospel: Mat. xxiv. 14, `For a witness

to them., The preaching of the word will be a witness that men had

warning enough. So to the dust of the apostles, feet: Mark vi. 11,

`Shake off the dust of your feet for a testimony against them;, that

is, it shall be clear that you are free of their blood; if there be no

other witnesses, this dust shall witness it So to the rust here, it

shall be a witness; that is, for the present it is an argument of

conviction that you had enough, though you would not lay it out; and

here after it shall be brought by the supreme judge as a circumstantial

evidence for your condemnation. Your own consciences, remembering the

moth and the rust, shall bring to remembrance your covetous hoarding.

Note hence:--

Obs. That in the day of judgment the least circumstances of our sinful

actions shall be brought forth as arguments of conviction. God cannot

want witnesses; the rusty iron, the cankered silver, the moth-eaten

clothes shall be produced; that is, by the recognition of our

consciences. So see Hab. ii. 11, `The stone shall cry out of the wall,

and the beam out of the timber shall answer it;, that is, the materials

of the house built up by oppression shall come as joint witnesses. The

stones of the wall shall cry, Lord, we were built up by rapine and

violence; and the beam shall answer, True, Lord; even so it is. The

stones shall cry, Vengeance, Lord, upon our ungodly owner; and the beam

shall answer, Woe to him, because he built his house with blood. The

circumstances of sin are as so many memorials to put us in mind of

guilt, and to put God in mind of vengeance. Well, then, think of these

things for the present; this rust may be produced against me, this pile

of building, these musty clothes in the wardrobe. Conscience is a

shrewd remembrancer; it writeth when it doth not speak. Many times for

the present it is silent, and seemeth to take no notice of those

circumstances of guilt; but they are all registered, and produced at

the last day; the very filth of thy fingers in telling money will be an

evidence that thou hast defiled thy soul with the love of it. And shall

eat your flesh as it were fire. Some interpret this of those anxious

and `piercing cares,, 1 Tim. vi. 9, wherewith covetous men cumber their

lives, and eat out the vigour of their own spirits; but with little

probability. They come much nearer to the scope of the apostle who

interpret this `eating as fire, of the means and cause of their ruin.

It is usual in scripture to compare the wrath of God to fire, whether

expressed by temporal judgments or eternal torments. See Ps. xxi. 9;

Isa. xxx. 27, and xxxiii. 11, `Your breath as fire shall devour you;,

so Mark ix. 44, `Their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be

quenched., Now the effects of wrath are also ascribed to the

meritorious cause of it; for what wrath is said to do, that sin is said

to do; as in the places cited, and here, the rust shall eat as fire;

that is, shall hasten the wrath of God, which shall burn as fire,

either in your temporal or eternal ruin. Possibly here may be some

latent allusion to the manner of Jerusalem,s ruin, in which many

thousands perished by fire, which was a pledge of the general judgment.

Observe hence:--

Obs. 1. That the matter of our sin shall in hell become the matter of

our punishment. The rust of hoarded treasures is not only witness, but

executioner. As it hath eaten out the silver, so it shall eat your

flesh, and gnaw upon your consciences. When you are burning in hell

flames, reflections upon the rust will be sad and horrible. The

vexation and anger at your past folly will heighten your present

sufferings. Conscience and a sense of the wrath of God are a great part

of that fire which burneth souls; [351] and the outward pains are much

in creased by remembering the past circumstances of sin; the revenging

image and representation of them always runneth in the thoughts, and

their flesh is eaten, but not consumed. [352] Oh! consider of it; the

rust that eateth out the money is but a pledge of those devouring

torments. It will be sad to think hereafter that so much money as you

hoarded up, so much fire you kept in your chests to your own eternal

ruin. It is a part of heaven,s happiness to `know as we are known;,

that is, to look back upon the circumstances of our past lives, and to

see what we were enabled to do by the care and help of grace. And so it

is a part of hell,s torment to review the passages of a sinful life,

and with horror and a despairing remorse to look back upon the known

evidences and circumstances of their own guilt. Their present delights

prove their future torments.

Obs. 2. Observe, again, the misery of covetousness here and here after.

Now it burneth the soul with desires and cares, and hereafter with

despair and remorse of conscience. Here pierced with thorns, and there

scorched with fires. Oh! what a hard service have these drudges of

Satan! Care for the present, and horror hereafter! They labour and

toil, and all that they may go to hell with just nothing. What do you

gain by Satan? Every sinner is first taken in his snares, and then

bound in chains of darkness; but you, above all others, be gin your

hell by eating out all your quiet with carking care, that you may

eternally undo your souls with the more pains.

Ye have heaped treasure for the last days.--This clause hath under gone

several constructions. Some by `the last days, understand the latter

part of their lives, as if the apostle in this expression did tax that

carnal distrust whereby covetous men think they shall never have enough

to suffice their needy old age. Such kind of men are always distrustful

of future events, and carking for the morrow: what shall become of them

and their children, and how they shall live when they are old--a sinful

anxiety, however veiled under the appearance of necessity. God gave the

Israelites manna but for one day, and our Lord taught us to pray for

`daily bread., Every day,s trouble is ordained by God for our exercise,

and is enough to take up our thoughts. We do but anticipate our cares,

and create a needless distraction to ourselves, by carking for the last

days; and yet usually this disposition increaseth with age, and the

older men grow, the more solicitous about worldly provisions. [353]

Thus some explain the apostle, but with little reason; for it is not a

description, but a threatening; and the apostle is not now intimating

their disposition, but their judgment and ruin. Others expound the

clause of treasuring and storing up wrath against the day of judgment,

as the apostle Paul useth such another phrase, Rom. ii. 5. Calvin

inclineth to this sense, because of the former expression, `shall eat

your flesh as fire., And, indeed, some translations (as the Syriac and

Arabic) read that clause `as fire `with this last sentence, `You have

treasured up riches as it were fire for the last days;, that is, as

Diodati expoundeth it, whereas you thought to lay up treasures for time

to come, you shall in effect find that you have laid up God,s wrath. I

confess this is probable, because of the particular allusion to their

hoarding, and because of the known resemblance between wrath `and a

treasure. It is long a-gathering, but every day the sum increaseth; and

the longer it is ere it be opened, the greater the heap. As Jehoiada,s

chest, which was not to be opened till the sum was considerable, so it

is here. God,s wrath increaseth by degrees, the slower always the more

sharp in the issue, so that it is some kind of mercy to meet with a

sudden punishment, [354] and to have our worldly practices checked with

an early disappointment, lest wrath grow r with our estates, and we do

not treasure up money so much as judgments, which will be a sad gain

when the chest of God,s patience is broken open. See Job xxvii. 8, and

Prov. xi. 4. It were far better to scatter than to increase such a

heap, as those that fly in battle scatter their wealth that they may

not be pursued. God gave us riches as a means to escape wrath, by a

liberal and charitable distribution of them to his own glory. Certainly

we should not use them as a means to treasure up wrath. Thus you see

the words may be fitly accommodated with this sense. But I rather

prefer a third, because there is no cogent reason why we should take

this ethesauri'sate, `ye have heaped treasures,, in a metaphorical

sense, especially since, with good leave from the context, scope of the

apostle, and the state of those times, the literal may be retained. I

should therefore simply understand the words as an intimation of their

approaching judgments; and so the apostle seemeth to me to tax their

vanity in hoarding and heaping up wealth, when those scattering and

fatal days to the Jewish commonwealth were even ready to overtake them.

All that treasure which, with such wrong to others, hazard of their own

contentment, and violation of their consciences, they had heaped up

together, was but heaped up for the spoiler and the violence of the

last days. From whence we may observe:--

Obs. That usually men are most secure and carnal before their own

judgment and ruin. What wretched men were here fallen upon the lot of

the last days! Usually thus it is, men are most full of carnal projects

when God is about to break down and pluck up: Jer. xlv. 5, `Seekest

thou great things for thyself? seek them not; for I will bring evil

upon all flesh, saith the Lord., Foolish men are like a company of

ants, storing their nests when their hill or burrow is like to be

turned up; and there is never more general security than when judgments

are at hand. A little before the flood, `they ate, they drank, they

married wives, and were given in marriage, and then the flood came, and

destroyed them all,, Luke xvii. 27. And the same is observed of Sodom:

`They bought, they sold, they builded, they planted,, &c., ver. 28.

When men generally apply themselves to worldly business, it is a sad

prognostic; they do but bring forth for the murderer, and heap up for

the plunderer: 1 Thes. v. 3, `When they shall say, Peace and safety,

then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with

child, and they shall not escape., When security runneth not, and is

like to degenerate into utter contempt of God, men are not likely to

profit by the word, therefore God taketh the rod in hand, that, by the

severity of discipline, he may teach men that which they would not

learn by kinder and milder persuasions. Plethoric bodies must have

their veins opened. And when a people are grown to such a wanton

fulness, God will send `the emptiers to empty them,, Nahum ii. 2.

Ver. 4. Behold, the hire of your labourers which have reaped down your

fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of

them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of

Sabaoth.

Here is another argument of conviction produced, viz., the oppression

of their servants and labourers, in defrauding them of their reward; a

sin so injurious, and of such a heinous quality, that it crieth to God

for vengeance. The phrases will be opened in the points. Observe--

Obs. 1. From the context, that there is no sin so heinous and base but

covetousness may be a mother or a nurse to it. What more sordid than

for a rich man to detain the labourer,s wages? It was base to hoard up

their own treasures till corrupted with moth or rust; but a practice

most accursed, after they had sucked out the strength and sweat of the

labourer, to deprive him of his reward. Yet usually thus it is, men

that do not part with their own right will not make conscience of

invading another,s. [355] First men are sparing, and then injurious.

Detest this sin with the more aversion, you know not how far it will

carry you; the apostle saith, it is `the root of all evil,, 1 Tim. vi.

10.

Obs. 2, From that crieth. Some sins are crying, and do more especially

require vengeance at the hands of God. This crying is applied to blood,

Gen. iv. 10, `Thy brother,s blood crieth;, not his soul, but his blood.

So to the wickedness of Sodom, Gen. xviii. 20, `The cry of Sodom and

Gomorrah is great, because their sin is grievous., So to oppression of

God,s servants; they are dear to him: Exod. ii. 24, and iii. 9, `God

heard their groaning,, and `the cry of the children of Israel is come

up unto me., So to oppression of the widows and fatherless: Exod. xxii.

23, `If thou afflict the widow and the fatherless, and they cry unto

me, I will surely hear their cry., So ver. 27, to taking the

neighbour,s necessary garment to pledge, `I will hear his cry, for I am

gracious., In short, all sins that disturb human society, that are

committed with impudence and public liberty, that are of so heinous

nature that God in honour is bound as it were to mark them out with

some severe stroke of vengeance, that are neglected by men because of

the power and greatness of those that commit them, or else done in

secret, and so past human cognisance, as Cain,s murdering of Abel; so

all sins which are past the help of the oppressed, all such sins are

said to cry; not that God wanteth evidence, or that his justice needeth

excitation, but because some of these sins do even dare vengeance, and

provoke divine justice to take notice of them; and in other of these

sins God is appealed to by the oppressed as witness and avenger, human

justice wanting will, or power, or fit means of conviction to proceed

against them. Besides, this crying in some cases showeth the

unwillingness of God to punish, till he be solicited and urged

thereunto by the importunity and provocation of our own sins. [356]

Obs. 3. As all oppression crieth to God, so especially the oppression

of poor servants, and those that live by handy labour. It is twice

repeated in the text, `which have reaped your fields,, and then, again,

`the cry of them which have reaped., And the reason is, because it is

their life, and so an act of the greatest unmercifulness; and besides,

you disappoint them of the solace of their labours. See Deut. xxiv. 15,

`He hath set his heart upon it;, this is, that he reckoneth upon his

wages at the end of the day. But you will say, How many ways may we

oppress the poor labourer? I answer--(1.) When through greatness you

challenge their labours without reward, as the gentry use the peasants

of many countries: Jer. xxii. 13, `Woe be to him that useth his

neighbour without wages;, meaning Jehoiakim, who, in his pompous

buildings used his subjects, labour without hire. (2.) When you give

them not a proportionate hire, working upon their necessities, for then

a great part of their labour is without reward; and it is flat

covetousness to `exact all your labours,, Isa. lviii. 3, when your

reward is scanty and short. (3.) When by cunning ye defraud them of

their reward, either through bad payment or crafty cavils. The Lord

saith, Mal. iii. 5, `I will be a swift witness against those that

oppress the hireling in his wages., So it is in the text, `by fraud

kept back., God knoweth what is oppression, though veiled under crafty

pretences. (4.) When you diminish or change their wages; as it is said

of Laban that he changed Jacob,s wages ten times, Gen. xxxi. 41. (5.)

When you delay payment. God commanded the Jews to do it before sunset:

see Deut. xxiv. 14, 15; Lev. xix. 30. It is a maxim of the law, minus

solvit, qui minus tempore solvit--that not to pay it at the time is to

pay the less, because of the advantage of improvement; and in the text

it is said, `kept back by fraud;, though not wholly taken away, yet

`kept back, entitled them to sin. The Lord, you know, rewardeth his

servants ere they have done their work; we have much of our wages

aforehand, &c.

Obs. 4. Though the poor should not cry, the very hire and money would

cry, and require vengeance against oppressors. The apostle saith, not

only the reapers cry, but the hire crieth. So see Job xxxi. 38-40, `If

my land cry against me, and the furrows thereof likewise complain; if I

have eaten the fruits thereof without money, or have caused the owners

thereof to lose their life,, &c. God cannot want witnesses against

cruelty; the hire shall cry, the poor shall cry, the beam and the stone

out of the wall shall cry, Hab. ii.; the very affliction shall cry. It

is said, Gen. xvi. 11, he heard Hagar,s affliction when Sarah had used

her harshly and imperiously. So the church saith, Lam. ii. 18, `The

apple of mine eye shall not keep silence., Their groans clamour, and

their tears have a loud voice. Oh! then, consider this, secret wrongs

will be known to God. The children of God may not know who harmed them;

wicked men act at a distance, like a spider, when she hath weaved a

net, goeth out of the way: but yet the Lord knoweth; their very

afflictions will cry against you when they know not against whom to

cry.

Obs. 5. From that, the Lord of Sabaoth; that is, the Lord of hosts, a

name often used in the prophetical books, but most commonly in Isaiah

and Zechariah; it is not usual in the New Testament, God,s titles being

there fuller of sweetness and grace; and the reason why it was so much

used then was because the people of God were in great misery, needed

much defence and protection, and were in danger to let fall their hopes

out of fear of men. It was a name of God, so commonly known and used,

that the Septuagint retained the Hebrew term by which it was expressed.

And so, also, it is kept in the New Testament, ku'rios Sabao`Th, as by

Paul, Rom. ix. 27, and by James in this place; not religiously, out of

any mystery in the syllables, as Jerome supposeth, but because this

appellation of God was so familiar among the Jews, and so easily known

to the nations that conversed with them. Now, the Lord is called the

Lord of Sabaoth, or Lord of hosts, because all his creatures are ranked

in such an order that they are always ready to serve and accomplish his

will. The note is, that the Lord is a Lord of hosts, commander-in-chief

of all the creatures, angels, men, thunders, lightnings, storms,

showers, lions, fevers, &c.; they are all at his beck, waiting for his

word: `He can send lightnings, that they may go; they say unto him,

Here we are,, Job xxxviii. 35; that is, Lord, Whither shall we go? here

we are, ready to fulfil thy word. It were easy to expatiate in so

copious an argument; but because it hath been handled by others, [357]

I shall but touch upon things. God,s command reacheth from the highest

angel to the lowest creatures. The angels are principally called God,s

host; see 1 Kings xxii. 9; Luke ii. 14. And of what power are they,

since one angel destroyed in a night a hundred fourscore and five

thousand, 2 Kings xix, 35. Then the heavens are intended: Isa. xxxiv.

9, `All the hosts of the stars shall be dissolved., That which Peter

calleth stoicheia, the elements, the prophet calleth the hosts. So it

is said, Judges v. 20, `The stars in their courses fought against

Sisera;, that is, by their influence and efficacy upon the clouds and

meteors. For Josephus, speaking of that battle, saith [358] that there

suddenly fell a storm mixed with hail, which the wind drove against the

faces of the Canaanites, and took away their sight, and benumbed their

hands, that they could not hold their targets, or fling their darts;

but beating upon the backs of the Israelites, it emboldened them the

more. So, also, men are called God,s hosts; as Israel, Exod. xii. 41;

and it is said, `He mustereth the host of the battle,, Isa. xiii. 9.

Nay, lower creatures, locusts, are called God,s army, Joel ii.; and God

is said to reserve the snow and hail against the day of battle, Job

xxxviii. 22, 23. Against Egypt he sent armies of frogs, and lice, and

flies; against the idolatrous people armies of lions, 2 Kings xvii.

Nay, God can arm the humours of thy body against thee, cause thine own

passions and thoughts to fall upon thee like so many armed men. He

needeth no forces from without; there is enough to overwhelm man in the

reflections of his own conscience. Oh! then, do not contend with him

that can command legions, and draw omnipotency about thy ears: `shall

the potsherds of the earth strive with the Lord of hosts?, Isa. xlv. 9.

Oh! how sad is it, that when all the creatures serve God, your hearts

only should war against him! that the Lord of hosts should not be lord

of your souls!

Obs. 6. From that their cries are come into the ears of the Lord of

hosts; that is, he hath taken notice of their wrong, and will take care

to avenge their quarrel. The note is, that the Lord of hosts is the

poor,s avenger; the God of angels and thunders is the God that

comforteth them are cast down. You may be high and rich in the world,

able to contest with poor creatures and crush them; but can you contend

with the Almighty? Oh! take heed of wronging the poorest servants of

God. Christ speaketh of offending his little ones. Mat. xviii. 10; as

little as they are, they have a great champion. The worm Jacob is

looked after by the Lord of hosts. So the poor, the servant, the widow,

the fatherless, they are called his people, as belonging chiefly to his

care: `They eat up my people as bread., Take heed what you do; your

poor servants have a master in heaven that will call you to an account.

Jerusalem is threatened with captivity for their breach of covenant and

unkindness to their servants, Jer. xxxiv. 11; therefore defraud them

not, leave them not shiftless. God will visit this sin upon many

gentlemen who turn off their old servants shift less and helpless, and

have more care of their dogs than of them. Oh! see what an avenger they

have, one that is powerful enough. A good man should have a care of his

beast, Prov. xii. 10, much more of his servants.

Ver. 5. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye

have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.

The apostle instanceth in another discovery of the wicked abuse of

their riches, and that is sensual or delicate living. In matter of

charity, or giving the poor their due, they were sparing and tenacious

enough, but did easily and largely lavish out their substance upon

pleasures and the gratifications of the flesh; like that epicure in the

Gospel, that fared deliciously every day, but denied a crumb to Lazarus

the beggar, Luke xvi. 19. Thus lusts, though they dispute every inch

with grace, do easily give way to succeeding corruptions.

Ye have lived in pleasure.--The word signifieth indulging the deli

cacies and delights of the senses, in meats, drinks, and apparel.

Obs. 1. A sin very natural to us. There were but two common parents of

all mankind, Adam the protoplast, and Noah the restorer, and both

miscarried by appetite; the one fell by eating, and the other by

drinking. We had need be careful. Christ saith, `Take heed of

surfeiting and drunkenness, to his own disciples, Luke xxi. 34.

Obs. 2. The sin is natural to all, but chiefly incident to the rich.

There is, I confess, a difference in tempers; wealth maketh some

covetous, and others prodigal, but the usual sin in the rich is luxury.

Pride, idleness, and fulness of bread were the sins of Sodom, and they

are usually found in great men,s houses; they should be the more wary.

Obs. 3. Though delicate living be a sin incident to wealthy men, yet

their abundance doth not excuse it. It is charged upon the rich man in

the Gospel that he fared deliciously every day, Luke xvi. God gave

wealth for another purpose than to spend it in pleasures. It is

prodigious in poor men to guzzle and drink away their days which should

be spent in honest labour; but it is not excusable in the rich; though

God alloweth them to live more liberally according to their condition

and estate, yet not inordinately. Intemperance is odious to God, be it

in any whatsoever they be. God threatened them for their delicacy that

had beds of ivory, Amos vi. 4; so also the fat cows and kine of Bashan,

Amos iv.

Obs. 4. Luxury is living in pleasure, etruphe'sate. God alloweth us to

use pleasures, but not to live in them; to take delights, but not they

should take us; to live always at the full is but a wanton luxury.

On earth; that is, say some, like beasts, which do prona spectare

terram, in the posture of their bodies look earthward; it is indeed

their happiness to live in pleasure, to enjoy pleasures without

remorse. But in any congruity of language you cannot thus interpret the

apostle,s speech. His meaning is, that in this earthly life they placed

all their happiness, and their spirits did altogether run after earthly

comforts and earthly contentments, as having no higher abode. Note:--

Obs. That all the pleasure that wicked men have is upon earth; here,

and nowhere else: Luke xvi. 25, `Remember that in thy life time thou

receivedst thy good things., Oh! it is sad to outlive our happiness;

when we come to live indeed, then to want our comforts and joys: Mat.

vi. 2, `They have their reward., Your heaven is past. It is the folly

of worldly men to be merry only in the place of their banishment and

pilgrimage; they live in pleasure here, where they are absent from God:

Job xxi. 13, `They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down

to the grave., Alas! then their best days are past; here they laugh,

and there they howl. Ah, fondness! to sell the birthright for a mess of

pottage, and let go heaven for a little earthly contentment! How should

this sour your carnal joys, when you remember all this is only upon

earth, it cannot be for ever! There will be a time when we shall go

down to the grave, and then we may with Adrian sadly warble it out to

our own souls, Oh! poor soul, whither dost thou now go? thou shalt

never jest it more, sport it more! [359] These things were upon earth,

but into what a gulf am I now falling! The earth is a place of labour

and exercise; we were not put into it, as leviathan into the sea, to

take our fill of pleasure.

And are wanton, espatalesate.--The same word is used of the carnal

widow, he de spatalosa zosa tethneke, 1 Tim. v. 6. We translate, `she

that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth., The word signifieth

such a delicacy as bringeth a brawn softness and deadness upon the

spirit, and therefore we translate it well by wanton. So that this part

of the charge implieth:--

Obs. 1. That luxury is always accompanied with carnal security and

contempt of God: Deut. xxxii. 15, Israel waxed fat, and kicked with the

heel: Hosea xiii. 6, `According to their pasture, so were they filled;

they were filled, and their heart is exalted; they have forgotten me.,

Through too much fatness and plenty the soul becometh wanton and

untamed.

Obs. 2. That a fulness of pleasures bringeth us to a wantonness, and

contempt of ordinary provisions. Lustful Israel desired quails. First

we contemn God, and then his creatures. It is a great sign sensuality

hath prevailed upon you when the soul desireth dainty food. Nature

itself is not wanton and delicate till it be made so by constant use.

It is strange to see how nature degenerateth by degrees, and desires

increase with use. At first we are pleased with what is plain and

wholesome, but afterwards we must have curious mixtures. Sea and land

will scarce yield bits dainty enough for a gluttonous appetite.

Cleopatra must have a draught of dissolved pearls, &c.

Ye have nourished your hearts.--What is that? Indulgere genio, to rear

up lust, rather than to satisfy nature. It is the same which the

apostle Paul expresseth by poiountes prono'ian, `making provision for

the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof,, Rom. xiii. 14. The heart is the

seat of lusts and desires; so it chiefly signifieth in theology. Now to

nourish the heart is to offer fuel to our lusts, to take in by excess

that we may unlade and put it out again in lust. Observe hence:--

Obs. Pleasures nourish the heart, and fatten it into a senseless

stupidity: nothing bringeth a dulness upon it more than they. Plutarch

observeth of the ass, which is of all creatures the dullest, that it

hath the fattest heart. Thence that expression in scripture, `Go make

their hearts fat;, that is, gross and dull. There is a fish which they

call o'nos, the ass-fish, which hath its heart in its belly; a fit

emblem of a sensual epicure. The heart is never more dull and unfit for

the severities and masculine heights of religion than when burdened

with luxurious excess; therefore Christ useth that expression, Luke

xxi. 36, `Let not your hearts be overcharged,, &c. Ah! do but consider

how many reasons we have to be wary in our pleasures. Will the in

conveniences they bring to your estates move you? Prov. xxiii. 21, `He

that loveth corn, and wine, and oil, shall be poor., How often hath the

belly brought the back to rags? Or will the mischiefs they bring upon

the body move you? Lust, which is but the last end and consummation of

all pleasures, sucketh the bones, and, like a cannibal, eateth your own

flesh, Prov. v. 11. Ah! but chiefly think of the inconveniency which

your precious souls sustain; your hearts will be nourished and

fattened. Pleasure infatuateth the mind, quencheth the radiancy and

vigour of the spirit: wine and women take away the heart, Hosea iv. 11;

that is, the generous sprightliness of the affections. So the apostle

speaketh of persons given to pleasures, that they are past feeling,

Eph. iv.; they have lost all the smartness and tenderness of their

spirits. Oh! that men would regard this, and take heed of nourishing

their hearts while they nourish their bodies. You should starve lust

when you feed nature; or, as Austin, [360] come to your meat as your

medicine, and use these outward refreshments as remedies to cure

infirmities, not to cause them; or, as Bernard, [361] refresh the soul

when you feed the body, and by Christian meditations on God,s bounty,

Christ,s sweetness, the fatness of God,s house, &c., keep the heart

from being nourished whenever you repair nature.

As in a day of slaughter, en eme'ra sphages.--Some say, as Brixianus,

that the meaning is, they did but fatten themselves for the slaughter;

but that is forced. Beza rendereth, as in a day of feast, which

Heinsius taxeth with some undue rigour. Certainly there is an allusion

to the solemn festivals of the Jews. Their thanksgiving-days were

called days of slaughter, wherein many beasts were killed for sacrifice

and food; for, in thank-offerings, a great part was reserved for the

use of the worshipper: Lev. ii. 15, they were to carry it home and to

eat it with their friends. Thence that expression, Prov. xvii. 1,

`Better is a dry morsel, than an house full of sacrifices with strife;,

that is, of good cheer, as was usual in the time of peace or

thank-offering. So also that other, Prov. vii. 14, `I have

peace-offerings with me this day;, that is, the flesh of

thank-offerings, wherewith to feast and entertain thee. Now the fault

wherewith these sensualists are charged, is double:--

1. That they made every day festival.

Obs. It is a wanton luxury to make every day a day of slaughter: Luke

xvi., `He fared deliciously every day;, that is an aggravation, that he

made it his constant practise. Some men do nothing but knit pleasure to

pleasure; their lives are nothing else but a diversion from one carnal

pleasure to another: Eccles. iii., `There is a time to feast and a time

to mourn., Such men disturb the order of seasons. Nature is relieved

with changes, but clogged with continuance; frequency of pleasures

begetteth a habit; and besides, this putteth men upon novel

curiosities, when ordinary pleasures by common use grow stale; pleasure

itself must have pleasure to refresh it, accustomed delights becoming

our clog and burden.

2. That they gave that to their lusts which was due only upon special

occasions to religion.

Obs. Usually this is the vanity of men, to bestow the allotments of

worship upon their lusts, and by a cursed sacrilege to serve god the

belly, Phil. iii. 19, as zeal serveth the great God of heaven and

earth. No music will serve the epicures in the prophet but temple

music: Amos vi. 5, `They invent to themselves instruments of music like

David., As choice and excellent as .David was in the service of the

temple, so would they be in their private feasts. Belshazzar,s draughts

are not half so sweet in other vessels as in the utensils of the

temple: Dan. v. 2, `He commanded to bring forth the golden and silver

vessels, that were taken out of the house of God., So the Babylonian

humour is pleased with nothing so much as with one of the songs of

Zion; not an ordinary song, but `Sing us one of your songs of Zion,,

Ps. cxxxvii. 3. No jest relisheth with a profane spirit so well as when

scripture is abused, and made to lackey upon their sportive jollity.

Vain man thinketh he can never put honour enough upon his pleasures,

and scorn enough upon God and holy things.

Ver. 6. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist

you.

The apostle cometh now to another sin, and that is tyrannous and

oppressing cruelty, which is also an effect of riches, where there is

no grace to sanctify the enjoyment of them. From the context observe:--

Obs. That plenty begetteth injury; and when all things are possible,

men think all things lawful. Rich and great men, if they be higher than

others, do not think of him that is higher than they: Eccles. v. 8, `If

there be oppression of the poor, marvel not at the matter; for he that

is higher than the highest regardeth, and there be higher than they.,

Ye have condemned.--The apostle now instanceth in their cruelty and

oppression, masked with a pretence and colour of law. Before they would

kill, there was some form of a legal process; they condemned. Note

hence:--

Obs. That God taketh notice of the injuries done to his people under

the form of a legal procedure; not only of open violence, but that

which is closely managed: Ps. xciv. 20, `Shall the throne of wickedness

have fellowship with thee, which frameth wickedness by a law?, God

taketh it more heinously when public authority, which is the defence of

innocency, is made the pretence of oppression. Many make conscience of

forms of law, that do not make conscience of oppressing the godly. See

Mat. xxvii. 6, `It is not lawful to put the price of blood into the

treasury;, yet it was lawful to spill the blood of Christ in their

account.

Again, the apostle saith, Ye have condemned, and so ye have killed;

they did but procure it by their authority and wealth, corrupting

judgment, and using evil arts to destroy the just. Note:--

Obs. That any concurrence to the destruction of the innocent bringeth

us under the guilt of their blood; and sins committed by our

instigation become ours by just imputation. Christ was put to death by

authority of the Roman empire, and executed by the Roman soldiers; yet

it is charged upon the Jews, upon the whole nation, because done by

their instigation and connivance: as Acts ii. 23, `Whom by wicked hands

ye have taken and slain;, and ver. 36, `This is Jesus whom you have

crucified;, so 1 Thes. ii. 15, `They killed the Lord Jesus., Do not

flatter thyself because thou art not the immediate executioner. Jezebel

was punished for Naboth,s death, though the judges and false witnesses

were the next agents, 1 Kings xiii. 23. Beware how you provoke others

to blood; the guilt will fall upon your own consciences: God looketh

upon the instigators as the principals: `Ahab did evil in the sight of

the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife provoked,, 1 Kings xxi. 25. It was a

sorry answer that of the priests to Judas, `See thou to it,, Mat.

xxvii. 4: they had need see to it too, since it was by their plot and

conspiracy.

And killed.--This is added to show that oppression will proceed as far

as death; wickedness knoweth no bounds and limits; as also to show the

reason why miseries were coming upon them. Note:--

Obs. When oppression goeth as far as blood, God will surely take

vengeance. `He maketh inquisition for blood,, Ps. ix.; and blood is one

of the crying sins, Gen. iv. 10. The blood of an ordinary man crieth

for vengeance; as that of the Gibeonites that were of the race of

Canaan; therefore is that clause interserted, 2 Sam. xxi. 2, `Now the

Gibeonites were not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of

the Amorites., Much more the blood of the saints, which is precious in

God,s eyes; much more the blood of Christ, which is the case here.

The just, to`n di'kaion.--It may be put indefinitely for any just

person; as Isa. lvii. 1, `The righteous perish,, &c. But because the

apostle speaketh in the singular number, and with an article, therefore

some understand it of John the Baptist; others of Stephen, with more

probability, whom the Jews stoned; others, with most probability, of

our Lord Jesus Christ. Because I strongly incline to this, I shall

produce my reasons:--(1.) Jesus Christ is elsewhere by way of emphasis

called `that Just One., to`n di'kaion, Acts xxii. 14. (2.) There

seemeth to be a direct parallel place to this, Acts iii. 14, `But ye

denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted

unto you,, (3.) This was the great reason and cause of judgments on the

Jews, 1 Thes. ii. 15, 16, which is the scope and argument of this

place; and indeed the text runneth that way most fluently. (4.) The

illation of the next verse, or persuasion to patient hope, doth most

sweetly arise from this consideration; the former part of the verse

holding forth their injury, and so the cause of their ruin, which is

the argument of hope the apostle propoundeth; and the latter part

Christ,s patience, the great example and pattern of ours. I know the

great prejudice against this exposition is, because all this is

supposed to be spoken to Christian Jews; but that we disproved in the

first verse. Neither is that exception of Brochmand of any weight, how

this could be charged upon these sensual rich men, since they that

condemned and killed Christ, and the main promoters of his sufferings,

were the Pharisees and chief priests, dissembling hypocrites, since the

guilt lay upon the whole nation, and they had taken the curse of his

blood upon themselves and their children; and therefore the apostle,

assigning the cause of approaching judgments, might well say to these,

Ye have killed. Neither let it seem strange to any that the apostle

doth not call Christ Lord or Saviour, since he speaketh to unconverted

Jews; and the fittest medium of conviction he could use to them is that

of his righteousness or innocency, as also Peter and John do, Acts iii.

14, `That just and holy one;, for those that would not acknowledge him

a Saviour, by a plain evidence of his life might acknowledge him a just

person, as Pilate,s wife doth, Mat. xxvii. 19, `Have nothing to do with

that just person., However, lest the exposition should seem too

critical, I shall carry the observations both ways.

Obs. 1. If you take the expression generally, as noting any just

person, you may observe that innocency itself cannot escape the pangs

of oppression. The just was condemned and killed; so the scripture

speaketh of the blood of righteous Abel, Mat. xxiii. 35. Men hate what

they will not imitate; and it is God,s wisdom that the worst should

hate the best, lest the world should judge perversely of their

sufferings: Ps. xciv. 21, `They gather themselves against the soul of

the righteous, and condemn innocent blood., Thus it hath been, is, and

will be. Gregory saith, I would suspect him not to be Abel that hath

not a Cain.

Obs. 2. If you understand it particularly of Christ, the note is, that

Christ died not as a malefactor, but as a just person. There were

several circumstances that did evince his innocency--the disagreeing of

the witnesses, Pilate,s wife,s letter, Pilate,s own acknowledgment,

Judas,s confession. Certainly he died not for his own sins, but ours:

`The just for the unjust,, 1 Peter iii. 18. Our sacrifice was a lamb

without spot and blemish. It is true he loved our justification better

than his own reputation; and therefore, when his innocency was taxed,

he would not answer a word.

And he resisteth not.--The present tense is put for the past. If you

understand it generally, it is to be understood of the weakness and

meekness of innocent men.

1. Of their weakness; they are not able to withstand, and therefore you

oppress them.

Obs. 1. Weakness is usually oppressed. Men are the more bold with them

that want means of defence and resistance. Oh! but consider, the less

outward defence men have, the more is the Lord of hosts engaged in

their quarrel; he is the patron of the fatherless and widows: Ps. x.

14, `The poor committeth himself to thee; thou art the helper of the

fatherless., Weak innocency hath a strong avenger.

2. Of their meekness; it is their duty not to be revengeful: Mat. v.

39, `But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil;, they must not

satisfy and accomplish their own private revenges.

Obs. 2. Meekness inviteth injury, but always to its own cost. It is

true that of Publius Mimus, though spoken to an ill end, Veterem

ferendo injuriam invitas novam--by bearing a former injury you do but

invite a second. Patience may be trampled upon, but God will ordain a

defence. Wicked men are mad without a provocation. You have seen crows

on a sheep,s back picking wool; it is but an emblem of oppressed

innocence. Wicked men do not consider who deserve worst, but who will

suffer most.

Obs. 3. If you understand it of Christ, so it is most true; he

resisteth not. Jesus Christ was condemned and slain without resistance.

He came to suffer, and therefore would not resist. He would declare his

obedience to his Father by his patience before men: Isa. liii. 7, `He

came as a lamb to the slaughter, as a sheep before the shearers is

dumb., Swine will howl, but the sheep is dumb in the butcher,s hands:

Isa. l. 6, `I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that

plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting.,

Christ did as it were offer himself to the affronts and indignities

done to his person: Father, since it is thy pleasure, here is a back

for smiters, here are cheeks for the nippers, here is a face for shame;

lo! I come to do all thy will. Well, then, we have a lucky sacrifice,

that did not struggle, but came to the altar willingly. It is notable

that Christ doth with the same severity check the devil tempting him to

idolatry, and Peter dissuading him from suffering. It is spoken to

both, `Get thee behind me, Satan;, compare Mat. iv. 10 with xvi. 23.

When he was to suffer, he forbiddeth the pious women to weep, Luke

xxiii. Being about to wipe away all tears by the benefit of his cross,

he would have none shed to hinder him from it. Thus our Saviour

resisted not; sibi soli injuriosus fuit, saith Tertullian--all the

injury he did was to himself. Ah! who would not be willing to do for

him that was willing to die for us? He struggled not when he was going

to the cross, and why do we struggle and find such reluctations when we

are going to the throne of grace? Shall we be more unwilling to pray

than Christ was to suffer? &c.

Ver. 7. Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord.

Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and

hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

He now diverteth from the rich oppressors unto the poor faithful

brethren that were oppressed; by the illative particle, therefore, we

may see the former paragraph was for their sakes. The rich men shall be

punished for their wickedness and oppression, therefore be you patient.

Be patient, therefore, brethren, makrothume'sate. The word is put for

long-suffering, and so usually translated, which is a further degree of

patience; for patience is a sense of afflictions without murmuring, and

of injuries without revenge. Now long-suffering is patience extended

and lengthened out to that which our apostle calleth its perfect work.

Observe:--

Obs. It is the duty of the children of God to be patient under their

sufferings, though they be long and sharp. It is easier in a calm and

sedate condition to discourse of patience than to exercise it in time

of trial. Philosophers have discoursed of it and commended it; but

Christians themselves have staggered when they have been exercised with

a sharp sense of evils. When God giveth up his people to the lust of

adversaries, then it is sad, and we are apt to murmur; and yet the

apostle saith we should suffer with a long patience. I shall spare

motives, and a little show you what Christian patience is. It differeth

from security and stoical insensibleness; there can be no patience

where there is no sense of evil. Christianity doth not abrogate

affections, but regulate them. Carnal men put off that which they

cannot put away, and are not patient, but stupid and careless. There

are other remedies in Christianity than quenching our sorrows in the

wine of pleasures. Again, it differeth from moral patience, which is

nothing but a yielding to necessity, and is usually accompanied with

vain thoughts, Jer. iv. 14, and carnal workings of spirit. When God

layeth on crosses, men please themselves with suppositions of worldly

profit, and how their present condition may conduce to secular

advancement; as when God taketh away wife or children, men do not think

of submission to the hand of God, but the capacity of augmenting their

worldly estate, &c. In short, Christian patience supposeth a sense of

evil, and then, in the formality of it, it is a submission of the whole

soul to the will of God: wherein observe--(1.) The nature; it is a

submission of the whole soul. The judgment subscribeth, `Good is the

word of the Lord,, &c., Isa. xxxix. 9. Though it were to him a terrible

word, yet the submission of a sanctified judgment can call it good.

Then the will accepteth: Lev. xxvi. 41, `If they shall accept the

punishment;, that is, take it kindly from God that it is no worse. Then

the affections are restrained, and anger and sorrow brought under the

commands of the word. Then the tongue is bridled, lest discontent plash

over: Aaron held his peace, Lev. x. 3. (2.) Consider the grounds and

proper considerations upon which all this is carried on; usually there

is such a progress as this in the spiritual discourse:--(1st.) The soul

seeth God in it: Ps. xxxix. 9, `I was dumb and opened not my mouth,

because thou didst it., (2d.) It seeth God acting with sovereignty: Job

ix. 12, `None can say unto him, What dost thou?, And elsewhere, `He

giveth no account of his matters., (3d.) Lest this should make the

heart storm, it seeth sovereignty modified and mitigated in the

dispensation of it with several attributes. With justice: Deut. xxvii.

26, when every curse was pronounced, they were to say Amen, that if it

come to pass, amen is but a righteous dispensation. With mercy: Ezra

ix. 13, `Thou hast punished us less than we deserved., They were

afflicted, they might have been destroyed; they were in Babylon, they

might have been in hell. With faithfulness: they look upon afflictions

as federal dispensations, as appendages of the covenant of grace: Ps.

cxix. 71, `It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might

keep thy statutes., When they are threshed, it is but to lose their

stalk and husk: God,s faithfulness would not suffer them to want such a

sweep help. With wisdom: Isa. xxx. 18, `God is a God of judgment;, it

is meant in his dispensations. Let God alone; he is too just to do us

wrong, and too kind and wise to do us harm.

Unto the coming of the Lord.--Here is an argument to enforce the duty;

God will come and right your injuries. But of what coming doth he

speak? Every manifestation of God,s grace or judgment is called a

coming of the Lord. It is in vain in so known a case to heap up places.

More especially his solemn judgments on a church or people are

expressed by that term; so to all the churches in the Revelations: `I

will come quickly, and take away thy candlestick,, Rev. ii.; to

Pergamus, `Repent or I will come quickly,, Rev. iii.; so to Sardis, `I

will come as a thief,, &c. Any solemn progress and march of God in a

judicial way is expressed by corning; but most chiefly it is applied to

Christ,s glorious appearing in the clouds, called his second coming.

But you will reply again, Which, then, is meant here? any particular

coming of Christ, or else his solemn coming to general judgment? I

answer--Both may be intended; the primitive Christians thought both

would fall out together.

1. It may be meant of Christ,s particular coming to judge these wicked

men. This epistle was written about thirty years after Christ,s death,

and there was but a little time between that and Jerusalem,s last; so

that unto the coming of the Lord, is until the overwhelming of

Jerusalem, which is also elsewhere expressed by coming, if we may

believe Chrysostom and OEcumenius, on John xxi. 22, `If I will that he

tarry till I come, what is that to thee?, that is, come, say they, to

Jerusalem,s destruction. Thus God often cometh to his people; and the

note is:--

Obs. That Christians, to assuage their griefs, should often think of

Christ,s coming to their rescue and deliverance. Have a little

patience, and when your Master cometh, he will put an end to your

afflictions. Long for the coming of Christ, but wait for it; do not

bind the counsels of God. Usually his coming is when he is least looked

for: Luke xviii. 7, 8, `When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith

upon the earth?, that is, confidence that he will avenge; will any look

for him then? Mat. xxv. 6, `At midnight there was a cry made, The

bridegroom cometh., Who would look for the bridegroom at midnight?

Usually because our expectations are earnest to be satisfied, we give

over waiting: our time is always present, and flesh and blood is soon

tired; yet, as long as it seemeth, it is but a short time: Heb. x. 37,

`He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry.

2. It is meant of the general day of judgment, which is the day of

their vengeance and your recompenses. See both in 2 Thes. i. 6-8,

`Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to

them that trouble you; and to you which are troubled rest, when the

Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in

flaming fire, taking vengeance of them which obey not the gospel of

Jesus Christ;, which is not to be understood as if they should not be

punished nor we rewarded before that day; but then both are more full

and complete: the wicked that are now in chains of darkness looking for

a more terrible day, and glorified souls for a more full reward, their

bodies as yet remaining under the dominion of death. The note is:--

Obs. That a spiritual argument of patience is a thought of the day of

judgment. Here we are beaten by enemies and fellow-servants, but then

the Lord will come, and all will be well, Mat. xxiv. 51. Oh! it will be

sweet when we shall be hugged in the arms of Christ, and he shall say,

`Well done, well suffered, my good and faithful servant;, and he shall

put the crown upon our heads with his own hands. Well, then, love the

coming of Christ, 2 Tim. iv. 8, and hasten it, 2 Peter iii. 12; cry as

the spouse, `Even so, Lord Jesus; come quickly,, Rev. xxii.

Behold, the husbandman waiteth.--Here the apostle anticipated! an

objection: Ay! but we wait long; so doth the husbandman, saith the

apostle, for that which is nothing so precious as your hopes. Clemens

saith, [362] that James and his brother Jude were husbandmen, and

therefore do they so often bring .similitudes from their own calling,

of trees, plants, and fruits of the earth, &c.

For the precious, fruit of the earth, ka'rpon ti'mion.--Precious,

because it costeth hard labour, and because it is a choice blessing of

God for the sustentation of life. This term is used to show that though

the fruit be dear to the husbandman, as deliverance is to you, yet he

waiteth for it, and, as the apostle saith, `hath long patience.,

Until he receive the early and the latter rain; that is, the former,

which falleth a little before sowing; and the latter, a little before

the ripening of the corn. These are phrases often used in the prophets.

The meaning is, then, he looketh till, in an ordinary way of

providence, it may be ripened. So Hosea vi. 3, `As the former and

latter rain to the earth., Especially we hear of the latter rain; for

the latter rain, that fell somewhat before harvest, was a rain that

came seldom in that country, but was much desired for the refreshing of

the corn, and other fruits and blessings of the earth.

Obs. From that behold the husbandman. We must behold outward objects to

a heavenly purpose, and every ordinary sight should be improved: so

doth Christ in his parables; so elsewhere he sendeth us to learn of the

lilies, as James doth to the husbandman: so Job biddeth us `to confer

with the beasts, and ask of the fishes,, Job xii. 7, 8; that is, by

meditation to draw useful collections from them. But you will say, How

shall we improve common objects? I answer--Two ways: in an

argumentative and representative way; by reasoning from them, by

viewing the resemblance between them and spiritual matters; as in the

present case and similitude of the apostle. (1.) In meditation argue

thus: If a husbandman, upon ordinary principles of reason, can wait for

the harvest, shall not I wait for the coming of the Lord, the day of

refreshing? The corn is precious to him, and so is the coming of Christ

to me; shall he be so patient, and endure so much for a little corn,

and not I for the kingdom of heaven? He is willing to stay till all

causes have had their operation, and he hath received the former and

the latter rain; and shall not I till the divine decrees be

accomplished? (2.) In meditation make the resemblance and discourse

thus within yourselves: This is my seed time, heaven is the harvest;

here I must labour and toil, and there rest. I see the husbandman,s

life is a great toil: we can obtain no excellent thing without labour

and an obstinate patience. I see the seed must be hidden in the

furrows, rotten, and corrupted, ere it can spring forth with any

increase; our hopes are hidden, and light is sown for the righteous,

Ps. xcii. 11; all our comforts are buried under the clods, and after

all this there must be long waiting. We cannot sow and reap in a day;

effects cannot follow till all necessary causes have first wrought: it

is not in the power of the husbandman to ripen fruits at pleasure; our

times are in the hands of God; therefore it is good to wait; a

long-suffering patience will reap the desired fruits, &c.

Ver. 8. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the

Lord draweth nigh.

Here he applieth the similitude, again enforcing patience; it is a

lesson that needeth much pressing.

Stablish your hearts, sterixate tas kardias humon.--The Septuagint use

the word sterixai, for the bolstering or holding up of Moses, hands,

Exod. xvii. 12. And here it noteth an immovableness in the faith and

hope of Christianity, notwithstanding the many oppressions they had met

with. In short, it implieth two things firmness of faith and constancy

in grace. (1.) Firmness of faith, when, out of the encouragement of a

sure trust, we can sit down under God,s will and good pleasure. (2.)

Constancy in grace, when we are not so bowed with our troubles and

sorrows as to depart from our innocency. Observe:--

Obs. That it is the duty of God,s children in time of their troubles to

establish their hearts, and to put on a holy courage and magnanimity.

It is said of a good man, Ps. cxii. 8, `That his heart is established;

he shall not be afraid until he see his desire upon his enemies;, that

is, neither discouraged in regard of trust and hope, nor miscarrying in

regard of constancy and perseverance. Oh! that we would labour for this

establishment. We lose our hope, and therefore we lose our patience; we

are of a soft and easy heart, and so soon overborne: there is a holy

obstinacy and hardness of heart, which is nothing but a firmness in our

Christian purposes and resolutions. We have need of it in these times:

there are persecutions and troubles; soft and delicate spirits are soon

tired: errors and delusions; wanton and vain spirits are soon seduced:

scandals and offences, by the miscarriages of false brethren; weak and

easy hearers are soon discouraged; as in Nehemiah,s time, there were

troubles without, delusions from the Samaritans, Tobiah, &c.,

oppression, and working on the necessities of the people by false

brethren, Neh. v. To fortify you against all these, consider, those

that draw back the Lord hateth: the crab is reckoned among the unclean

creatures, Lev. xi. 10. The four prophetical beasts went every one

straight forward, Ezek. i. 9. If you know not how to get this holy

hardness or strength of spirit, go to God for it; man,s strength is but

small, and soon overborne: Ps. xxvii. 14, `Wait on the Lord, and be of

good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart;, so 1 Peter v. 10,

`Now the Lord Jesus make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, and settle

you after ye have suffered awhile., Desire him to give you courage, and

to strengthen and settle it against all temptations and dangers.

For the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.--Either, first, to them by a

particular judgment; for there were but a few years, and then all was

lost; and probably that may be it which the apostles mean when they

speak so often of the nearness of Christ,s coming, Phil. iv. 5, Heb. x.

25, escha'ge o'ra, 1 John ii. 18. But you will say, How could this be

propounded as an argument of patience to the godly Hebrews, that Christ

would come and destroy the temple and city? I answer--(1.) The time of

Christ,s solemn judiciary process against the Jews was the time when he

did acquit himself with honour upon his adversaries, and the scandal

and reproach of his death was rolled away. (2.) The approach of his

general judgment ended the persecution; and when the godly were

provided for at Pella, the unbelievers perished by the Roman sword.

Secondly, It may be meant of the day of general judgment, which,

because of the certainty of it, and the uncertainty of its particular

approach, hath been always represented to the church as at hand; or

else, in regard of eternity,, all that efflux of time between Christ,s

ascension and his second coming seemeth nothing. Whence the note is:--

Obs. That the world,s duration, in regard of eternity, is but short: 2

Peter iii. 8, `One day with the Lord is but as a thousand years. and a

thousand years as one day., Men count time long, because they measure

it by the terms of their own duration; but God comprehending all ages

in the indivisible point of his own eternity, all is as nothing to him,

as a moment, as a `watch in the night,, Ps. xc. 3. So Ps. liv. 7, `For

a small moment have I forsaken thee,, &c. Though there was more than a

space of two thousand between the first separation and the calling of

the Gentiles; yet God saith, `For a small moment have I forsaken thee.,

The word judgeth not according to sense and appearance. We, being

impatient of delays, reckon minutes and count moments long; but God

doth not judge of these things, `as men count slackness,, 2 Peter iii.

9; that is, as flesh conceiveth. To short-lived creatures a few years

may seem an age; but scripture, in its computations measuring all

things by the existence of God, reckoneth otherwise. Human reason

sticketh altogether in the outward sense and feeling, and therefore, as

man measureth his happiness by temporal accidents, so his duration by

temporal existences. [363] Oh! when shall we look within the veil, and

learn to measure things by faith, and not by sense! We count moments

long, and God, that is of an eternal duration, counteth thousands of

years a small moment. All outward accidents have their periods, beyond

which they cannot pass; but eternity is a day that is never overcast

with the shadows of a night. Certainly all space of time should be

small to them that know the greatness of eternity. [364] As in

permanent quantity, so it is in successive. The whole globe of the

earth is but as a middle point to the vast circumference of the

heavens. So is this life but a moment to eternity. If we did value all

things according to the computation and valuation of the word, it would

not be so irksome to us to wait for Christ,s coming. It is too much

softness that cannot brook a little delay.

Ver. 9. Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned:

behold, the judge standeth before the door.

In this verse the apostle layeth down the danger of evil groaning,

using the same argument as before, the near and speedy approach of

judgments.

Grudge not one against another, me stenazete kat' allelon.--The word

signifieth, groan not one against another. Because it is not easy to

find out what is the particular sense and intent of the apostle, the

phrase hath been diversely expounded. Some open it thus: Do not sigh

out your murmuring complaints into one another,s bosom, as if God were

unjust in punishing his children and letting the wicked be prosperous;

but this cannot be the meaning. It is in the original, kat' allelon,

against one another. Others thus: Do not in a groaning manner require

vengeance at the hand of God, but forgive, that God may forgive you;

but certainly it is lawful to complain to God of our injuries, though

not with a revengeful spirit. Much ado there hath been to state this

groaning spoken of in the text. Groans in themselves are not unlawful.

The apostle must needs mean such groaning as doth arise from an evil

cause; as discontent at providence; murmuring groans, so some; or

despondency and weakness of mind, distrustful groans; or from revenge

and stomachs against their oppressors, vindictive groans, so others; or

else from envy at those that suffered less than they did. If any man,s

condition be more tolerable, we are apt to murmur, and to say, no

sorrow like our sorrow; and so fretting against God maketh us angry

with men. Thus the apostle would understand envious groans; and to this

sense our translators render stenazete by grudge not; that is, at the

happiness of those that are not exercised with sufferings, or with the

same degree of sufferings that you are. I should easily subscribe to

this sense, as unwilling to recede from our own translation, but that I

see no cause why we should not retain the proper sense of the word,

groan not one against another, brethren; for the apostle seemeth to me

herein to tax those mutual injuries and animosities wherewith the

Christians of those times, having banded under the names of

circumcision and uncircumcision, did grieve one another and give each

other cause to groan, so that they did not only sigh under the

oppressions of the rich persecutors, but under the injuries which they

sustained from many of the brethren, who, together with them, did

profess the holy faith; which exposition will well suit with the state

of those times and the present context. The apostle is persuading them

to patience now, because the pressures did arise, not only from

enemies, but brethren. He seeketh to dissuade them from a practice so

scandalous, lest they should all be involved and wrapped up in the

common ruin. What! should brethren grudge one against another? Take

heed; such practices seldom escape without a quick revenge. My thoughts

are the more confirmed in this exposition, because here seemeth to be a

tacit allusion to the history of Cain and Abel, where the blood of one

brother cried or groaned against the other, and God told him that sin

lay at the door, Gen. iv. 7, intending the punishment of sin, as the

apostle telleth these that the judge was at the door, meaning the

judgments hanging over their heads. Observe hence:--

Obs. Many times differences may so far be heightened among brethren,

that they may groan one against another, as much as against the common

enemy. Paul, speaking of the state of primitive times, showeth how

Christians did `bite and devour one another,, Gal. v. 15. To show their

rage, he useth words proper to the fights and quarrels of beasts. Thus

usually it falleth out when contests arise in the church. Religious

hatreds are most deadly. Thus Luther [365] complaineth that he never

had a worse enemy than Carolostadius; and Zuinglius [366] that the

Papists were never so bitter to him as his friends. It is sad when we

dispute one against another, and tongue is armed against tongue, and

pen against pen; but it is sadder when we groan one against another,

and prayer is set against prayer, and appeal is set against appeal;

lambs acting the wolves, part, &c.

Lest ye be condemned, hina me krithete, lest ye be judged; that is,

lest God punish you; or lest, by mutual allegations, you provoke a

condemning sentence to pass against you both, and you be also in volved

in the common ruin. You may note hence:--

Obs. 1. That false brethren shall also meet with their judgment. Not

only the rich oppressors, but you that groan one against another, shall

be condemned: hell is the hypocrite,s portion: Mat. xxiv. 51, `He shall

appoint him his portion with hypocrites;, in Luke it is meta` ton

api'ston, with unbelievers, Luke xii. 46. Possibly our Saviour might

use both expressions, hypocrites and unbelievers, to show that open

enemies and secret shall meet with the same judgment.

Obs. 2. Mutual groanings and grudgings between brethren are a usual

forerunner of judgment; after biting and devouring, there followeth

consuming. Gal. v. 15. It cometh to pass partly by the providence and

ordination of God. Wanton contests are not cured but by deep

afflictions; and when spirits are once exulcerated, there is no

likelihood of agreement but in a prison. The warm sun maketh the wood

warp and cleave asunder; in prosperity we wax wanton and divide; when

the dog is let loose, the sheep run together. Usually in troubles there

are not so many scatterings and disgregations in Christ,s flock. Partly

by the course of ordinary causes. Our divisions give the adversary an

advantage; we should be as wise to reconcile ourselves as they to

combine against us. Nazianzen was wont to call them koi'nous

dialla'ktas, the common reconcilers. But party-making and faction

maketh men blind , engaged persons will not consider till all be un

done. A little before Diocletian,s persecution there were sad divisions

in the church, tais pro`s alle'lous philoneiki'ais anaphle'gonto, saith

Eusebius, they burned with mutual intestine discords,

Behold, the judge standeth before the door.--He had said before, `the

coming of the Lord draweth nigh;, now he addeth, that he is `at the

door,, a phrase that doth not only imply the sureness but the

suddenness of judgment: see Mat. xxiv. 33, `Know that it is near, even

at the doors;, so that this phrase intendeth also the speediness of the

Jewish ruin. Observe hence:--

Obs. 1. The nearness of the judge should awe us into duty. To sin in

calamitous times is to sin in the presence of the judge; to strike, as

it were, in the king,s presence, and to provoke justice when

punishments hang over our heads. This is like King Ahaz, that

trespassed the more for his stripes. When God holdeth up his hand, you

do as it were even dare him to strike.

Obs. 2. If we be ready to sin, God is ready to judge: `If thou do evil,

sin lieth at the door,, Gen. iv. 7 ,, that is, the punishment, like a

serjeant or messenger of justice, doth but lie in wait to arrest us.

Thus it is many times; the punishment taketh the provocation by the

heel; and whilst we are bustling and `beating our fellow-servants,, our

Lord is at the door, and cometh ere we look for him, Mat. xxiv. 50, 51.

Ver. 10. Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name

of the Lord, for an example of suffering, affliction, and of patience.

Here the apostle persuadeth to patience by the example of the saints,

who though they were dear to God, and employed in high and special

services, yet were exercised with sundry sharp afflictions.

Two ways are they an example to us--n their sufferings and in their

patience. They are famous for kakopa'theia and makrothumi'a, hard

sufferings and great patience; an example of sufferings, that we may

not flinch from them, or sink under them when we meet with them in the

way of duty; an example of patience, that we may write after their copy

by a meek submission. Their sufferings are produced to allay

discomfort, and so Christ urgeth it, Mat. v. 12, `So they persecuted

the prophets which were before you;, their patience to stir up

imitation: Heb. vi. 12, `Let us be followers of them who through faith

and patience inherited the promises., Never any yet went to heaven but

those two graces were first exercised, faith and patience; faith in

expectation of the future reward; patience in sustaining the present in

conveniences. But to the words.

Take for an example.--The word is hupodeigma; it noteth such an example

as is propounded to imitation. The same word is used when Christ

commended his washing of the disciples, feet to their imitation, John

xiii. 15.

The prophets.--He instanceth in them as the captains and leaders of the

church. Every purpose of life hath its chieftains and princes. The

Roman warriors can talk of their Camilli, Fabricii, Scipios, the

philosophers of their Aristotle, Plato and Pythagoras; but religion

propoundeth the example of the prophets.

Who have spoken to us in the name of the Lord; that is, were employed

by God, and authorised to speak to the people in his stead, and

specially gifted and supplied by his Spirit. Though they spake by

divine inspirations, and were as God,s mouth, yet they could not

escape, but were molested and maligned in the world, even to cruel

death and sufferings, for the faithful discharge of their message. This

Christ chargeth upon the Jews, Mat. xxiii. 37, `O Jerusalem, Jerusalem,

thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them,, &c. So doth Stephen,

Acts vii. 52, `Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?

and they have slain them which showed before the coming of the Just

One,, &c. Now if this were done to the prophets, who .seemed to be

sheltered under the buckler of their special commission, and the

singular innocency and holiness of their lives, certainly private

believers have less reason to promise themselves freedom and exemption.

Of suffering afflictions and of patience; that is, when God maketh us

like them in sufferings, we should be like them in patience. It is

comfortable to come into their lot, and to be bound up in the same

bundle of honour with them. Their example is produced partly to take

off prejudice. The matter is not strange; it is not our case alone. We

are apt to say, Never man in such a case as I, `Is any sorrow like to

my sorrow?, Lam. i. 12. Yes; this was the lot of all the prophets.

Partly to allay the shame. We do not surfer with the rude multitude,

but with the prophets. Partly to encourage our imitation. Examples have

a singular efficacy; man is apt to be led by company. The points are

these:--

Obs. 1. The examples of the saints do much encourage us to patience.

Man is a ductile creature, more apt to be led by the eye than the ear.

We look upon precepts as calculated for notion and fancy; practices are

a great confirmation. The strictest and severest ways are not

impossible, nor untrodden; that which hath been may be done. Besides

they are a check to delicacy; we may say as Elijah, `I am not better

than my fathers;, can we look for more privilege than the prophets?

Minors are ashamed when they cannot endure that which men of a higher

order have endured: Micah was in prison, Jeremy in the dungeon, Isaiah

sawed asunder, and shall we stick at a little suffering? Our betters

have endured far worse. Besides, good company is a great encouragement.

`Having such a cloud of witnesses,, &c., saith the apostle, Heb. xii.

1--it is an allusion to the pillar of the cloud that guided the

Israelites having such a pillar going before us, we may travel to

heaven the more cheerfully.

Obs. 2. Afflictions light on all ranks of saints, but especially upon

the prophets. The cross is kindly to our order; to preach is nothing,

but to bait the world. [367] We are God,s ambassadors, but we are often

ambassadors in chains, Eph. vi. 20. What recompense did the prophets

receive for all their pains and expense of spirits, but saws, and

swords, and dungeons? It is almost as necessary a character of a

minister to be much in afflictions, as to be much in spirit and much in

labours. God hath reserved us, in these latter days, for all the

contempt and scorn that villany and outrage can heap upon our persons.

But it is no matter; it is the badge of our order, and we know where to

have better entertainment; no matter though the world count us scurf

and refuse, when Jesus Christ counteth us his own glory: the messengers

of the churches are the filth of the world, 1 Cor. iv. 13; but the

glory of Christ, 2 Cor. viii. 23; it were suspicion enough that we were

not true to our master, when we are dandled on the world,s knees.

Obs. 3. From that which spoke to us in the name of the Lord. It noteth

the cause of their sufferings, the faithful discharge of their office,

only for speaking in God,s name. Sufferings are comfortable when they

overtake us in the way of duty. It is sad to be spewed out of God,s

mouth, and to be made contemptible for being partial in the law, Mal.

ii. 9, when the Lord maketh us base before the people. It is indeed his

usual course with corrupt dispensers of holy mysteries; it is others,

malice, but God,s judgments. But now, if it be for the faithful

performance of your place, for speaking boldly in the name of the Lord,

you may bind it as a crown to your head. Why should we care for the

scorns of an unthankful world, when we have such a good master? It is

an honour for us to lose our name for God,s, and it is no matter though

we be nothing, so Christ be all in all; a minister should be like one

in a crowd, that lifteth up another to public view, though himself be

jostled and lost in the throng; so Christ be exalted, it is no matter

though we suffer loss.

Ver. 11. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the

patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord that the Lord is

very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

The drift of the context is to persuade to patience: in this verse many

things are offered to that purpose.

Behold, we count them happy that endure.--We, it may imply--First, The

judgment of all men; mere men are wont to have high thoughts of them

that can bear the brunt of afflictions. Note:--

Obs. 1. That meek patience in afflictions is a taking thing even in the

eyes of men. There is a double reason implied in the words tou`s

upome'mpmtas, those that endure misery, and fortitude in misery. Now

misery worketh upon pity, and fortitude calleth for praises; miseries

work upon weak spirits, and constancy in miseries upon generous

spirits. Fortitude in miseries is more taken than elsewhere; there is

more of choice in it than of furious and brutish valour. Seneca

observeth, [368] that the burning of Mutius, hand was a greater token

of his courage than fighting an enemy. Those that are engaged in a good

cause need not despair; we shall gain somewhat with mere men; a

resolute constancy and a meek patience may recover those friends which

the miscarriages of a prosperous condition have lost: providence

ordereth such things for good. But remember you cannot take this

comfort but in a good cause. Sometimes wicked ones are the depressed

party. All would entitle their sufferings to persecution, as the

Donatists did in Austin,s time; and therefore though sufferings are

creditable, yet we must know that the persecuted cause is not always

the best. Sarah was a type of the true church, and Hagar of the false;

now Sarah she corrected Hagar. There is an unquiet generation; when

they suffer anything, they call it persecution, when it is but just

punishment. As the Moabites, when they saw the waters look ruddy

through the reflection of the morning sun, thought them mingled with

blood; so many voice up persecution and martyrs, blood when their

insolences are but a little corrected and restrained.

Secondly, We, may imply the judgment of the visible church. The whole

Christian church doth acknowledge the slain prophets happy, and

celebrate their memory: makari'zein, the word in the text, properly

signifieth to make or declare happy. What is in the Hebrew, `the

daughters will call me blessed,, Gen. xxx. 13, the Septuagint render by

makari'sousi. So Luke i. 48, `All generations shall call me blessed;,

in the Greek, makariousi me pasai ai geneai'. From this consideration I

observe:--

Obs. 2. That it is often the condition of God,s people to live envied

and persecuted, but to die sainted. We account the slain prophets

happy, and celebrate the memory of those which endure; the scribes and

Pharisees garnished the tombs of the dead prophets, but killed the

living, Mat. xxiii. 29, 30. They pretended honour to the saints

departed, but in the meantime were injurious to the saints alive. So

John v., the Jews pretended love to Moses, but showed hatred to Christ.

It cometh to pass, partly by the providence of God, who after death

cleareth up the innocency and holy conversation of his servants;

posterity acknowledged them whom the former age destroyed; partly

because living saints are an eyesore; by the severity of their lives

and reproofs they trouble and torment the world; dead saints do not

stand in the way of their lusts, for objects out of sight do not

exasperate: this may comfort God,s children against the abasers of the

present age: `The day will declare it,, 1 Cor. iii. 13; when the heat

of oppression is over, that which is now called heresy and

anti-christianism will then be accounted worship, and your sufferings

will speak you not malefactors but martyrs. Men cannot discern the

present truth, 2 Peter i. 12, because blinded with interests; but it

may be truth itself may be the interest of the next age, and the bleak

wind that bloweth now in our faces may be then on our backs; there are

strange revolutions. Again, this may serve for caution to us. Let us

not rest in fond affection to saints and worthies departed; the memory

of Judas is not so accursed to us as Korah, Dathan, and Abiram were to

the carnal Jews in Christ,s time; Moses was dear to them, as Christ and

the apostles to us. That is the best affection which is expressed by

imitation; and stableness in the present truth is a great trial of our

sincerity; dead saints are out of our envy: how are we affected to the

living, that walk in their ways? It is good to examine what proportion

and likeness there is between the case of the present hated parties,

and the case of Christ and his apostles in the primitive times.

Thirdly, We, may imply (and so I think chiefly) the judgment of the

children of God, as it is opposed to the judgment of the world: Behold,

we count them happy that endure; we that are enlightened by the Spirit

of God. I prefer this last consideration, because this sentence hath

reference to a passage of scripture, `Blessed is he that waiteth,, Dan.

xi. 12, where the Septuagint have makarios o upome'non. From hence

note:--

Obs. 3. That the judgment of the saints and the judgment of the world

about afflictions are far different; they have different

principles--the spirit of the world, and the Spirit of God; they have

different lights and rules--that of faith and that of sense. A carnal

man judgeth by appearance, but a spiritual man looketh within the veil;

the world judgeth afflictions miserable, they happiness. It is notable

that all the beatitudes are affixed to unlikely conditions, Mat. v., to

show that the judgment of the word and the judgment of the world are

contrary. Well, then, do not hearken to the judgment of the world about

afflictions, but to the judgment of the Spirit; not to what sense

feeleth, but to what faith expecteth. The men of the world are

infeliciter felices, miserable in their happiness, but the children of

God are happy in their misery. But you will say, Wherein? I

answer--(1.) The very suffering for righteousness, sake is a kind of

grace which God doth us: 1 Peter iii. 14. `Happy are ye,, &c., so

`Blessed are they,, &c.; Mat. v. 12; `they rejoiced,, &c., Acts v. 41.

God forgive me this great unthankfulness for this exceeding great

mercy, saith Bradford, that he chooseth me for one in whom he will

suffer. Secondly, Ye have gain by the afflictions, experience, hope,

and grace, Rom. v. 3, 4; Heb. xii. 11; as also the sweet sense of

divine consolations, 2 Cor. i. 5. (3.) God hath promised bountifully to

reward it; there is a blessing in hand, but more in hope: see James i.

12

Ye have heard of the patience of Job.--He instanceth in Job because he

was an eminent instance of misery. From the citation we may note that

the book of Job was not a parable, but a history of what was really

acted.

Obs. 1. Again from that ye have heard. We had never heard of Job had he

not been brought so low. Affliction maketh saints eminent: [369] Job,s

poverty made him rich in honour and esteem; stars do not shine but in

the night; the less we are made by providence, the greater. [370] You

may oppose this against the temptation of lowness and baseness: God,s

children never gain so much honour as in their troubles. Many whose

names now do breathe forth a fresh perfume in the churches would have

lived and died obscurely, and their bones have been cast into some

unknown charnel, undistinguished from other relics of mortality, but

that God drew them forth into public notice by eminent sufferings.

Obs. 2. Again from that the patience of Job. He showed much impatience

and murmuring, cursing the day of his birth, &c.; but not a word of all

this: where the bent of the heart is right, the infirmities of God,s

people are not mentioned. So Heb. xi. 31, there is no mention of

Rahab,s lie, but only of her faith, and peaceable behaviour towards the

spies. Where God seeth grace, he doth as it were hide his eyes from

those circumstances that might seem to deface the glory of it: so in

Sarah,s speech, though the whole sentence be full of distrust and

unbelief, God taketh notice of her reverence to her husband: [371] she

called Abraham lord, 1 Peter iii. 6. Wicked men watch for our halting,

and feed their malice with our failings; they can oversee a great deal

of good, and pitch only upon what is evil. But the Lord, where the

heart is sincere, pardoneth the defects. Job murmured; but the word

saith, Ye have heard of the patience of Job. There was patience in the

man. Job often submitteth to God, sometimes blesseth God, disliketh

those murmurings extorted from him by the sense of his sufferings,

often correcteth himself as soon as he had spoken any unbecoming word

of God and providence, when he was reproved of God, chap. xli.; he

humbled himself, chap. xlii.

Obs. 3. Again observe, we should often in our afflictions propound

Job,s pattern and example; he was famous for miseries, various in their

kind; now Chaldeans, then Sabeans, now wind, then fire, &c. When

afflictions come like waves, one in the neck of another, and you are

put upon divers trials, think of Job. They light upon all his comforts,

his goods; a life is no life without a livelihood: his children, those

dear pledges of affection; you lose one, Job many; when you lose all,

it is but as Job: then upon his own body; he was rough-cast with sores.

God,s afflictions usually come closer and closer till they touch our

very skins. In the plague, you may remember how Job,s body was smitten

with sores; nay, his soul was exasperated with the censures of his

friends; this goeth closer and closer. God,s immediate hand silenceth

the spirit: we take injuries from man very unkindly, especially

injuries from friends; these were stabs to the very heart. Perils among

false brethren was Paul,s sorest trial; it is grievous to suffer from

an enemy, worse from a countryman, worse than that from a friend, and

worst of all from godly friends. But yet this was Job,s case; he

complaineth that they were miserable comforters. Thus you see Job was

famous for misery, and as famous for patience; it would be too long to

survey it. In all the expressions of it, two are notable, which run

through every vein of the whole book: his advancing God and debasing

himself; good thoughts of God, and low thoughts of himself: `Blessed be

God,, &c., Job i. 23; and `I have sinned,, Job vii. 20. Well, then, in

all your afflictions, look upon this spectacle of misery and example of

patience.

And have seen the end of the Lord.--It may be applied to Christ or Job.

Some apply it to Christ for these reasons:--(1.) Otherwise the main

pattern of patience will be left out; (2.) The change of the verb, `ye

have heard of Job, and ye have seen the end of Christ., The adding of

this new word seen, seemeth to be done by way of contradistinction to

heard. These reasons, when I first glanced upon this text, inclined me

to that opinion, especially when I afterward saw the same reasons urged

by learned Paraeus. Many of the ancients go this way, as Austin, Beda,

Lyra, Aquinas; [372] which last improveth it more than I have seen any.

Job and Christ, saith he, the two famous instances, are well

coupled--Job in the Old Testament, Christ in the New; in the one we

have a pledge of a temporal, in the other of an eternal recompense; you

have heard of the one and seen the other; Job suffereth, but not to

death; therefore, that they might have a complete pattern, he mindeth

them of the end of the Lord. Thus far Aquinas. If this were the sense,

the point would be, that Christ,s death is the great spectacle and

glass of patience. But modern divines go another way, and with good

reason:--(1.) Because the drift of the context (see ver. 6, 7) is to

propound not only a perfect pattern of miseries, but a happy end out of

miseries: he had spoken of Job,s patience, but if the former sense were

true, nothing of his happy issue, a thing most suitable to his purpose

and most remarkable in the story. (2.) The apostle in the former verse

showeth he would instance in some prophets and holy men of God, not in

the Lord himself. (3.) The Syriac translation hath plainly finem quem

ei fecit Dominus--the end which the Lord made to him. (4.) The latter

clause in the text cannot so commodiously agree to the former sense, to

wit, that God is pitiful, and of tender mercy; but with this latter

sense it fitly suiteth; the end that the Lord made with him, because he

is of great mercy, &c. The former arguments may be easily

answered:--(1st.) To the first: We must not teach the apostles how to

reason, or what instances to bring. Possibly the example of Christ,s

patience is purposely omitted, because the main thing in question,

wherein their constancy was assaulted, was their belief in Christ, and

therefore, it was not so necessary to propound his example so much as

that of other holy men who were afflicted; that they might not be

scandalised at the cross, and from their great afflictions suspect the

way which they professed. To all this I may add, that the sufferings of

Christ are mentioned, ver. 6, as we cleared before. (2d.) To the second

argument, which is grounded upon the change of the verb, heard and

seen, I answer--Both words, implying the acts of the outward sense, are

put for acts of knowledge and understanding; and seen, which is the

clearer way of perception, is used in the latter clause, because God,s

recompense was so ample, and far more visible than Job,s patience. And

let not the phrase seem too curt, there being special reason why the

issue of Job,s afflictions should be called the end of the Lord. The

points are these:--

Obs. 1. That the afflictions of God,s children must not be considered

in their nature and beginning, but in their issue and end: Heb. xii.

11, `No affliction for the present seemeth joyous, but grievous., There

are two words emphatical, pro`s me`n to` paro`n, for the present, and

ou dokei, seemeth; they are smart in the apprehension of the flesh, and

smart only for the present. It is but childish to judge of afflictions

by present sense; always it is worst with Christians in the present

time: see Rom. viii. 18; 1 Cor. xv. 19; 2 Cor. iv. 16-18. Well, then,

do not measure afflictions by the smart, but by the end of them;

besides our everlasting hopes, usually that end which is seen and

liable to common observance is glorious. When Israel was dismissed out

of Egypt, it was with gold and ear-rings, Exod. xi.; so the Jews were

dismissed out of Babylon with gifts, jewels, and all necessary

utensils, Ezra i.; so `When the Lord turned the captivity of Job, he

gave Job twice as much as he had before, and every one of his friends

brought him a piece of money and an ear-ring of gold,, Job. xlii. 10,

11. Oh! wait for the end then; the beginning is usually Satan,s, but

the end is the Lord,s; at the beginning the power of darkness may have

an hour, but at the end the Lord will be seen.

Obs. 2. The Lord must give a happy end to all afflictions. (1.) A

temporal end; man may begin, but God must make an end. `The beginning

of strife (saith Solomon) is as the opening of the waters;, a fool may

pull up the sluices, but there is no turning of the stream: Penes reges

est inferre bellum, penes autem Deum terminare when man beginneth, the

Lord will exercise his own dominion and sovereignty ere the end cometh.

(2.) A gracious end: `The fruit of it is to take away sin,, Isa. xxvii.

9. Now this is God,s work; God,s rod, as well as God,s word, doth

nothing without his blessing, otherwise they are both poor, dead, and

useless means: `I am the Lord that teacheth them to profit,, Isa.

xlviii. 18; that is, by afflictions. (3.) A glorious end; it is the

Lord,s gift, not our merit. Oh! then, let us do duty, and God will not

be wanting; let us wait upon him with Job,s patience, and he will give

Job,s end.

That the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.--This clause

expresseth partly the cause, partly the manner of God,s appearance in

Job,s end. (1.) The cause why Job had so good an end of his troubles

was God,s mercy, not his own merit; it was his happiness that he had to

do with a pitiful and merciful God. (2.) The manner of God,s appearance

in the end of afflictions. You will find God merciful and pitiful,

whatever the flesh saith to the contrary; in the beginning you think

him cruel, but in the end you find him merciful. Here are two words

that express God,s goodness: the first is, very pitiful, in the

original polu'splanchnos, of much or many bowels. These are the tender

parts in which we feel a commotion upon every strong affection, as the

mother,s bowels were said to yearn to the infant when he was to be

divided, 1 Kings iii. 26; therefore we are bid to put on bowels: Col.

iii. 12. The next word is, of tender mercy, oikti'rmon. It is the word

which is opposed to the hard heart, and therefore we do not render it

`the merciful,, but `of tender mercy., Now the proper use and

distinction of these words in this place may be conceived thus:--(1.)

The one hath respect to our miseries, the other to our sins; pitiful in

feeling our miseries, merciful in pardoning our sins. (2.) The one

noteth affection; the other acts suitable, [373] inward and outward

mercy. From hence you may observe several notes.

Obs. 1. From that very pitiful and tender mercy.--God,s mercy is seldom

spoken of without some addition of much, or great, or tender, &c. Most

commonly in the Old Testament it is expressed plurally, mercies and

loving-kindnesses, and very often are those additions of much and great

annexed: Exod. xxxiv. 6, `Great in mercy;, 2 Sam. xxiv. 14, `His

mercies are very great;, so Ps. cxxx. 7, `With him there is plenteous

redemption:, so `abundant mercy,, 1 Peter i. 3; Eph. ii. 7, `The

exceeding riches of his grace., God delighteth to discover this

attribute in its royalty and magnificence. Certainly, there is more in

God,s mercy than in men,s sins; our ephah is full, but God,s mercy is

over-full; and there is enough in God to supply all our wants. When you

can exhaust overflowing mercy, then you may complain; and there is

enough in God to satisfy every particular believer. We all drink of the

same fountain, and yet cannot draw it dry. Oh! when shall we learn of

our heavenly Father not only to do good works, but to abound in them

more and more? He is rich in mercy, when shall we be rich in good

works? &c.

Obs. 2. God is very tender to his people in misery. Sense doth but make

lies of God. When we hearken to the voice of our own feeling, we are

apt to say as Job, `Thou art turned to be cruel,, Job xxx. 31; or at

least as David, `I am cut off,, though at that very time God had a

gracious respect to him, `nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my

supplications,, Ps. xxxi. 22. Israel is chidden for saying `My way is

hidden from the Lord, and my judgment passed over by my God,, Isa. xl.

27; that is, God hath left me out of the count of providence, and the

roll of those whom he is to look after; he doth not take notice of my

case. Do but wait a little while, and you shall see that the Lord is

very pitiful and tender. God,s children have been at length ashamed of

their hasty words, and when providence hath had its course, they can

easily see that, though the outside and bark of it was rough and harsh,

yet it was lined with pity and mercy.

Obs. 3. From the two words pitiful and merciful. God hath every way

provided for the comfort of his people. He hath pity for their

afflictions, and pardon for their sins. He was sensible of Job,s misery

and Job,s weakness; his compassion might be discouraged by our

murmurings, but that he is merciful as well as pitiful. Afflicted

persons may hence comfort themselves, and answer the objections of

their sad spirits; when you have injuries from men, you shall find

pities in God. Ay! but I have sinned. I answer--There is mercy in him

as well as pity, &c.

Obs. 4. From the order of the words, very pitiful, and then of tender

mercy! There is in God, first, bowels, and then bounty; so Exod. xxxiv.

6, `Merciful and gracious., Oh! then, let us learn of our heavenly

Father, when we do good, to do it with all our hearts; let the spring

be within us: Isa. lviii. 18, `Draw out thy soul to the hungry,, and

then satisfy the afflicted person.

Ver. 12. But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by

heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your

yea be yea, and your nay, nay, lest ye fall into condemnation.

For the context, some say this is the coherence between the former

matter and the present verse. Men in affliction are usually impatient,

and impatience bewrayeth itself by oaths and curses--a conceit very

injudicious, and no way complying with the intent of the apostle. We

need not stick at method and connection; it is usual with James and the

other apostles to divert from one matter to another, according as the

necessity of the times did require, without any curiosity or

observation of the laws of method. In this verse there is an admonition

or dissuasive from swearing, in which you may note:--

1. The vehemency of proposal: but above all things.

2. A direction proposed:--

[1.] Negatively, swear not; wherein some forms of oaths are specified,

neither by heaven, nor by earth, nor by any other oath.

[2.] Positively, let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay.

3. Here is a comminatory reason and enforcement, lest ye fall into

condemnation.

But above all things, pro panton, a'delphoi.--The phrase hath under

gone several constructions, it properly signifieth before all things;

therefore Lyra [374] interpreteth the apostle thus, Do not swear before

all things; before every word and promise. The exposition were

plausible, if the posture of the words were me omnuete, a'delphoi, pro`

pa'nton, `My brethren, swear not before all things;, but it is, `Before

all things, my brethren,, &c. Therefore I rather take it for a form of

vehemency and earnestness, frequent in the apostolical epistles: `Above

all things take the shield of faith,, Eph. vi. 16. So 1 Peter iv. 8,

`Above all things have fervent charity among yourselves., But you will

say, Why doth he press this above all things? The question is grave and

weighty. I shall give some reasons, which will occasion so many notes.

Obs. 1. Because it is a great sin to swear lightly and inconsiderately;

it is specially forbidden in the Decalogue: `I will not hold him

guiltless,, Exod. xx. 7. Of all things God is tender of his own name;

it is a great sin in regard of the object about which it is conversant,

God,s name, which ought to be sacred; every thought and mention should

be accompanied with reverence. All sin is against God, but this is

formally and directly against God. Men are most tender of their credit.

It is a great sin in regard of the occasion; it is without a

temptation, unless it be such as argueth height of wickedness, either a

wantonness in sin, because it is a sport to do evil. Other sins have an

external bait; here is nothing but a glorying in our own shame, Phil.

iii. 19. Or an obstinate pride. It is a daring of God; they will sin,

because they will sin. It is usually found in ruffians that have lost

all awe. Oh! let us beware of this sin of rash swearing, of every

tendency that way, any irreverent use of the name of God in sudden

outcries, O God, O Lord, &c., or any vain jesting with oaths. Those

that swear in jest shall go to hell in earnest. The Jews were so tender

of the name of God, that they would not pronounce Jehovah in the law,

but read Adonai, unless by the high priest once every year. And being

given to swearing, they were loath to use their greater oath, Chi

Eloah, [375] but swore by the creatures. The heathens would name those

but seldom whom they reverenced. Augustus, as Suetonius reporteth,

would not have his name obsolefieri, to be worn threadbare. The name of

Mercurius Trismegistus was not commonly pronounced, because of great

reverence to him.

Another reason why the apostle saith `above all things,, is, because it

was a sin familiar with the Hebrews, as appeareth by sundry passages in

scripture: see those dissuasives, Mat. v. 33, 34, &c.; Mat. xxiii. 16,

17. It was a sin very common amongst them, as among some nations to

this day--as the Dutch, French, Scottish, though the English have too

much written after their copy. The note is:--

Obs. 2. That common and known sins must be opposed with all

earnestness. The apostle saith, `Above all things, swear not,, such

points are to be pressed above all other. Usually such truths as

concern the present age are disliked, when we reflect upon the guilt of

the times. Men would have us preach Christ, and the general doctrines

of faith and repentance; which is nothing but a vain cavil, masked with

the specious pretence of religion; for you shall see when the preaching

of Christ was the main truth in controversy, and the apostles bended

their strength that way, the Corinthians cried for wisdom, meaning

doctrines of civil prudence, and the softer strains of morality; and

that is the reason why Paul said, 1 Cor. ii. 3, I have determined to

know nothing but Jesus Christ, nai kai` touton estaurome'non, yea, and

him crucified;, which was the doctrine at which they were most

scandalised, and therefore he resolved to take notice of no argument so

much as that in his ministry. The work of the ministry is not to

contend with ghosts and opinions antiquated, but the errors and sins of

the present time. Look, as it is the duty of Christians to spend the

heat of their indignation on the main sin with which they are

surprised: Ps. xviii. 23, `I kept myself from mine iniquity;, so must

ministers chiefly bend their zeal and strength against the present

guilt. Were we only to provide for ourselves, we might read to you fair

lectures of contemplative divinity, and with words as soft as oil

entice you into a fool,s paradise, never searching your wounds and

sores. But our commission is to `cry aloud, and spare not,, &c., Isa.

lviii. 1.

Obs. 3. It is a custom that can hardly be left or forsaken; therefore

above all things take heed of swearing. Austin urgeth this argument,

[376] `Why doth the apostle say, Above all things? is it worse to swear

than to steal? worse to swear than to commit adultery? worse to swear

than to kill a man? no, but the apostle would fortify as much as he

could against a pestilent custom,, &c. Certainly, when we have once got

it, it is hardly left; every corporal thing being often moved in one

and the same manner, receiveth a greater easiness and aptitude to the

same motions. So doth the tongue when it is used to the voicing of

oaths. Custom hath so great a power upon us, that the word is uttered

before the mind can check it. The executions of other sins are slower,

as murder, lust, theft, because other members are not so ready as the

tongue. A man may sooner command his hand than his tongue. Well, then,

let those that, by company or education, have learned to swear, or to

use vain, idle expressions, watch with the more care; a custom is soon

got, either by our own use, or constant conversation with them that use

it. Good Joseph learned to swear in the house of Pharaoh. Watch

diligently: thy custom will not excuse thee; if it be thy custom to

sin, it is God,s custom to destroy sinners.

Swear not, neither by heaven, nor by earth, nor by any other oath.--For

the opening of this passage, it may be inquired:--

1. Whether all oaths be forbidden? Divers have been of this judgment.

The Essenes thought all oaths as bad as perjury, as Josephus

witnesseth, `De Bello Judaico,, lib. ii. cap. 7. Jerome chargeth the

Pelagians with the same opinion; it hath been also objected against the

Waldenses, how truly I know not. The Anabaptists have been uncertain in

this point; sometimes they have professed against all oaths, at other

times expressed themselves as denying only rash oaths, as in the

conference at Franckendale; and those of that sect amongst us seem to

have recanted the ancient rigour herein. Many modern writers of great

note seem to incline to the absolute prohibition of oaths, as

unbeseeming that faith and simplicity which should be among Christians.

Certainly there hath been a great abuse of them in our civil courts,

even to the disgrace of our holy profession, as being administered upon

every trifling occasion, for a shilling matter, and in businesses of a

low concernment. But, however, oaths in themselves are lawful, if taken

`in truth, righteousness, and judgment,, Jer. iv. 2--that is, without

fraud, in a lawful matter, and upon a weighty occasion--the apostle

saith, an oath is antilogi'as, `an end of strife,, Heb. vi. 17. In the

Old Testament, in any doubtful case which could not be otherwise

determined, they were `to accept the oath of the Lord,, Exod. xxii. 11,

12. The commandment itself alloweth a liberty: `Thou shalt not take the

name of the Lord thy God in vain,, which implieth a lawful use of God,s

name. In the New Testament, the apostle Paul in weighty matters often

sweareth and calleth God to witness, see Rom. i. 9, and ix. 1; 2 Cor.

i. 23; `God is my record,, Phil. i. 8.

2. What oaths are condemned? Answer--Our Saviour and the apostle James

do only meet with that wicked custom introduced by the Pharisees, that

a man might swear by the creatures, if there were no mention of the

name of God, or things offered to God; as appeareth by considering Mat.

v. and Mat. xxiii. The nation of the Jews were guilty of three

things--(1.) Frequent swearing; (2.) Swearing by the creatures; (3.)

Breaking these oaths as not binding and valid; and these sins being

rife in the apostle,s days, the prohibition of the text must be chiefly

applied to them; so that `swear not, neither by heaven nor earth,, must

be meant of their usual and accustomed forms, which they had invented

to evade the law; for the Jews, so they did omit the great oath of Chi

Eloah, thought they were safe. So Philo saith, [377] that it `was a sin

and a vanity, epi` to`n pate'ra kai` poiete`n olon anatre'chein,

presently to run to God, or the maker of all things, and to swear by

him; but that it was lawful to swear by our parents, by heaven and the

stars., So it is observed of some of the ancient Greeks, that they did

not propetos omnu'ein peri` ton theon, alla` kata` ton

epitunchano'nton, that they did not easily swear by the gods, but by

the creatures and things before their eyes, and then that there was no

harm, and no solemn obligation in these oaths; vain pretences, and

excuses; for though the name of God was not interposed, yet it is

implied, Mat. xxiii. 20-22; Mat. v. 34, 35, the creature being God,s

creature, and in an oath made by them implicitly called upon to be

God,s instrument of vengeance in case of perjury. That other clause,

nor by any other oath, is meant of other oaths of that kind, so that

the note out of the whole is:--

Obs. That swearing by the creatures is unlawful; swearing is an act of

worship, and therefore it must be only done in weighty cases, by the

name of God: Deut. vi. 13, `Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and swear

by his name., So the prophet reproveth those that `swear by the sin of

Samaria,, meaning the idol, Amos viii. 14. In such oaths the creature

is made use of instead of God, whether it be by way of assertion, as

when we say, as sure as there is heaven, or there is light in heaven;

or by way of execration, as let heaven blast me, earth swallow me, or

devil take me, &c. In all these rude speeches there is a double evil--a

rash oath, and an oath made by the creature instead of God; and yet

what more common than such forms amongst us? I might instance in many:

the Popish oath by the Virgin Mary, and our common word, Yes, marry; so

also those sottish vulgar forms, by my head, by this light, by this

candle, this bread, by my faith, &c.

Reader, thou art entreated to take notice, that the author being

sensible that this book grew somewhat bulkish, purposely omitted those

larger discourses which he conceived upon this verse concerning the

lawfulness of oaths, the abuse of them in ordinary commerce and courts

of civil judicature, as also the discussion of those questions whether

the Old Testament did only forbid perjury, and the New added to the law

the prohibition of rash and unnecessary oaths, as Papists, Socinians,

and some of late think; as also whether it is in any case lawful to

swear by the creatures, and whether oaths so made be valid and

obligatory. All these inquiries he purposely omitted, and would rather

appear in this curt and contracted form than be burden some; especially

there being large discourses extant on all these matters. See the

writers on the commandments, Grotius on Mat. v. 34, &c., and Mat.

xxiii. 20-22; Perkins on Mat. v.; Hammond,s Pract. Cat., and Spanheim

Dub. Evang., part 3, Dub. 124, et sequentibus; Brochman, Hist. Theol.

Act. de Lege Dei, cap. 8, quaest. 1-3: Jacobus ad Portum in Refut.

Institut. Ostorodii, ad cap. 25, &c.

But let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay.--Some suppose that this is

the same with what our Saviour speaketh, Mat. v. 37, which implieth

that a Christian in his ordinary speech should content himself with

simple affirmations or negations, that he may abstain from all

appearance of an oath; but mark, our apostle doth not say, `Let your

speech be yea, yea, nay, nay,, but `Let your yea be yea, and your nay

be nay., Yea and nay were the usual forms and words used in

stipulations. Now, saith the apostle, let your yea be always yea, and

your nay always nay; that is, let your affirmations and negations be

plain and sure-grounded on a mere truth; as Paul saith his preaching of

the gospel was not yea and nay, but yea and yea, 2 Cor. i. 18; so here,

let your yea be yea. The first yea referreth to the promise, the second

to the performance; let there be yea in the promise, and yea in the

performance; and herein the apostle seemeth to strike at the root,

falsehood being the cause of oaths: and we may observe:--

Obs. That an excellent way to prevent swearing is to use a constant

truth in our speeches, then we need not interpose an oath; the credit

of our communication will be enough. Oaths give suspicion of men,s

falseness and lightness. If men were serious and sincere in their

discourses, their word would be equivalent to an oath, and their very

affirming would be swearing; whereas others in a doubtful case are

hardly credited, though they swear never so deeply, because they swear

so commonly; for having prostituted the highest and most solemn way of

assurance to every trifle, they have nothing left where with to

establish a controverted truth.

Lest ye fall into condemnation.--Many read hina me eis upo'krisin

pesete, least ye fall into hypocrisy, that is, be found liars; but it

seemeth by most translations, the Syriac, the Arabic, the Latin, that

the original was read as we read it, hupo krisin pesete, fall into

judgment. It is an allusion to that commination which in in the law

that forbiddeth swearing: `The Lord will not hold him guiltless that

taketh his name in vain;, where not only perjury, but rash oaths are

forbidden; for that word which we translate `in vain,, is properly so

rendered, according to the use of it in scripture, as the learned prove

against the Socinians; so the Septuagint render it; [378] and so

Aquila. [379] Note hence.

Obs. That rash and false swearing will bring a sure judgment; for

oaths, persons and lands mourn, Hosea iv. If duty doth not move.

methinks thou shouldst startle at the danger and punishment. If thou

beest not afraid to sin, yet it is strange thou art not afraid to burn.

[380] All sins are threatened with death, but this more expressly. God

hath engaged himself that he `will not hold him guiltless;, usually

they are brought to a speedy trial: Mal. iii. 5, `I will be a swift

witness,, &c.; and judgment marcheth against them with a swift pace,

`the flying roll,, &c.; Zech. v. 4. Certainly there is no sin that doth

more weary the patience of God, because there is no sin that doth more

banish the fear of God out of our hearts.

Ver. 13. Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let

him sing psalms.

Here he diverteth to another matter, which is a direction how to behave

ourselves either in an afflicted or in a prosperous condition, we being

apt to fail or miscarry in both.

Is any among you afflicted? let him pray.--Some Latin copies read the

whole verse in one sentence, strangely perverting the sense thus: Is

any sorry among you? let him pray and sing with an equal mind; but the

Greek readeth as we do, `is any among you,, &c. He meaneth you that are

in the church, that are the flock of Christ. Christianity giveth us no

lease of temporal happiness, no exemption from the cross, rather the

contrary; `miserable, is one of the church,s names: Isa. liv. 6, 10,

`thou afflicted.,

Is any merry? euthumei ti`s; `is any of a good mind?,--The effect is

put for the state, gladness for prosperity, which is wont to make the

heart glad and merry; the word is translated `of good cheer,, Acts

xxvii. 22, `I exhort you to be of good cheer;, it is euthumein.

Let him sing psalms.--In the original there is but one word, psalle'to,

let him sing; but because the apostle is pressing them to religious use

of every condition, and because this is the usual acception of the word

psalle'to in the church, it is well rendered `let him sing psalms.,

Certainly, when the apostle biddeth them sing, he doth not mean songs,

but psalms; not songs to gratify the flesh, but psalms to refresh the

spirit. Merry men are wont to `chant to the sound of the viol,, Amos

vi. Nature needeth not to be pressed to that; therefore questionless he

is to be understood of the duty of singing.

There are many practical notes and inferences deducible from this

verse.

Obs. 1. Our temporal condition is various and diverse; now afflicted,

and then merry. It is the folly of our thoughts that we cannot be

happy, but we think our nest is among the stars: `Man,s best estate is

altogether vanity,, Ps. xxxix. 5. Our prosperity is like glass, brittle

when shining. The complaint of the church may be the motto of all the

children of God: Ps. cii. 10, `Thou hast lifted me up, and cast me

down., The church,s name, as I said, is `afflicted and tossed with the

tempest,, Isa. liv. 11.

Obs. 2. This is the perfection of Christianity to carry an equal pious

mind in unequal conditions. Paul had learned to walk up-hill and

down-hill with the same spirit and pace: `I know both how to be abased,

and how to abound,, Phil. iv. 12. The prophet saith of Ephraim that he

was `as a cake not turned,, Hosea vii. 8, baked of one side, but dough

of the other. Most men are fit but for one condition. Some cannot carry

a full cup without spilling. Others can not bear a full load without

breaking. Sudden alterations perplex both body and mind. It is the

mighty power of grace to keep the soul in an equal temper.

Obs. 3. Several conditions require several duties. The Christian

conversation is like a wheel, every spoke taketh its turn. God hath

planted in a man affections for every condition, grace for every

affection, and a duty for the exercise of every grace, and a season for

every duty. The children of the Lord are `like trees planted by the

rivers of water, that bring forth their fruit in due season,, Ps. i. 3.

There is no time wherein God doth not invite us to himself. It is

wisdom to perform what is most seasonable. There is a time to encourage

trust: Ps. lvi. 3, `At what time I am afraid, I will trust in thee;,

and there is a time to deject security. In misery the duty is prayer,

in prosperity, giving of thanks. Sometimes, I confess, these duties may

be inverted. We may bless God for giving as well as taking, [381] and

in prosperity there may be great need of prayer; but the apostle

speaketh of what is ordinary; at least he would show us that there is

no condition so good but there is need of duty; there is none so bad as

to be past duty. In all estates we must be doing. No providence exempts

you from duty, and cassates the bonds of obedience. It is our folly to

betray our duties by our wishes. If it were thus and thus with us, we

could serve God readily and cheerfully. Thou fool! there is no

condition but grace can improve it to some religious use, for the

advantage of some duty or other. It is thy laziness; and the blame of

thine own neglects must not be charged upon providence.

Obs. 4. That it is of excellent advantage in religion to make use of

the present affection; of sadness, to put us upon prayer; of mirth, to

put us upon thanksgiving: Anima nunquam melius agit, quam ex impetu

insignis alicujus affectus--the soul never worketh more sweetly than

when it worketh in the force of some eminent affection. With what

advantage may we strike when the iron is hot! When the affections are

stirred up on a carnal occasion, convert them to a religious use: Jer.

xxii. 10, `Weep not for the dead, but weep for him that goeth away,,

&c.; that is, when sorrow is stirred up by your private loss, turn it

out into a public channel. So Luke xxiii. 28. So Christ would have them

to spiritualise their tears, `Weep not for me, O daughters of

Jerusalem, but for yourselves and children., Christ would not have them

to bewail his death in a carnal manner, but to bemoan their own sins

and their approaching ruin. So for joy and mirth: Eph. v. 4, `Not

jesting, but rather giving of thanks., Mentioning his sweet experiences

should be a Christian,s mirth and jesting. Oh! that we could learn this

wisdom, to take the advantage of a carnal motion, not to fulfil it, but

to employ it for the uses of the sanctuary. When the affections are

once raised, give them a right object, otherwise they are apt to

degenerate, and to offend in their measure, though their first occasion

was lawful.

Obs. 5. Prayer is the best remedy for sorrows. Griefs are eased by

groans and utterance. Such evaporation disburdeneth and cooleth the

heart. It is some ease to pour out our complaints into a friend,s

bosom. Prayer is but the exercise of our graces, and graces exercised

will yield comfort. We have great cause in afflictions to use the help

of prayer. (1.) That we may ask patience. If God lay on a great burden,

cry for a strong back. (2.) That we ask constancy, that you may not

`put forth your hands to iniquity,, Ps. cxxv. 3. (3.) That we may ask

hope, and trust and wait upon God for his fatherly love and care. (4.)

That we may ask a gracious improvement. The benefit of the rod is a

fruit of the divine grace, as well as the benefit of the word. (5.)

That we may ask deliverance, with a submission to God,s will: Ps.

xxxiv. 7, `I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from

all my fears., So Ps. cvii., it is four times repeated, `Then they

cried unto the Lord, and he saved them out of all their distresses,,

ver. 6, 13, 19, 28.

Obs. 6. Thanksgiving, or singing to God,s praise, is the proper duty in

the time of mercies or comforts. It is God,s bargain and our promise,

that if he would `deliver us,, we would `glorify him,, Ps. l. 15. The

spouse,s eyes are `dove,s eyes,, Cant. iv. Doves peck and look upward.

For every grain of mercy there is some return of praise. Look to it

then. Mercies work one way or another; they either be come the fuel of

our lusts or our praises; either they make us thankful or wanton. Your

condition is either a help or a hindrance in religion. Awaken

yourselves to this service: every new mercy calleth for a new song. It

is sad to hold a great farm by the divine bounty, and pay no rent.

[382] You should, as it is in the psalm for the Sabbath, `show forth

his loving-kindness every morning, and his faithfulness every night,,

Ps. xcii. 2. Our morning hopes are founded in God,s mercy, and our

evening returns of praise should take notice of his truth or

faithfulness. We would have mercy in the morning, but usually we forget

praise at night.

Obs. 7. That singing of psalms is a duty of the gospel. Having so fair

a leave from the text, it will be good to vindicate this holy ordinance

and institution. Most practise it out of custom, and in a formal,

perfunctory manner, and therefore are apt to lay it aside now it is

questioned. Usually the devil taketh that advantage to draw men of a

probable faith to atheism; [383] and when they do not know the reasons

of a duty they are the sooner won to the neglect of it. This

comfortable ordinance and spiritual recreation hath been several ways

impugned.

First, Some question the whole duty, as if it were legal worship,

because we have no formal and solemn institution of it in the New

Testament; but vainly, and without reason. For, (1.) Moral duties,

enjoined in the Old Testament, need no other institution in the New.

That it is a part of moral worship is discernible by the light of

nature; the heathens sang hymns to their gods. As also because in the

Old Testament it is always sorted with other duties that are of a

perpetual and immutable obligation; as Ps. xcv. 1, 2, &c., where there

is a perfect enumeration of all parts of public worship, the word and

prayer, &c., and singing is joined with them, as of equal necessity.

Yea, it is notable that all those psalms which prophesy of the worship

of the Gentiles under the gospel do mention singing: see Ps. cviii. 2,

and Ps. c. &c. (2.) We have the example of Christ and his apostles:

`They sang a hymn,, Mat. xxvi. 30. The same is recorded of Paul and

Silas, Acts xvi. 25. (3.) We have exhortations in the New Testament, as

Col. iii. 16, and Eph. v. 19, and the present scripture which we are

now upon. (4.) The consent of the churches. Pliny, in his letter to

Trajan, mentioneth the Christians, hymnos antelucanos, their morning

songs to Christ and God, as a usual practice in their solemn worship.

Justin Martyr saith, quaest. 117, ad Orthodoxos, Humnous kai`

proseucha`s to Theo anape'mpomen &c.--we send up prayers and psalms to

God, c.

Secondly, Others question whether we may sing scripture psalms, the

psalms of David, which to me seemeth to look like the cavil of a

profane spirit. But to clear this also. I confess we do not forbid

other songs; if grave and pious, after good advice they may be received

into the Church. Tertullian, in his Apology, showeth that in the

primitive times they used this liberty, either to sing scripture psalms

or such as were of a private composure. [384] But that which I am to

prove, that scriptural psalms may be sung, and I shall, ek perissou,

with advantage over and above, prove that they are fittest to be sung.

1. That they may be sung may be proved by reason; the word limiteth

not, and therefore we have no reason to make any restraint. They are

part of the word of God, full of matter that tendeth to instruction,

comfort, and the praise of God, which are the ends of singing; and

therefore, unless we will bring a disparagement upon the scriptures, we

cannot deny them a part in our spiritual mirth. Besides, thus it hath

been practised by Christ himself, by the apostles, the servants of the

Lord in all ages; and there is no reason why, in these dregs of time,

we should obtrude novel restraints upon the people of God. That Christ

himself sang scripture psalms may be probably collected out of Mat.

xxvi. 30, Humne'santes, `when they had sung a hymn,, &c.; which hymn,

that it was one or more of David,s psalms, may be proved by these

reasons to those that do not wrangle rather than scruple. (1.) By the

custom of the Jews; they were wont to end the paschal supper with

solemn psalms or hymns; they sang six psalms in the night of the

passover, when the lamb was eaten; the psalms were cxiii. to cxix.,

which were called by the Jews the Great Hallelujah, as Lucas Brugensis,

Scaliger, Buxtorf, and others skilled in their customs do inform us;

and it is more than probable that Christ followed their custom herein,

because in all other things he observed their usual passover rites.

(2.) From the word itself, they sang a hymn. Now what shall we

understand by this but such a hymn as was usual in that age? If any

should report the manner of our assemblies, and should say after such

exercises they sang a psalm, without any other description, what can

rationally be understood but the psalms in use amongst us? Now the

psalms or hymns then in use were the psalms of David. (3.) The

evangelists specify no new hymn made for this purpose, who are wont to

mention matters of far less moment and concernment. Grotius, indeed, is

singular, and thinketh that the 17th of John was this hymn; but that is

a solemn prayer, not in metre or measured words, hath not the style of

other hymns and songs; and those words were spoken by Jesus alone, the

disciples could not so properly join in them: `These words spake Jesus,

and lift up his eyes,, &c., John xvii. 1.

That hymn which Paul and Silas sang, Acts xvi. 25, was probably also a

scriptural hymn; such were used in that age. Certainly it must be such

a hymn as both were acquainted with, or else how could they sing it

together? If the practice of the apostles may be interpreted by their

instructions, the case will be clear. In Col. iii. 16, and Eph. v. 19,

Paul biddeth us `speak to one another, psa'lmois kai` u'mnois kai`

o'dais pneumatikais in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs., Now these

words (which are the known division of David,s psalms, and expressly

answering to the Hebrew words Shurim, Tehillim, and Mizmorim, by which

his psalms are distinguished and entituled), being so precisely used by

the apostle in both places, do plainly point us to the Book of Psalms.

2. Scripture psalms not only may be sung, but are fittest to be used in

the church, as being indited by an infallible and unerring Spirit, and

are of a more diffusive and unlimited concernment than the private

dictates of any particular person or spirit in the church. It is

impossible any should be of such a large heart as the penmen of the

word, to whom God vouchsafed such a public, high, and infallible

conduct; and therefore their excellent composures and addresses to God

being recorded and consigned to the use of the church for ever, it

seemeth a wonderful arrogance and presumption in any to pretend to make

better, or that their private and rash effusions will be more edifying.

Certainly if we consult with our own experience, we have little cause

to grow weary of David,s psalms, those that pretend to the gift of

psalmony, venting such wild, raw, and indigested stuff, belching out

revenge and passion, and mingling their private quarrels and interests

with the public worship of God. But suppose men of known holiness and

ability should be called to this task, and the matter propounded to be

sung be good and holy, yet certainly then men are like to suffer loss

in their reverence and affection, it being impossible that they should

have such absolute assurance and high esteem of persons ordinarily

gifted as of those infallibly assisted. Therefore, upon the whole

matter, I should pronounce, that so much as an infallible gift doth

excel a common gift, so much do scriptural psalms excel those that are

of a private composure.

Thirdly, There are divers other lesser scruples which I shall handle

briefly. Some will have no singing with the voice at all, because the

apostle saith, `singing within your hearts., Ay! but the apostle saith

there too, `speaking to yourselves., The inward part must not exclude

the outward; the lively voice doth not only give vent to affections,

but increaseth them. David speaketh often of praising God with his

tongue, and `with his glory,, Ps. cviii. 1, by which he meaneth his

tongue; as Ps. xvi. 9, `My heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth;, it

is rendered, `my tongue rejoiceth,, Acts ii. 16. Besides all this, the

benefit we may convey to others by loud singing; one bird sets all the

flock a-chirping. Austin speaketh how much he was moved with the melody

and singing of the church at Milan, Quantum flevimus in hymnis et

canticis suavisonantis ecclesiae, &c.

Others will have the psalmist only to sing, and the congregation say

amen, which seemeth to be the fashion in the church of Corinth, 1 Cor.

xiv. 14, 15. But mark, that singing spoken of there was the fruit of an

extraordinary gift, by which they were able to dictate a psalm in any

tongue, which gift being for confirmation, could not be discerned if

all should join. I confess this practice was, after the expiration of

the age of miracles, kept up in the church, as appeareth by that

passage of Tertullian cited before, and among us in our cathedrals,

where often one alone chanted, the rest being silent. But yet I should

judge that the most simple performance of this duty is as it is now

practised, the whole congregation joining; this is most suitable to the

precedents of scripture, where the duty is spoken of without any

relation to that extraordinary gift; as Exod. xv. 1, `Then sang Moses

and all Israel this song unto God;, so it is said, 2 Chron. v. 13, they

joined together, &c.; so Christ and his apostles sang a hymn, and Paul

and Silas joined, &c.

Others scruple the psalms because they are done in metre and rhyme; a

vain cavil. Many learned men, as Gomarus and others, prove, that the

psalms of David were penned in measure, and with musical accents.

Certainly, as we read them in our translation, a common ear may discern

that they are of a different style and cadency from other scriptures.

So Josephus saith the Song of Moses was penned in Hebrew hexameter

verse. Now there is no reason but that verse may be done into verse, or

such metre with which nations are most accustomed. If the scruple

continueth, such may sing the reading psalms, as hath been used in

cathedrals: and as Austin reporteth of Athanasius, that he was

pronuncianti quam canenti vicinior--that his singing was rather a more

deliberate and extended pronunciation.

Some scruple singing as a set and usual ordinance, urging this

scripture which we are now upon: `Is any merry? let him sing psalms;,

in which clause the apostle showeth the chiefest season, not the only

time of performance; as in the other duty, prayer, it is to be

practised at other times besides in affliction, though then it be most

needful. So also for singing; it is not only useful when we are merry,

that we may turn the course of our affections into a religious channel,

but sometimes to beget spiritual mirth, and to divert our sadness. Paul

and Silas sang in prison; and the disciples sang a hymn after the

supper of the Lord, though our Lord was presently to suffer, and they

were troubled at it, as appeareth John xiv. 1; in that sad hour they

sang.

Some scruple singing of scriptural psalms as set by others, because the

matter doth not suit with their case, but belongeth to other men and

other times. I answer--It is a folly to think that whatever we sing

must expressly suit with our case; you may as well say that whatever we

read should so suit. We are to meditate upon the psalm which is sung,

that we may receive comfort and hope from it, as from other scriptures,

Rom. xv. 4. I confess there must be always application. Some psalms

have direful imprecations. We are not so to sort them to our case as to

wish the like judgments on our private adversaries, but to think of the

horrible judgments of God on unbelievers, &c. Other psalms contain sad

narratives of the sufferings of the church or of Christ, which, though

we sing them, cannot be conceived as remonstances of our particular

case and state to God, but we are to use them as an occasion to awaken

meditations on the afflicted state of the church, or the agonies which

Christ endured for our sakes. But this scruple is of the less weight,

because the psalms do most commonly contain matter of such general and

comprehensive concernment, that they readily offer matter to us to

present our own case to God.

Some scruple singing with company of whose gracious estate they can

have no assurance, rather shrewd presumptions to the contrary. I

confess `praise is comely for the upright,, Ps. xxxiii. 1; but yet `it

is obligatory to all mankind. Wicked men are bound; and you have no

reason to discontinue your own acts of obedience because they are in

some sort mindful of theirs. You may as well refuse to hear with them

or pray with them; singing being a part of such kind of worship as is

not peculiar to a church as a church. Yea, upon this ground the saints

may refuse to `bless God,, because all the creatures join in consort

with them, and `all his works praise him,, Ps. cxlv. 10.

Lastly, some scruple the present translation of the Book of Psalms, the

metre being so low and flat, and coming so far short of David,s

original. I confess this is a defect that needeth public redress and

reformation. But it is good to make use of present means, though weak,

when we have no better; as the martyrs did of the first translations of

the Bible, which in many places were faulty and defective. At least, it

is far more safe to sing the psalms as now translated than to join in

the raw, passionate, and revengeful eructations of our modern

psalmists. Besides, for those that conscientiously and modestly scruple

this, the Lord hath provided some help by the more excellent

translations of Sands, Rous, Barton, and others. Thus I have showed how

many ways the devil seeketh to divert men from this comfortable

ordinance. I confess a psalmodical history would be of great use and

profit, and might be easily collected by them that are versed in

antiquity; but our leisure and present intendment will not now permit

it.

Ver. 14. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the

church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name

of the Lord.

Having given general directions, he descendeth now to particulars,

instanceth in one special kind of afflictions, in sickness. (1.) He

supposeth the case as likely to be frequent among them, `Is any sick

among you?, (2.) Proposeth the duty--(1st.) Of the sick Christian, `let

him call for the elders of the church,, (2d.) Of the elders, which is

twofold--[1.] One ordinary and immutable, `let him pray over him,, [2.]

The other temporary, and suiting with the gifts of those times,

`anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.,

This scripture hath occasioned much controversy. Though in this

exercise I would mainly pursue what is practical, yet when a matter

lieth obvious and fair, like the angel in the way of Balaam, it cannot

be avoided without some dispute and discussion: I shall therefore first

open the phrases, then clear the controversy, then give you the

observable notes.

Is any sick among you, asthenei ti`s en humin; `is any weak,, and

`without strength?, so the word signifieth. Sickness is often expressed

by this word astheneis, Mat. x. 8; esthenese, he was sick unto death,

Phil. ii. 26, 27; in the next verse the apostle changeth the word, the

prayer of faith shall save ka'mnonta, `him that laboureth, under a

disease; we translate `the sick., From this change of the word the

Papists collect that extreme unction is not to be administered but to

those that are mortally sick; but Cajetan, a cardinal of theirs, well

replieth, that James doth not say `is any sick unto death?, but `is any

sick?, It is true, there is somewhat in the change of the word; it

showeth that the elders must not be sent for upon every light occasion,

as soon as the head or foot acheth, as Serarius scoffeth at our

exposition, but in such grievous diseases wherein there is danger and

great pain; though it be an abuse of the Papists to interpret it of

extreme danger, and when the body is half carcassed.

Let him call, proskalesastho.--The motion coming from them is a call

which we cannot withstand.

The elders.--The word is of a promiscuous use; sometimes it is put for

our ancestors and those that lived before us: Heb. xi. 2, oi

presbu'teroi, `the elders obtained a good report;, that is, the fathers

of the Old Testament: so Mat. xv. 2, `the tradition of the elders;, so

it cannot be taken in this place. Sometimes it is put for elders in

years and wisdom, 1 Tim. v. 1, 2, `elder men,, and `elder women.,

Aretius saith such are here understood, any ancient and discreet

Christians in the vicinage; [385] but that is a private opinion without

ground; the apostle saith, presbutrou's tes ekklesi'as, `the elders of

the church., Thirdly, then, there are elders by office. Now the term

elder is given to all the offices and administrations in the church,

from the apostle to the deacon; apostles, pastors, teachers, ruling

brethren, deacons, are all called elders. Principally here is

understood that order of elders who are elsewhere called bishops,

whether ruling or teaching elders, chiefly the latter. In sickness we

call in the best helps, and it is to be supposed that the best gifts

reside in them who are called to teach in the church; and to add the

greater seal to their ministry, and to supply the want of physicians,

many of them were endued with the gift of healing. Now mark, he saith,

plurally, tous presbute'rous, `the elders,, because, saith Grotius, in

those eastern countries seven elders were usually called to this

service. Certainly in the primitive times there was great love in the

several churches and societies of the faithful, and many elders would

go to one sick man. Some say it is an enallage, let him call the elders

of the church; that is, one of the elders, as if the speech did imply

the order rather than number; as we say, Send him to the schools, that

is, to some school; so Call for physicians, that is, go to men of that

rank, &c. This sense is considerable, though I do believe the apostle

speaketh plurally, be cause in every church there were many, and as

they were associated in all acts of superiority and government, so in

all acts of courtesy and charity; and indeed visiting of the sick is an

act of such great skill; I mean to apply ourselves to them for their

comfort and salvation, that it should be done with joint consent.

And let them pray over him.--Here is the first duty of the elders, over

him, that is, for him say some; but ep' auton doth not easily bear that

construction. It either implieth that ancient rite of covering the

diseased body with the body of him that prayed, as Elijah did one

child, 1 Kings xvii. 21, and Elisha another, 2 Kings iv. 24, Paul did

Eutychus, Acts xx. 10, `he went down and fell on Eutychus,, praying for

life, a rite that expressed much fervency, and a desire that the dying

party might, as it were, partake of his own life; or by prayer over him

he meaneth laying on of hands on the sick, which was used by the

apostle in cures; see Mark xvi. 17, 18. So Paul healed the father of

Publius by laying hands on him. So Cyril on Leviticus, citing this

place, instead of `that they may pray over him,, readeth ut imponant ei

manus, that they may lay their hands on him. The ceremony had this

significancy: they did, as it were, point at the sick man, and present

him to God,s pity, as you know present things do the more stir

affections, as Christ would not pray for Lazarus till he could pray

over him; for when the stone was taken away, and the object was in his

sight, then it is said, `Jesus prayed,, John xi. 41.

Anointing him with oil.--There is but one place more in the scriptures

that speaketh of using oil in the healing and cure of diseases, and

that is Mark vi. 13, `They cast out many devils, and anointed with oil

many that were sick, and healed them., Oil among the Hebrews was a

usual symbol of the divine grace, and so fitly used as a sign of that

power and grace of the Spirit which was discovered in miraculous

healing; it was an extraordinary sign of an extraordinary and

miraculous cure. It was the error of Aretius to think that the apostle

meant some medicinal oil; he rendereth it salubria medicamenta non

negligant; he was not the first that was in that mistake. Wickliff

before him held those oils in Palestine excellent and medicinal, and

therefore used. But this I say is a mistake, for oil was not used as an

instrument, but as a symbol of the cure. The apostle doth not mention

what kind of oil it should be, probably oil-olive, as wine is put to

signify the wine of the grape, which is the most common. Therefore, by

the way, that extreme unction used by the Papists is but a ridiculous

hypocrisy, and carrieth little proportion with this rite; for they

require oil-olive mixed with balsam, consecrated by a bishop, who must

nine times bow the knee, saying thrice, Ave, sanctum oleum, and thrice

more Ave, sanctum chrisma, and thrice more, Ave, sanctum balsamum. But

of this more anon.

In the name of the Lord; that is, either by his authority, calling upon

him to operate by his power according to the outward rite, or in his

stead, as his ministers, or to his glory, to the honour of Christ,

signified here in the term Lord, that being his proper appellation as

mediator. All these miracles and cures were wrought in his name: Mark

xvi. 17, `In my name shall they cast out devils:, so Acts iii. 6, `In

the name of Jesus of Nazareth arise and walk,, and ver. 16, `His name,

through faith in his name, hath made the man strong.,

Having opened the phrases, I come now to open the controversy, whether

this anointing with oil be a standing ordinance in the church? The

Papists make it a sacrament, which they call the sacrament of extreme

unction; others in our days would revive it as a standing ordinance for

church members, expecting some miraculous cure, therefore I must deal

with both. I know that the intricacies of dispute are unpleasant to a

vulgar ear, therefore I shall not traverse arguments to and fro, but

cut the work short by laying down some propositions, that may prevent

both the error of the Papists and the novelism of those that would

revive this rite in our days. The propositions are these:--

1. In the very apostles, time, when it was most in use, it was not

absolutely necessary, nor instituted by Christ. Some Protestants, I

confess, say that it was instituted by Christ as a temporary rite,

which is denied even by some among the Papists, as Lombard, Cajetan,

Hugo, who all found it upon apostolical practice. For my part, I think

it was only approved by Christ, and not instituted, and taken up as a

usual practice among the Hebrews. As I remember, Grotius, in his

commentary on the Evangelists, proveth that it was a usual rite among

that people, it being their custom to express everything inward and

spiritual by some hieroglyphic and visible symbol; and therefore God,

in a condescension to them, appointed so many rites and figures

suitable to the genius of that nation; and therefore, when they prayed

for the sick, they would anoint them with oil, as a token of that ease

and joy which they should obtain from God. This right was imitated by

the apostles, and by the primitive Christians, with such preciseness

and constancy, that they would never give or take any medicine without

anointing with oil, so that I think, verily, it was nothing but an

imitation of a Jewish rite which Christ approved, but never instituted;

for when Christ sent out the apostles, and the power of healing was so

solemnly conferred upon them, we hear of no such commands of anointing

with oil. He bid them `heal sicknesses,, Mark xvi. 18, but prescribeth

not the manner. This you will grant, at least, that it never had that

solemn ratification, till the Lord come, which other standing

ordinances have. Yea, I find it to be a mere arbitrary rite in the

apostles, practice, oil being seldom used; they healed by touch, by

shadow, by handkerchief, by laying on of hands, by word of mouth, &c.

So that was an arbitrary rite which the Lord approved so far as thereby

to discover his power. Something may be objected against this, as why

then doth James press the elders to anoint with oil? I answer--That

they might not neglect the grace of God, which in those times was

usually dispensed in a concomitancy with this rite; as long as the gift

remained, the accustomed rite and symbol might be used. But you will

say he coupleth it with a moral duty, with prayer, which is an act of

perpetual worship. I answer--It is not unusual in scripture to couple

an ordinary duty with an extraordinary rite--prayer and laying on of

hands; baptism and laying on of hands; and so here, prayer and

anointing with oil. But you will say, God honoured it with a miraculous

effect. I answer--So he did the water of Siloam to heal the blind, John

ix. 7, the pool of Bethesda to cure the diseased, John v. 2, Jordan for

Naainan,s leprosy, &c.; and yet these cannot be set up as sacraments

and standing ordinances.

2. In the apostles, time it was [386] promiscuously used and ap plied

to every member of the church, but with great prudence and caution, for

the apostles only anointed those of whose recovery they were assured by

the Holy Ghost, as James here seemeth to restrain it to such an object

where they could pray in faith. He that gave the gift did always

suggest the seasons of using it; with the power he gave discretion,

that by a common use they might not expose the gift to scorn. It was a

mistake in our learned Whitaker to say, that oleum symbolum erat

valetudinis recuparatae, et quod apostoli nullos unguerent nisi � morbo

liberatos--that anointing was a symbol of health already recovered, and

that the apostles anointed none but those that were in a fair way of

recovery. However, it is true that they anointed none but those of whom

they were persuaded that they would recover, otherwise the apostle Paul

would never have left Trophimus sick at Miletum, 2 Tim. iv. 20, or

sorrowed so much for Epaphroditus, sickness, if he could so easily have

helped it by anointing with oil, Phil. ii. 27. But now among the

Papists it is not given but to those that are halt, dead, or at the

point of death; so the Council of Florence decreed, Hoc sacramentum

illi de cujus morte non timetur, dari non debet.

3. In the more common use of it afterward, all were not healed that

were anointed; God gave out his grace and power as he saw good, for the

effect did not depend upon anointing, but the prayer of faith, and if

all that were anointed had recovered, there would have been no

mortality in the primitive times. God wrought then as he worketh now,

by the ordinary means, sometimes blessing them, some times leaving them

ineffectual, all depending upon his free pleasure and operation.

4. When it did cease we cannot tell; when it should cease we may easily

judge, if we will but understand the nature, use, and end. The rite

ceased when the gift ceased, which God hath taken from the world almost

these fifteen hundred years. Gifts of healing are coupled with other

miraculous gifts, Mat. x. 8; Mark vi. 13; xvi. 17, 18; and ceased when

they ceased. At the first mission of the apostles to gain the world,

Christ invested them with these gifts. As a tree newly set needeth

watering, which afterwards we discontinue, so after some space of time

these dispensations ceased, for miracles would not have been miracles,

but reckoned among ordinary effects, if still continued. He still

provideth for his own, but not in that supernatural way; and healeth as

he seeth cause. When men can restore the effect, let them restore the

rite, otherwise why should we keep up a naked and idle ceremony? Thus

we see when it should cease; but when miracles did cease is not easy to

be defined. If the story be true in Tertullian, [387] they continued

some two hundred years after Christ, for he speaketh of one Proculus, a

Christian, that anointed Severus and recovered him: Proculum

Christianum qui Torpacion nominabatur, Evodiae procuratorem, qui eum

per oleum aliquando curaverat, et in palatio suo habuit usque ad mortem

ejus. Some suspect the story because of the strangeness of the names,

Proculus and Evodia, and the silence of other authors about this thing;

though Pamele saith that in the Martyrologies, on the Calends of

December, there is mention made of one Proculus, a priest near Rome, in

a place where Severus did use to resort. Ever since that passage there

is a deep silence of it in histories.

5. Popish anointing, or extreme unction, is a mere hypocritical

pageantry. It must be prepared by a bishop, heated with thus many

breathings, enchanted with uttering so many words. The members anointed

are their eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and, for greater entireness, the

reins and feet; in women the navel. The form--By this holy oil, and his

tender mercy, piissimam misericordiam, God forgive thee whatever thou

hast sinned by thy sight, thy hearing, thy smell, thy touch. Nay, to

make the blasphemy more ridiculous, �gidius Conink, a schoolman, saith

those words, per piissimam misericordiam, by his most tender mercy, may

be left out. The administrator must be a priest, may be a bishop; the

object, a person that must be believed to be at the point and danger of

death; the end of it they make to be the expulsion of the relics of

sin, healing the soul, and helping it against temptations, and in the

congress with Satan, or combat with the powers of the air. So the form

of Milan and Venice, which are somewhat different from others, Unguo te

oleo sancto in nomine Patris, &c., ut more militis praeparatus, &c. To

propose these things is to confute them; for the most ignorant cannot

but see the great difference between a miracle and a sacrament, curing

the body and the expulsion of sin. Besides, in the circumstances of it

there is a great deal of difference among themselves. But let this

suffice; I come to the points.

Obs. 1. From the supposition is any among you sick? The note is

obvious. Christ,s worshippers are not exempted from sickness, no more

than any other affliction. God may chasten those whom he loveth. It is

said, John xi. 3, `Behold he whom thou lovest is sick., Those that are

dear to God have their share of miseries. Austin asketh, Si amatur,

quomodo infirmatur? If he were beloved, how came he to be sick? In the

outward accidents of life God would make no difference. It is usual in

providence that they who have God,s heart should feel God,s hand most

heavy. I have observed it, that God,s children never question his love

so much as in sickness; our thoughts return upon us in such retirement,

and the weakness of the body discomposeth the mind, and depriveth us of

the free exercise of spiritual reason; to sense and feeling all is

sharp. Besides, in sickness we have not that express comfort from

Christ,s sufferings which we have in other troubles. It is a sweet help

to the thoughts when we can see that Christ went through every

miserable condition to which we are exposed. Now, Christ endured want,

nakedness, trouble, reproach, injustice, &c., and not sickness. Ay! but

he had passions like sickness, hunger, thirst, and weariness, wherewith

his body was afflicted. Christ, by experience, knoweth what it is to be

under the pains and inconveniences of the body. But if you have not the

example of Christ, you have the example of all the saints. Paul had a

racking pain, which he expresseth by sko'lops en sa'rki, `a thorn in

the flesh,, 2 Cor. xii. 7-9, and could have no other answer but only

`my grace is sufficient for thee., He alludeth to such a kind of

punishment as slaves, or men not free, were put to for great offences:

they sharpened a stake, and pointed it with iron, and put it in at his

back till it came out at his mouth, and so with his face upward he died

miserably. And, therefore, by that expression the apostle intendeth

some bodily distemper and racking pain; suppose the stone, the gout,

the strangury, inward ulcers, or some like disease. Of this mind is

Cyprian [388] among the fathers; the word asthe'neia, which we

translate infirmity, but is usually put in the New Testament for

sickness, confirmeth it. Certainly he speaketh of such infirmities in

which he would glory, because of concomitant grace, and such as were

apt to cure pride; and therefore it cannot be meant of sin or some

prevailing lust, as is usually expounded. Therefore comfort yourselves:

God,s dearest saints may have experience of sorest sicknesses; and if

God afflict you with an aching head, you will have abundant recompense

if thereby he giveth you a better heart; and if he make your bones

sore, bear it, if thereby he breaketh the power of your corruptions. It

is no unusual thing for saints to `chatter like cranes,, as Hezekiah

did, Isa. xxxviii.; and for healthy souls to be troubled with a weak

body, as Gaius was, 3 John 2. Sicknesses are not tokens of God,s

displeasure. It was the folly of Job,s friends to judge of him by his

calamity. Usually men smite with the tongue where God hath smitten by

his hand. Alas! the children of God have bodies of the same make with

others; and in this case `all things come alike to all., Hezekiah, Job,

David, Epaphroditus, they were all corrected, but not condemned. It was

Popish malice to upbraid Calvin with his diseases: `You may see what he

is,, say they, `by his sicknesses and diseases., He was indeed a man of

an indefatigable industry, but of a sickly weak body; and the same hath

befallen many of the precious servants of the Lord.

Obs. 2. From that let him call for the elders. Note, that the chief

care of a sick man should be for his soul. If any be sick, the apostle

doth not say, let him send for the physician, but the elders.

Physicians are to be called in their place, but not first, not chiefly.

It was Asa,s fault, 2 Chron. xvi. 12, `In his disease he sought not to

the Lord, but to the physicians., Sickness is God,s messenger to call

us to meet with God. Do not as the most do, send for the bodily

physician, and, when they are past all hope and cure, for the divine.

Alas! how many do so, and ere a word of comfort can be administered to

them, are sent to their own place.

Obs. 3. From that let him call. The elders must be sent for. A man that

hath continued in opposition is loath to submit at the last hour, and

to call the elders to his spiritual assistance. I remember, Aquinas

saith, Sacramentum extremae unctionis non nisi petentibus verbo vel

signo dari debet, that this last office must not be performed but to

those that require it. Possidonius, in the life of Austin, saith, that

Austin was wont of his own accord to visit the poor, the father less,

and the widow, but the sick never till he was called. It is indeed

suitable to true religion to `visit the fatherless,, James i. 27; but

the sick must call for the elders. Truly sometimes I have been afraid

to prostitute the comforts of Christianity to persons sottishly

neglecting their own souls. I confess sometimes, where we know our

company will not be unwelcome, and in some other cases, we may go

uncalled, that we may learn of our master, and be `found of them that

asked not for us,, Isa. lxv. 1.

Obs. 4. From that the elders. For our comfort in sickness it is good to

call in the help of the guides and officers of the church. They,

excelling in gifts, are best able to instruct and pray. They can with

authority, and in a way of office, comfort and instruct; the prayers of

prophets have a special efficacy. So God saith to Abimelech of Abraham,

Gen. xx. 7, `Go to him, for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for

thee., This was the special work of the prophets, to pray for the

people, and they had more solemn promises of success: Jer. xxvii. 18,

`If they be prophets, and the word of the Lord be in them, let them

entreat the Lord., They that speak God,s word to you are fittest to

commend your case to God. Well, then, do not despise this help. Acts

done by virtue of an office are under a more solemn assurance of a

blessing: `Whose sins ye remit, they are remitted,, &c., It is not

spoken to every believer. They can authoritatively minister comfort. It

is not false divinity to say, God will hear their prayers, when he will

not hear the prayers of others: Job xlii. 8, `Job shall pray for you,

and him will I accept, lest I deal with you after your folly., Though

they were good men, yet God would hear Job; therefore in Ezekiel Job is

proverbially used for a praying prophet. Use their help then; it is

help in the way of an ordinance, and then you may the better expect a

blessing. When Hezekiah was sick, Isaiah, the prophet, cometh to give

him faithful counsel, 2 Kings xx. 1, 2.

Obs. 5. Again from that the elders. Visiting of the sick should be

performed with the joint care of church officers; it is a weighty work

y and needeth many shoulders; the diversity of gifts for prayer and

discourse seemeth to call for it; it is the last office we can perform

to those of whom the Lord hath made us overseers.

Obs. 6. From that let them pray. One necessary work in visiting is

commending sick persons to God, and this prayer must be made by them,

or over them, that their sight may the more work upon us, and our

prayers may work upon them.

Obs. 7. From that and anoint him with oil. From this clause observe the

condescension of God. The first preachers of the gospel of Christ had

power to do miracles: the doctrine itself, being so rational and

satisfactory, deserved belief; but God would give a visible

confirmation, the better to encourage our faith; when Christ had ended

his sermon upon the mount, then he wrought miracles; before, there was

a great rest and silence of prodigy and wonder: John iii. 2, `We know

that thou art a teacher sent from God, for no man can do such things as

thou dost, unless God were with him., This was the satisfaction God

would give the world concerning the person of the Messiah. Now those

miracles are ceased, Christ having gotten a just title to human belief,

and that we might not be left to uncertainty. The devil can do strange

things, though not such as are truly miraculous; and, therefore, lest

we should be deceived, Christ hath foretold that we can expect nothing

but `the lying wonders, of Antichrist, 2 Thes. ii. 7, and that `false

Christs shall show great signs,, Mat. xxiv. 24.

Obs. 8. From that anoint with oil in order to cure, note, that the

miracles done in Christ,s name were wrought by power, but ended in

mercy. In the very confirmation of the gospel God would show the

benefit of it. The miracles tended to deliver men from miseries of soul

and body, from blindness, and sickness, and devils, and so best suited

with that gospel which giveth us promises of this life and that which

is to come. These miracles were a meet pursuance of his doctrine; not

only confirmations of faith, but instances of mercy and charity; not

miracles of pomp, merely to evince the glory of his person, but

miracles of mercy and actions of relief, to show the sweetness of his

doctrine; as also to teach us that in the gospel God would chiefly

manifest his power in showing mercy.

Obs. 9. From that in the name of the Lord. All the miracles that were

wrought were to be wrought in Christ,s name. The apostles and primitive

Christians, though they had such an excellent trust, did not abuse it

to serve their own name and interests, but Christ,s; teaching us that

we should exercise all our gifts and abilities by Christ,s power to

Christ,s glory: Ps. li. 16, `Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall

show forth thy praise;, that was a right aim. To desire quickening for

our own glory, is but like him that lighted his candle at one of the

lamps of the altar to steal by, or to beg the aid and contributions of

heaven for the service of hell. The name and form was made use of by

the sons of Sceva, but to their own ends, and therefore to their own

ruin, Acts xix. 13. To do things in his name, that is, by abilities

received from him, with a pretence to his glory, when we design our

own, will succeed but ill with us, as that attempt did to them. Christ

will be honoured with his own gifts, and, in dispensing every ability,

expecteth the return of praise.

Ver. 15. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord

shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be

forgiven him.

Here he cometh to show the effect of this anointing and praying, though

it is notable he ascribeth it rather to the prayer than to the oil, the

moral means being much more worthy than the ritual and ceremonial; and,

therefore, he doth not mention the anointing, but the prayer of faith;

as also to show that this is the standing spiritual means of cure, the

other being but an arbitrary rite suited to those times.

The prayer of faith; that is, made out of, or in faith. This is added

to show that this remedy should only be effectual when they had a

special revelation or persuasion of the success of it, there being

required to the miracle faith both in the elders and person sick; faith

in him that did the miracle, and faith in him upon whom it was wrought;

otherwise the one was not to attempt it, or to the other, if

administered, it would not prove successful We see unbelief did ponere

obicem, let and hinder our Saviour,s operation: Mark vi. 5, `He could

do no mighty work,, &c.

Shall save the sick, so'sei, save.--He speaketh of a corporal

infirmity, and therefore it is meant of a corporal salvation, that is,

shall restore to health: so saving is used for healing, Mat. ix. 21;

Mark vi. 56, `were saved,, or `made whole.,

And the Lord shall raise him up, egerei.--It is used for a resurrection

out of death, and a restoration to health out of sickness, not only

here but elsewhere: Mark i. 31, `He came and took her by the hand,,

kai` egeiren aute`n, `lift her up,, or `raised her up., So Mat. viii.

15, ege'rthe kai` dieko'nei, `She was raised, and ministered to them.,

The reason of the word is, because sick persons lie upon their beds,

and when they are recovered we say, he is up again, upon his legs

again. `The Lord shall raise him up;, this is added to show by whose

power it is done: faith,s worth and efficacy lieth in its object, so

that it is not faith properly, but God called upon in faith, that

saveth the sick.

And if he have committed sins.--Why doth the apostle speak

hypothetically? Who is there that can say `my heart is clean,? Prov.

xx. 9. I suppose the apostle would imply those special sins by which

the disease was contracted and sent of God. Now herein he might speak

by way of supposition, sicknesses being not always the fruit of sins,

but sometimes laid on, as a means to discover God,s glory, John ix. 2.

They shall be forgiven him.--But how can another man,s prayer of faith

obtain the remission of my sins? I answer--Very well in God,s way, and

as they procure means of conversion and repentance for me; not as if

because they pray and believe, though I do what I will, I shall be

forgiven; but they pray, and therefore God will give me a humble heart,

and, in the way of the gospel, the comfort of a pardon; for certainly

we are to ask spiritual matters for others, as well as temporal; and,

if we ask, there must be some hope at least that God will grant. Out of

this verse observe:--

Obs. 1. That means, whether moral or ritual, are no further effectual

than they are accompanied with faith; anointing will not do it, prayer

will not do it; but `the prayer of faith shall save the sick., In the

primitive times, when miracles were in their full force and vigour, the

effect is always ascribed to faith: Mat. ix. 22; `Thy faith hath made

thee whole., Christ doth not say, thy touching my garment, but thy

faith. You shall see it is said, Mark vi. 56, `As many as touched his

garment were made whole;, and, therefore, the woman thought that the

emanation was natural, and not of free dispensation. To instruct her,

Christ showeth it was not the rite, but her faith; so Acts iii. 16,

`His name, by faith in his name, hath made this man strong., Mark, that

place showeth, that as means cannot work without faith, so neither will

the principal cause,--`his name, through faith in his name., The

disciples, though invested with high gifts, could not cure the lunatic

for want of faith: Mat. xvii. 17, `I brought him to thy disciples, and

they could not cure him; and Jesus said, O faithless generation!, Well,

then, learn that in all duties and means we should mind the exercise of

faith, and we should strive to make the persuasion as express and

particular as the promises will give leave: acts of trust are engaging,

and the way to get God,s power exercised is to glorify it in our own

dependence.

Obs. 2. That all our prayers must be made in faith; our apostle beateth

much upon that argument: James i. 6, `Let him ask in faith,, &c. Faith

is the fountain of prayer, and prayer should be nothing else but faith

exercised; none can come to Christ rightly but such as are persuaded to

be the better for him; all worship is founded in good thoughts of God.

We have no reason to doubt; we always find a better welcome with him

than we can expect; therefore, in all your addresses to God, pray in

faith; that is, either magnifying his power by counter balancing the

difficulty, or magnifying his love, by referring the success to his

pleasure.

Obs. 3. Prayers made in faith are usually heard and answered; Christ is

so delighted with it that he can deny it nothing: Mat. xv. 28, `O

woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee as thou wilt., Christ

speaketh there as if a believer did obtain as much as he can wish for.

Obs. 4. The efficacy of faith in the use of means is not from its own

merits, but from God,s power and grace. The apostle saith, `Faith

saveth;, but addeth, `The Lord shall raise him up., Faith is but the

instrument; it is a grace that hath no merit in itself; it is the empty

hand of the soul, and deputed to such high services because it looketh

for all from God. The Papists look upon it as an act in us; and because

reason will suggest that it is not of worth enough and sufficient for

such high effects, they piece it up with works, which, they say, give

it a value and a merit.

Obs. 5. That sins are often the cause of sicknesses; we may thank

ourselves for our diseases. The rabbins say, that when Adam tasted the

forbidden fruit, his head ached. Certainly there was the rise and root

of man,s misery: 1 Cor. xi. 30, `For this cause many are sick and

weak,, &c. The body is often the instrument of sins, and therefore the

object of diseases; the plague and sore of the heart causeth that of

the body. It is very notable that Christ in all his cures pointeth at

the root of the disease: Mat. ix. 2, `Be of good cheer; thy sins are

forgiven thee., It would have been an ineffectual cure without a

pardon; while sin remaineth, you carry the matter of the disease about

you. So John v. 14, `Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.,

Obedience is the best physic; while sin remaineth, the distemper may be

stopped, but not cured; it will break out in a worse sore and scab. The

prophet Isaiah saith of Christ, Isa. liii. 4, `He hath borne our griefs

and carried our sorrows;, the meaning is, the punishment of our sins:

so St Peter applieth it, 1 Peter ii. 24: `He bare our sins in his own

body on the tree,, which is the express reading of the Septuagint; but

now Matthew applieth it to Christ,s cure of sicknesses, Mat. viii. 17,

`That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, He

took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses., How shall we reconcile

those places? I answer thus--In taking away sickness, which is the

effect, Christ would represent taking away sin, which is the cause;

Christ,s act in taking away sickness was a type of taking away sin. Now

Matthew applieth that^ to the sign, which did more properly agree to

the truth itself or thing signified; for you may observe, for the

clearing of this and other scriptures, that as the patriarchs, in their

actions and in what they did, were types of Christ; so Christ,s own

actions were in a manner types of what he himself would do more

principally. As casting out of devils signified the spiritual

dispossessing of Satan, and therefore there happened so many

possessions in Christ,s time; so the curing of blindness, the giving of

spiritual sight, and taking away of sicknesses, the pardoning of sins.

Well, then, if sin be the cause of sickness, if we would preserve or

recover health, let us avoid sin: Exod. xv. 26, `If thou wilt hearken

unto me, I will bring none of these diseases upon thee,, &c.; otherwise

you may, as that woman, spend your whole estate upon the physicians,

and yet the cause continue. You shall see, Deut. xxviii. 21, 22, sin is

threatened with the consumption, fever, and inflammation; usually the

disease answereth the sin, the distempered heats of lust are punished

by an inflammation: Asa put the prophet in the stocks, and he himself

was diseased in his feet, 2 Chron. xvi. 9, with ver. 12. There were

times when God did more visibly plague disobedience, as in the times of

the law; when dispensations were more corporal, diseases were a part of

God,s coercive discipline. However now and then God useth the like

dispensations; sinners are met with according to the kind of their

offence, though many I confess are left to be taken out by their own

rust, and, like chimneys, are let alone so long foul till at length

they be fired. But how many adulterers have we seen going up and down

like walking spittles? How many beastly epicures, whose skins have been

set afire by their own riot and surguedry, &c.?

Obss. 6. That is the best cure which is founded in a pardon. The

apostle saith, `shall save the sick, and if he have committed sins,

they shall be forgiven him., O my brethren! it were ill if any of us

should be cured without a pardon, if the stripe and wound should remain

upon the conscience when the body is made sound and whole; therefore

first sue out your pardon; that is proper physic which worketh upon the

cause. David saith, Ps. ciii. 4, `Bless the Lord, who forgiveth all

thine iniquities; and healeth all thy diseases., There is the right

method; a sick man,s work first lieth with God, and then with the

physician. Asa went first to the physician, and therefore it sped but

ill with him. When God taketh away the disease, and doth not take away

the guilt, it is not a deliverance, but a reprieval from present

execution.

Ver. 16. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another,

that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man

availeth much.

For the connection, many copies have oun `confess your faults

therefore,, as inferring this direction from what was said before.

However it be, there is a connection between the verses, for therefore

would he have the special fault acknowledged, that they might the more

effectually pray one for another. From whence note:--

Obs. That there is a connection between pardon and confession. The

apostle saith `his sins shall be forgiven him;, and then `confess

therefore your faults., See the like in other places: Prov. xxviii. 13,

`He that confesseth and forsaketh his sins, shall find mercy;, so 1

John i. 9, `If we confess,, &c. This is the ready way to pardon, it is

the best way to clear the process of heaven; that which is condemned in

one court, is pardoned in others. God hath made a law against sin, and

the law must have satisfaction; sin must be judged in the court of

heaven or in the court of conscience, by God or us. In confession the

divine judgment is anticipated, 1 Cor. xi. 31, 32; it is the best way

to honour mercy. When sins abound in our feeling, mercy is the more

glorious. God will have pardon fetched out in such a way in which there

is no merit; by confession justice may be glorified, but not satisfied.

We cannot make God satisfaction, and therefore he requireth

acknowledgment: `He keepeth not his anger for ever; only acknowledge

thine iniquity,, Jer. iii. 13. It is the most rational way to settle

our comfort; griefs expressed are best eased and mitigated; all

passions are allayed by vent and utterance. David roared when he kept

silence, but `I said, I will confess, and thou forgavest,, Ps. xxxii.

5. Besides, it is the best way to bring the soul into a dislike of sin.

Confession is an act of mortification, it is as it were the vomit of

the soul; it breedeth a dislike of the sweetest morsels when they are

cast up in loathsome ejections; sin is sweet in commission, but bitter

in the remembrance. God,s children find that their hatred is never more

keen and exasperated against sin than in confessing. Well, then, come

and open your case to God without guile of spirit, and then you may sue

out your pardon. David maketh it an argument of his confidence: `Blot

out my offences, for I acknowledge my transgression,, Ps. li. 3.

Confession doth not offer a bill of indictment to God,s justice, but a

sad complaint to God,s pity and compassion. Oh! set upon this duty; it

is irksome to the flesh, but salutary and healthy to the spirit. Guilt

is shy of God,s presence; the Lord is dreadful to wounded consciences.

Ay! but consider this is the only way to sue out your pardon. Gracious

souls would not have pardon but in God,s way: Domine, da prius

poenitentiam, et postea indulgentiam--Lord, give me repentance, and

then give me pardon, saith Fulgentius. But you will say, We confess and

find no comfort. I answer--It is because you are not so ingenuous with

God as you should be; you do not come with a necessary clearness and

openness of mind. David saith none have the comfort of a pardon but

those `in whose spirit there is no guile,, Ps. xxxii. 2. Usually there

is some sin at the bottom, which the soul is loath to cast up, and then

God layeth on trouble; as David lay roaring as long as he kept Satan,s

counsel. Moses had a privy sore which he would not disclose. He

pleadeth other things, insufficiency, want of elocution; but carnal

fear was the main: therefore God gently toucheth this privy sore: Exod.

iv. 19, `Arise, Moses, for the men that sought thy life in Egypt be

dead., He had never pleaded this, but God knew what was the inward let.

So it is with Christians, some distemper is cockered in the soul; this

guile is shaken off with difficulty, but always kept with damage. So

you shall see in the history of Job; Job had complained that he did not

know the reason of his hard usage; one of his friends answereth him,

Job. xxiii. 9, to the end, that God speaketh `several times, and men

note it not;, therefore God layeth on trouble upon trouble, and

temptation upon temptation, and all for want of ingenuous and open

dealing with him, till at length we confess; and then that rare

messenger, `one of a thousand,, cometh to seal up our comforts to us:

for God will not open his heart to us till we open our hearts to him:

`But if any say, I have sinned, and it profited me not, then his life

shall see light., Usually thus it is, there is some sin at the bottom,

and therefore God continueth trouble; therefore it is best to take

David,s course, Ps. cxix. 26, `I declared my ways, and thou heardest

me., He opened his whole estate to God, and then God gave him the light

and comfort of grace.

Confess your faults one to another, exomologeisthe allelois.--This

clause hath been diversely applied. The Papists make it the ground of

auricular confession, but absurdly; for then the priest must as well

confess to the penitent person, as the penitent person to the priest.

For James speaketh of such a confession as is reciprocal, as the words

imply; therefore some of the more ingenuous Papists have disclaimed

this text. [389] Others apply it to injuries; as the sick person must

reconcile himself to God that he may recover, so to his neighbour whom

he hath wronged or offended. But parapto'mata, faults, are of a larger

signification than to be restrained to injuries. Some understand it of

those sins in which we have offended by joint consent, as if a woman

hath humbled herself to the lusts of another, she must confess her sin

to him, and consequently and reciprocally he must acknowledge his sin

to her, that they may by mutual consent quicken themselves to

repentance. But this interpretation and application of the words is too

restrained and narrow. I suppose the apostle speaketh of such sins as

`did most wound the conscience in sickness as the special cause of it;

and therefore joineth this advice of confession with healing and

prayer, this being a means most conducible to quicken others to actions

of spiritual relief, as the application of apt counsels, and the

putting up of fit prayers. Things spoken at random have not usually

such an efficacy and comfort in them. The note is:--

Obs. That there is a season of confessing our sins, not only to God,

but to man. I will not digress into controversy; I shall briefly

show--(1.) The evils and inconveniences of that confession which the

Papists require; (2.) The seasons wherein we must confess to man.

First, For auricular confession, or that confession which the Papists

require, I shall describe it to you. The Papists call it the sacrament

of penance, by which a man is bound, at least once a year, to confess

to a priest all the sins he hath committed since he was last shriven,

with all the circumstances of it, quis, quid, ubi, quibus, auxiliis,

&., and from this law none are exempted, neither prince nor king, no,

not the Pope himself; in it they place a great deal of merit and

opinion. The truth is, this is the great artifice and engine by which

they keep the people in devotion to their interests, knowledge of

secrets rendering them the more feared. [390] Now that which we

disprove in it is--(1.) The absolute necessity of it; confession to men

being a thing only necessary in some cases; in others confession to God

may be enough. Necessity, indeed, is laid upon that, 1 John i. 9. (2.)

The requiring of such a precise and accurate enumeration of their sins,

with all their circumstances, under the pain of an anathema, which,

being impossible, maketh it one of those pho'rtia dusba'stakta, those

insupportable burdens which neither we nor our fathers were able to

bear. In short, this scrupulous enumeration is nothing else but a rack

to the conscience, invented and exercised without any reason, no man,s

memory being so happy as to answer the requiry, Ps. xix. 12. (3.) Their

making of it a part of a sacrament of divine institution. The

jure-divinity of it they plead from this place, but wretchedly. One of

the most modest of their own writers, Gregory de Valentia, reckoneth up

many Papists that say the ground of it only was universal tradition,

although indeed it was instituted twelve hundred years after Christ,

among other superstitions, by Innocent the Third. (4.) The manner as it

is used, and the consequences of it, make it justly odious. It is

tyrannical, dangerous to the security and peace of princes, betraying

their counsels, infamous and hazardous to all men. I know they talk of

the seal of confession; but let a man in Rome or Spain confess but an

ill thought of the court of Rome, or any just scruple of the vanities

there professed, and by bitter experience he will find how soon this

seal is broken open, and the secrets of confession divulged. [391]

Besides, it is profane, as appeareth by the filthy and immodest

questions enjoined to be put by the confessarius, mentioned in

Bucharadus, Sanchez, and others.

Secondly, We are not against all confession, as the Papists slander as.

Besides that to God, we hold many sorts of confessions necessary before

men; as:--

1. Some public. And so by the church in ordinary or extraordinary

humiliation: Lev. xvi. 21, `The congregation was to confess their sins

over the head of the sacrifice., So Neh. ix. 3, `One part of the day

they read the law, the other part they confessed., Thus, by the church.

So also to the church, and that either (1.) Be fore entrance and

admission, in which they did solemnly disclaim the impurities of their

former life, professing to walk suitably to their new engagement for

time to come: Mat. iii. 6, `They were baptized of him, confessing their

sins., So also the apostles, in receiving members into the church,

required the profession of faith and repentance, though there was not

that scrupulous and narrow prying into their hearts and consciences

which some practise; as John did not take a particular confession from

every one of that multitude, it was impossible. So Acts xix. 18, `And

many that believed confessed, and showed their deeds;, that is,

solemnly disavowed their former life and practice. Or (2.) upon public

scandals after admission, for of secret things the church judgeth not;

but those scandalous acts, being faults against the church, cannot be

remitted by the minister alone; the offence being public, so was the

confession and acknowledgment to be public, as the apostle saith of the

incestuous Corinthian, that `his punishment was inflicted by many,, 2

Cor. ii. 6. And he biddeth Timothy `Rebuke open sinners in the face of

all,, 1 Tim. v. 20, which Aquinas referreth to ecclesiastical

discipline. Now this was to be done, partly for the sinner,s sake, that

he might be brought to the more shame and conviction; and partly

because of them without, that the community of the faithful might not

be represented as an ulcerous, filthy body, and the church not be

thought a receptacle of sin, but a school of holiness. And, therefore,

as Paul shaked off the viper, so these were to be cast out, and not

received again, but upon solemn acknowledgment. So Paul urgeth, 1 Cor.

v. 6, `A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump;, and Heb. xii. 15,

`Lest many be defiled,, &c. In which places he doth not mean so much

the contagion of their ill example, as the taint of reproach, and the

guilt of the outward scandal, by which the house and body of Christ was

made infamous.

2. Private confession to men. And so--(1.) To a wronged neighbour,

which is called a turning to him again after offence given, Luke xvii.

4, and prescribed by our Saviour, Mat. v. 24, `Leave thy gift before

the altar, and be first reconciled to thy brother., God will accept no

service or worship at our hands till we have confessed the wrong done

to others. So here, confess your faults one to another, it may be

referred to injuries. In contentions there are offences on both sides,

and every one will stiffly defend his own cause, &c. (2.) To those to

whom we have consented in sinning, as in adultery, theft, &c. We must

confess and pray for each other. Dives in hell would not have his

brethren come `to that place of torment,, Luke xvi. 28. It is but a

necessary charity to invite them that have shared with us in sin to a

fellowship in repentance. (3.) To a godly minister or wise Christian

under deep wounds of conscience. It is but folly to hide our sores till

they be incurable. When we have disburdened ourselves into the bosom of

a godly friend, conscience findeth a great deal of ease. Certainly they

are then more capable to give us advice, and can the better apply the

help of their counsel and prayers to our particular case, and are

thereby moved to the more pity and commiseration; as beggars, to move

the more, will not only represent their general want, but uncover their

sores. Verily it is a fault in Christians not to disclose themselves

and be more open with their spiritual friends, when they are not able

to extricate themselves out of their doubts and troubles. You may do it

to any godly Christians, but especially to ministers, who are solemnly

intrusted with the power of the keys, and may help you to apply the

comforts of the word when you cannot yourselves. (4.) When in some

special cases God,s glory is concerned; as when some eminent judgment

seizeth upon us be cause of a foregoing provocation, which provocation

is sufficiently evidenced to us in gripes of conscience, it is good to

make it known for God,s glory. Thus David, when stung in conscience,

and smitten with a sudden conviction, said, 2 Sam. xii. 13, `I confess

I have sinned., So when Achan was marked by lot, Joshua adviseth him.

Josh. vii. 19, `My son, confess, and give glory to God., So when divine

revenge pursueth us till we are brought to some fearful end and

punishment, it is good to be open in acknowledging our sin, that God,s

justice may be the more visibly cleared; for hereby God receiveth a

great deal of glory, and men a wonderful confirmation and experience of

the care and justice of providence.

And pray for one another.--From thence note, that it is the duty of

Christians to relieve one another by their prayers. You shall see John,

in the close of his epistle, giveth the same charge: 1 John v. 16, `If

any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall

ask, and he shall give him life for him that sinneth not unto death;,

that is, God shall pardon him, and by that means free him from

everlasting death. Because particulars affect us more than general

considerations, let me tell you--(1.) You must pray for the whole

community of saints, every member of Christ,s body; not only our

familiars, but those with whom we are not acquainted. So Eph. vi. 18,

`Make supplication for all saints., This is indeed the church,s

treasury, the common stock of supplications. Paul prayeth for them that

had never seen his face: Col. ii. 1, 2., God knoweth what conflict I

have for you, and for many that have not seen my face in the flesh., A

Christian is a rich merchant, who hath his factors in divers countries,

some in all places of the world, that deal for him at the throne of

grace; and by this means the members of Christ,s body have a communion

one with another, though at a distance. (2.) It is our duty to pray for

those especially to whom we are more nearly related; as Paul, Rom. ix.

3, for his own countrymen. So for our kindred, that they may be

converted, and be to us, as Onesimus to Philemon, dear `in the flesh,

and in the Lord,, Philem. 16. So for the same particular society and

assembly of the faithful in which we are engaged. So the minister for

his people, and the people one for another: Eph. iii. 12, `For this

cause I bow my knees,, &c. Certainly we do not improve this interest so

much as we should do. (3.) More especially yet for magistrates and

officers of the church. For magistrates: 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2, `For all in

authority,, &c. This is the best tribute you can pay them. So for

ministers, the weightiness of their employment calleth for this help

from you. In praying for them you pray for yourselves. If the cow hath

a full dug, it is the benefit of the owner. With what passionateness

doth the apostle Paul call for the prayers of the people! Rom. xv. 30,

`For the Lord Christ,s sake, for the love of the Spirit, strive

together with me in your prayers., Oh! do not let us stand alone, and

strive alone, Voe soli. Single prayers are like the single hairs of

Samson; but the prayers of the congregation like the whole bush.

Therefore you should, in Tertullian,s phrase, quasi manu fact�, with a

holy conspiracy besiege heaven, and force out a blessing for your

pastors. (4.) The weak must pray for the strong, and the strong for the

weak. There is none but should improve his interest. When there is much

work to do, you give your children their parts; as those busy

idolaters, Jer. vii. 18, `The children gather wood, the fathers kindle

the fire, and the women knead the dough,, &c.; all bore a part in the

service. So in the family of Christ. None can be exempted: `The head

cannot say to the feet, I have no need of you,, &c., 1 Cor. xii. 21,

22. God delighteth to oblige us to each other in the body of Christ,

and therefore will not bless you without the mutual mediation and

intercession of one an other,s prayers; for this is the true

intercession of saints. And so, in a sense, the living saints may be

called mediators of intercession. But chiefly the strong, and those

that stand, are to pray for them that are fallen; for that is the

intent of this place. Oh! then, that we would regard this neglected

duty. Not to pray for others is uncharitableness; not to expect it from

others is pride. Do not stand alone; two, yea, many, are better than

one. Joint striving mutually for the good of each other maketh the work

prosper. Especially, brethren, pray for us, for us in the ministry. Our

labours are great, our corruptions are strong, our temptations and

snares are many, possibly the more for your sakes; that our hearts may

be entendered to you, and the fitter to apply reproof, comfort, and

counsel to your souls. Oh! pray that we may have wisdom and

faithfulness, and speak the word of the Lord boldly. So also pray for

one another. Some are in better temper to pray for others than they for

themselves; or it may be your prayers may be more acceptable. Job,s

friends were good men, yet (as we noted be fore) the Lord saith, `I

will not hear you; my servant Job shall pray for you,, Job xlii. 8.

That ye may be healed.--The word is of a general use, and implieth

freedom from the diseases either of soul or body, and the context

suiteth with both; for he speaketh promiscuously of sins and sickness.

If you understand it of corporal healing, with respect to sickness, you

may observe:--

Obs. 1. That God will have a particular confession of the very sin for

which he laid on sickness, before healing. But I chiefly understand

this healing spiritually: confess, and the Lord will purge you from

your sins, and heal the wounds of your consciences. So healing is taken

elsewhere in scripture, as Ps. xli. 4, `Lord, heal my soul, for I have

sinned against thee;, and 1 Peter ii. 24, `By whose stripes ye are

healed., I observe hence:--

Obs. 2. That sin is the soul,s sickness. There are many fair

resemblances. (1.) Distemper: the soul is disordered by sin, as the

body is distempered by sickness. (2.) Deformity: therefore of all

diseases under the law sin was figured by leprosy, which most spotteth

and deformeth the body. (3.) Pain: sickness causeth pain, so doth sin a

sting in the conscience, horrors in the hour of death, 1 Cor. xv. 57.

(4.) Weakness: the more sin, the more inability and feebleness for any

gracious operation. The apostle saith, Rom. v. 6, `We were without

strength;, weak, sickly souls that could do no work: thus we were in

the state of nature: yea, after grace, there is a feebleness; we never

have perfect health till we come to heaven. Thus you see there is a

general resemblance between sin and sickness. So in particular between

the kinds of sin, and the kinds of sickness. Original sin is like the

leprosy of Naaman, which God threatened should `cleave to Gehazi, and

to his seed for ever,, 2 Kings v. 27, so that every child born of that

line was born a leper, as every one born of Adam is born a sinner. So

there is the tympany of pride, the burning fever of lust, the dropsy of

covetousness, the consumption of envy, &c. These allusions are obvious.

So Solomon calleth tenacity a disease. When a man hath abundance, and

hath no power to use it, this is, saith he, vanity, and an evil

disease, Eccles. vi. 2. As if a man were hungry, and had abundance of

meat, yet out of dyscrasy of stomach could not taste it. Well, then,

avoid sin as you would avoid sickness; and when you have admitted it,

complain of it as the plague and sore of your souls, 1 Kings viii. 38.

Many cry because of the plague of their bodies; but when they regard

the plague of their hearts, saith the Lord, then will I hear from

heaven. The diseases of the soul are worst. Bodily diseases tend only

to the death of the body, but these to the eternal death of body and

soul. Other diseases are but consequents of sin; it is sin that is the

strength of diseases, the sting of death, and the cause of eternal

horror and torment. Oh! run to Christ then, he is the great physician

of souls; his skill to cure you cost him dear: `By his stripes we are

healed.,

For the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth

much.--This is added by way of encouragement. In this sentence there

are three things:--(1.) The qualification of the prayer, fervent,

effectual. (2.) The qualification of the person, of a righteous person.

(3.) The effect of the whole, availeth much.

First, for the qualification of the duty, de'esis energoume'ne. The

word in the original is so sublime and emphatical, that translations

cannot reach the height of it. It hath been diversely rendered. The

vulgar, assidua precatio, daily prayer; but without any reason. Beza,

oratio efficax, effectual prayer; but it is not energe`s, but

energoume'ne; and, besides, this rendering would impose a tautology

upon the sentence,--effectual prayer is effectual. Others render it,

wrought in us by the Holy Spirit; as they that were possessed with an

evil spirit were called energou'menoi. Our translators, because they

know not what fit expression to use, translate it by two words,

fervent, effectual. The phrase properly signifieth a prayer wrought and

excited; and so implieth both the efficacy and influence of the Holy

Ghost, and the force and vehemency of an earnest spirit and affection.

The word will yield us two notes:--

Obs. 1. That a true prayer must be an earnest, fervent prayer. The

ancient token of acceptance was firing the sacrifice. Success may be

much known by the heat and warmth of our spirits. Prayer was figured by

wrestling; compare Gen. xxxii. 26 with Hosea xii. 4; certainly that is

the way of prevailing. So it is resembled to his immodesty that would

take no denial, Luke xi. 8; what we translate `importunity, is in the

original anaidei'an, `impudence., It is said, Acts xxvi. 7, that the

tribes served God instantly, en ektenei'a; the word signifieth to the

utmost of their strength. Under the law, the sweet perfumes in the

censers were burnt before they ascended. [392] Oh! look to your

affections; get them fired by the Holy Ghost, that they may flame up

towards God in devout and religious ascents. It is the usual token for

good that you shall prevail with God as princes. Luther said, Utinam

eodem ardore orare possem--would to God I could always pray with a like

ardour, for then I had always this answer, fiat quod velis--be it unto

thee as thou wilt. Oh! be earnest and fervent, then, though you cannot

be eloquent. There is language in groans, and sighs are articulate. The

child is earnest for the dug when it cannot speak for it. Only beware

that your earnestness doth not arise from fleshly lusts and

concernments. The sacrifices and perfumes were not to be burned with

strange fire. When your censers are fired, let not the coal be taken

from the kitchen, but the altar. God hath undertaken to satisfy

spiritual desires, but not fleshly lusts.

Obs. 2. From the word you may observe, that in prayer we must use much

diligence to work our hearts to the duty; so the word signifieth a

prayer wrought and driven with much force and vehemency. It is said of

the apostles, Acts i. 14, `They continued in prayer and supplication;,

in the original, e'san proskarterountes. The phrase signifieth such a

perseverance as is kept up with much labour and force. It is no easy

thing to pray, and to work a lazy dead heart into a necessary height of

affections. The weights are always running downward, but they are wound

up by force: Ps. xxv. 1, `I lift my heart to thee., When our affections

are gotten up, it is hard to keep them up; like Moses, hands, they soon

flag and wax faint. A bird cannot stay in the air without a continual

flight and motion of the wings; neither can we persist in prayer

without constant work and labour: our faith is so weak, that we are

hardly brought into God,s presence; and our love is so small, that we

are hardly kept there: affections flag, and then our thoughts are

scattered; weariness maketh way for wandering; first our hearts are

gone, and then our minds, so that we have need of much labour and

diligence; all acts of duty are drawn from us by an holy force.

Secondly, The qualification of the person, of a righteous person; that

is, not absolutely, as appeareth by Elias, the instance brought, who is

said to be a man subject to like passions with us; therefore, it is

meant of a man righteous in Christ, justified by faith. Note hence:--

Obs. That in prayer we should not only look after the qualification of

the duty, but of the person. God first accepteth the person, and then

the duty. So the apostle proveth the acceptance of Abel,s person by

God,s testimony to his gifts, Heb. xi. 4; and the place to which he

alludeth, Gen. iv. 4, plainly showeth that God,s first respect was to

Abel, and then to his offering. I have read of a jewel that being put

into a dead man,s mouth loseth all its virtue: prayer is such a jewel

in a dead man,s mouth; it is of no force and efficacy: Prov. xxi. 27,

`The prayer of a wicked man is an abomination, much more when he

offereth it with an evil mind., At the best, it is naught, if made with

a devout aim; but where there is a conjunction of an evil person and an

evil aim, the Lord abhorreth it. Balaam came with seven rams and seven

altars, and all would not do. They urge it as a proverb and known

principle, John ix. 31, `The Lord will not hear sinners., Well, then,

when you come to pray, look to the interest of your persons:--(1.)

Otherwise you will be in danger of a legal spirit, to hope to gratify

God by your prayers and good meanings. There is not a surer sign of

resting in duties than when you look altogether to the quality of the

duty, and not to the quality of the person; as if the person were to be

accepted for the work,s sake, and not the work for the person. This

plainly revolveth you to the tenor of the old covenant, and maketh

works the ground of your acceptance with God. (2.) You will be in

danger of refusal; God will have nothing to do with the wicked: Job

viii. 20, he will not take sinners by the hand; so the original and

margin; and God will ask what you have to do with him, `What hast thou

to do,, &c. Ps. 1. Look to your interest in Christ; all hangeth upon

that.

Thirdly, The effect of the duty, availeth much. He doth not tell you

how much; you will find that upon trial and experience. Observe:--

Obs. That prayers rightly managed cannot want effect. This is the means

which God hath consecrated for receiving the highest blessings. Prayer

is the key by which those mighty ones of God could lock heaven, and

open it at their pleasure. Among the graces, faith excelleth, and

prayer among the duties; these are most excellent, be cause most useful

to our present state. It is wonderful to consider what the scripture

ascribeth to faith and prayer; prayer sueth out blessings in the court

of grace, and faith receiveth them. It were easy to expatiate in this

argument; but because this is the usual subject of most practical

discourses, I forbear. God himself speaketh as if his hands were tied

up by prayer: Exod. xxxii. 10, `Let me alone,, &c. [393] Nay, he

indenteth with Moses, and offereth him composition if he would hold his

peace, `I will make of thee a great people,, &c. So that other

expression, if we read it right, `Concerning my sons and daughters,

command ye me,, &c. These are expressions which are to be admired with

a holy reverence; not strained, lest our thoughts degenerate into rude

blasphemy. Certainly they are mighty condescensions, wherein the Lord

would signify to Us the fruit and efficacy of prayer, as he is pleased

to accept it in Christ. Well, then, pray with this encouragement, God

hath said in an open place, that is, solemnly avowed before all the

world, that none shall seek his face in vain, Isa. xlv. 19.

Ver. 17. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and lie

prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth

by the space of three years and six months.

He proveth the general proposition by a particular instance, the

.example of Elias. Before we come to examine the words, I shall discuss

a doubt. How could he infer a general rule out of one single instance,

especially from a man whose life was full of prodigy and wonder? I

answer--(1.) In a case necessary, one instance is enough, proofs in

such a case being ek perissou, over and above measure, and for

illustration rather than confirmation. (2.) Though the instance be

particular, yet the precept of praying, and the promise of being heard

in prayer, are both universal. (3.) His drift is to show that, if he

obtained so much, our prayers shall not altogether be in vain; there

may be less of miracle in our answer, but there will be as much of

grace. (4.) For the special dignity of the person, the apostle himself

anticipateth that objection; omoiopathe`s, of like passions with us, is

here put by way of prevention. They might plead Elias was a singular

instance; who can expect his experiences? The apostle anticipateth this

doubt, by acquainting them that he was subject to like infirmities

wherewith other men are surprised. I come now to the words.

Elias.--An eminent prophet, and of whom singular things are related in

scripture. He raised the widow,s son, 1 Kings xvii. 22; obtained fire

from heaven against the priests of Baal, 1 Kings xviii. 38; he was fed

by ravens, 1 Kings xvii.; went forty days and forty nights in the

strength of one meal, 1 Kings xix. 8; brought fire from heaven on the

captains of two fifties and their companions, 2 Kings i. 10; passed

over Jordan dry-foot, 2 Kings ii. 8; he was snatched into heaven in a

fiery chariot, 2 Kings ii. 11; he visibly appeared in the

transfiguration of Christ, Mat. xvii. 3. The Papists feign that he

shall come corporally into the world before the day of judgment. And

here our apostle instanceth in another miracle--heaven itself seemed to

be subject to his prayers, and to be shut and opened at his pleasure.

Was a man subject to like passions as we are.--Some apply this to

outward sufferings and afflictions; some to weaknesses of body and the

inconveniences of the present life; some to inward passions and

perturbations of the mind; some to moral infirmities and sins: all may

be intended. The same word is used Acts xiv. 15, when they would have

sacrificed to Paul and Barnabas: `We are,, say they, `omoiopatheis, of

like passions with yourselves., It is put there for whatever

differenceth man from the divine nature; as Peter in the like case

saith, Acts x. 26, `I am also a man,, &c. Thus the scripture showeth

that Elias was hungry, 1 Kings xvii. 11; that he feared death, and

therefore fled from Jezebel, 1 Kings xix. 3; and requested to die in a

pet and discontent, 1 Kings xix. 4. All kinds of infirmities incident

to man are ascribed to him.

And he prayed earnestly, proseuche proseuxato, he prayed in prayer, a

known Hebraism. Verbalia addita verbis is a kind of construction among

the Hebrews which implieth vehemency, and that earnest contention of

spirit which should be in prayer. It is an explication of deesis

energoumene, used by the apostle in the former verse. So Christ saith,

Luke xxii., `With desire have I desired;, that is, vehemently and

earnestly; it is a like Hebraism. But because among the Hebrews I have

observed that there is always a conveniency between the forms of

expression and the things expressed, therefore Aquinas,s note is not

altogether amiss, Cordis et oris orationem notat, it may note the

agreement between tongue and heart; the heart prayed and tongue prayed.

This clause noteth the cause why Elias was heard; he prayed with

earnestness and faith, according to the will of God revealed to him.

That it might not rain.--There is no such thing in the history, which

you have at large, 1 Kings the 17th and 18th chapters, where there is

not a word of his praying that it might not rain; the scripture showeth

that he only foretold a drought. But it is more than probable that the

worship of Baal, being everywhere received, did extort from this good

man, so full of zeal for God, a prayer for drought as a punishment, by

which the people being corrected, he prayed again for rain. Certainly,

the apostle having recorded the story, we cannot doubt of the truth of

it. It is usual in scripture in one place to give us the substance of a

history, in another the circumstances of it; as that of Jannes and

Jambres, 2 Tim. iii. 8. So Ps. cv. 18, we read that `Joseph,s feet were

hurt in fetters,, and that he was laid in iron; there is no such thing

recorded in Genesis. So Heb. xii. 21, `So terrible was the sight, that

Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake,, which is nowhere recorded in

the Pentateuch.

And it rained not by the space of three years and six months.--The same

term of time is specified, Luke iv. 25, `Many widows were in Israel in

the days of Elias, when the heavens were shut three years and six

months,, &c. But you will say, How is this true? how three years and a

half, when it is expressly said, 1 Kings xviii. 1, `And it came to pass

after many days, that the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third

year, saying, Go show thyself to Ahab, and I will send rain upon the

earth?, To answer this scruple, Grotius saith, that the word of the

Lord came to him about the end of the third year, to be executed half a

year after; but this is not so probable: others say otherwise. The

`best answer I conceive is that proposed by Abulensis, and since

embraced and improved by Junius and other divines of great note. They

answer, that the third year spoken of in that place is to be reckoned

from his dwelling at Sarepta; so that the time of his abode about the

brook Cherith is not computed, where he was one whole year fed by

ravens; for it is said, 1 Kings xvii. 10, `And after a while he

departed to Sarepta;, in the margin, `at the end of days;, that is, at

the end of the number of days which make a year. So Junius rendereth

anno exacto. The same phrase is used, Gen. iv. 3, `In process of time,,

&c., in the margin, mikketh jomim, `at the end of days,, or, `at the

year,s end., Well, then, after this year is elapsed, from thence for

ward we must begin the computation, which may be well inferred from 1

Kings xvii. 14, where Elijah being at Sarepta, it is said, `The Lord

came to him, and said, The barrel of meal shall not waste, nor the

cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain., Now about

the middle of the third year from that time the Lord appeared to him

again.

The notes are these:--

Obs. 1. That God,s eminent children are men of like passions with us:

see 1 Peter v. 9, `The same things are accomplished in your brethren

that are in the flesh;, they are all troubled with a naughty heart, a

busy devil, and a corrupt world. We are all tainted in our originals,

and infected with Adam,s leprosy: all blood is of a colour. [394] Many

times there are notorious blemishes in the lives of the saints; they

are of the same nature with others, and have not wholly divested and

put off the interests and concernments of flesh and blood. Moses spake

unadvisedly with his lips, and David turned aside to adultery: he

rendereth the reason, Ps. li. 5, he had a common nature with other men.

So often divers of God,s dear children have foul falls. Constancy and

continuance in sin would deny them saints, and an uninterrupted

continuance in holiness would deny them men. Well, then, God,s

children, that travail under the burden of infirmities, may take

comfort; such conflicts are not inconsistent with faith and piety:

other believers are thus exercised, none ever went to heaven but there

was some work for his `faith and patience,, Heb. vi. 12. When we

partake of the divine nature we do not put off the human; we ought to

walk with care, but yet with comfort.

Obs. 2. It is no injury to the most holy persons to look upon them as

men like ourselves. There is a double fault; some canonize the servants

of God, not considering them in their infirmities, make them half gods,

who were by privilege exempted from the ordinary state of men, and so

lose the benefit of their example; whereas, in the word, they are set

out as so many precedents. Thy prayers may he heard as well as those of

Elias; thy sins may be pardoned as well as Paul,s, 1 Tim. i. 17. God

will strengthen and confirm necessary graces in thee as well as David,

Zech. xii. 8. Others reflect only upon their infirmities, and instead

of making them precedents of mercy, make them patrons of sin. Thus

every base spirit will plead Lot,s incest, David,s adultery, Noah,s

drunkenness. In Salvian,s time they pleaded, Si David, cur non et ego?

si Noah, cur non et ego? Follow them in their graces as you follow them

in their sins: they were men of like passions, but they were also holy

men. James here doth not only recite Elijah,s weaknesses, but his

graces.

Obs. 3. That in the lives of God,s choicest servants there was some

considerable weakness. Elias, in the midst of his miracles, was

encumbered with many afflictions. Paul had `abundance of revelations,,

but `a thorn in the flesh., In the life of Jesus Christ himself there

was an intermixture of power and weakness; of the divine glory and

human frailty. At his birth a star shone, but he was laid in a manger;

afterwards the devil tempted him in the wilderness, but there angels

ministered to him; as man, he was deceived in the fig-tree, but, as

God, he blasted it; he was caught by the soldiers in the garden, but

first he made them fall back. So it is notable that the same disciples

that were conscious to his glory in the mount, are afterwards called to

be witnesses of his agonies in the garden. Compare Mat. xvii. 1 with

Mat. xxvi. 37. And all this to show, that in the highest dispensations

God will keep us humble, and in the lowest providences there is enough

to support us.

Obs. 4. Grace is not impassible, or without passions and affections.

The stoics held no man a good man but he that had lost all natural

feeling and affection. Elijah was a man of like passions. Grace doth

not abrogate our affections, but prefer them; it transplanted them out

of Egypt that they may grow in Canaan; it doth not destroy nature, but

direct it.

Obs. 5. All that God wrought by and for his eminent servants was with

respect to his own grace, not to their worth and dignity. God did much

for Elijah, but he was a man of like passions with us; though his

prayers were effectual, yet he was, as every believer is, indebted to

grace. When we have received a high assistance, yet still we are

unprofitable servants, Luke xvii. 10; when we reflect upon the common

frailty, We may say so in words of truth, as well as in words of

sobriety and humility; [395] at first, when God taketh us to mercy, we

are like other men; was not Esau Jacob,s brother? Mal. i. 2; in their

persons, and, as they were men, there was no difference. God could love

nothing in Jacob above Esau but his own grace; [396] so, if we be

preferred above other believers it is out of mere grace; if, from their

shoulders upward, they be higher than other saints, it is the Lord,s

choice, not their own worth. Elijah was like us, and Elijah,s widow was

like other widows: Luke iv. 25, 26, `There were many widows in Israel,

but he was sent to none save the Sareptan., God hath mercy on whom he

will have mercy; if thou dost excel, who hath made thee to differ?

Obs. 6. Where the heart is upright, our infirmities shall not hinder

our prayers. Elijah was a man of like passions, yet he prayed, and it

rained not; imitate his faith and earnestness, and your infirmities

will be no impediment: 2 Chron. xxx. 19, `The Lord pardoned them that

had prepared their hearts to seek the Lord,, though they were not

legally clean. Christ, when he came into the gardens, saith he would

eat the honey with the honeycomb, Cant. v., accept their duties, though

not severed from the wax, from weakness and imperfection, and drink his

wine mingled with milk, that is, allayed with a milder and less

generous liquor. Under the law, `the high-priest was to bear away the

iniquity of their holy things,, Exod. xxviii. 38; so Jesus Christ doeth

away the weakness of our services. Those that do not allow their

infirmities m,ay pray with hope of success. God knoweth the voice of

the Spirit; our fleshly desires meet with pardon, and our spiritual

with acceptance.

Obs. 7. From that he prayed earnestly, or prayed in prayer. This is our

duty, to pray in prayer. Not only to say a prayer, but to pray a

prayer: Rom. viii. 26, `We pray, and the Spirit maketh intercession for

us with sighs and groans that cannot be uttered;, that is, we pray, and

the Spirit prayeth in our prayers. When the tongue prayeth alone it is

but an empty ring; we often mistake lungs and sighs for grace, and the

agitation of the bodily spirits for the impressions of the Holy Ghost;

[397] many work themselves into a great heat and vehemency by the

contention of speech, and that is all; the voice, that is heard on high

are the groans of the soul. Well, then, pray in prayer, make you all

your prayers and supplications in the Spirit, Eph. vi. 16. Let not the

heart be wandering while the lips are praying; lip-labour doth no more

than a breathing instrument, make a loud noise; the essence of prayer

lieth in the ascension of the mind. [398]

Obs. 8. It is sometimes lawful to imprecate the vengeance of God upon

the wicked. Elias prayed that it might not rain, out of a zeal of God,s

glory, and detestation of their idolatry. I confess here we must be

cautious; imprecations in scripture were often uttered with a prophetic

spirit, and by special impulse and intimation from God. Elijah,s act

must not be imitated without Elijah,s spirit and warrant. The apostles,

out of a preposterous imitation of another act of Elias, `called for

fire from heaven,, Luke ix., whereupon Christ checketh them: `Ye know

not what spirit ye are of., There may be distempered heats of revenge,

strange wildfire that was never kindled upon God,s hearth. To direct

you in this case of imprecation, I shall lay down some propositions.

(1.) There is a great deal of difference between public and private

cases. In all private cases it is the glory of our religion to bless

them that curse us, to pray for them that despitefully use us; so we

learn of the great author of our profession, `he was numbered among

transgressors, and he made intercession for transgressors,, Isa. liii.

12. It is a prophecy of that prayer which Christ uttered upon the cross

for his persecutors, `Father, forgive them, for they know not what they

do;, his heart was full of love when theirs was full of spite; and

truly the followers of the Lamb should not be of a wolfish spirit; we

should be ready to forgive all private and personal wrongs; but in

public cases, wherein divine or human right is interverted and

disturbed, we may desire God to relieve oppressed innocence, to `wound

the hairy scalp of evil-doers,, &c. (2.) In public cases we must not

desire revenge directly and formally; so our prayers must respect the

vindication of God,s glory, and the avenging of our own case only as it

doth collaterally and by consequence follow there upon: Ps. cxv., `Not

to us, not to us, but to thy name give glory;, that is, not for our

revenge, or to satisfy our lusts, but to repair the esteem of thy mercy

and truth. The mainspring and sway upon the spirit should be a zeal for

the divine glory. The whole 83d Psalm is full of imprecations, but it

is concluded thus, ver. 18, `That men may know that thou, whose name

alone is Jehovah, art the most high over all the earth., The

vindication of God,s honour and ways is the main aim of their requests.

(3.) God,s people do not desire vengeance against particular persons

absolutely, but in the general against the enemies of the church, and

expressly against such as are known to God to be perverse and

implacable. (4.) Their ordinary prayers are against the plots rather

than the persons of their enemies; diligunt in inimico naturam, non

vitium--they can love the nature, though they hate the sin.

Obs. 9. God may continue judgments, especially that of unseasonable

weather, for a long time. In Elijah,s time, for three years and six

months the heavens were as brass and the earth as iron; this may serve

to calm our froward spirits, that are apt to murmur against providence

when we have not seasons to our mind. Oh! think how it was with Israel

when it rained not in three years and more, and fear him that can stop

`the bottles of heaven,, Job xxxviii. 37, and stay the clouds from

giving out their influences: fruitful seasons are at his disposal; see

Jer. v. 24. Second causes do not work by chance, can not work at

pleasure. This is the bridle which God hath upon the world; the

ordering of the weather is one of the most visible testimonies of his

power and goodness.

Obs. 10. Lastly, observe how sad it is for any to provoke the prophets

of the Lord to pray against them. The grieving of Elijah,s spirit cost

Israel dear. There is much in their messages, and there is as much in

their solemn prayers. We may often observe in the history of the Old

Testament, when God had a mind to destroy a people, he commanded his

prophets silence. If their silence be a sad omen, what are their

imprecations? When Zacharias,s blood was shed, he said, `the Lord

requite it,, which prayer cost them the miseries of Babylon, and his

blood was not fully revenged till their utter ruin; compare Mat. xxiii.

35, 36, with 2 Chron. xxiv. 21. Certainly, though there be little in

such prayers as are but the effusions of revenge or distempered heat,

yet when by your sin and insolence you give them cause to pray against

you, their complaints are the sad presages of an ensuing judgment.

Ver. 18. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth

brought forth her fruit.

He prayed again; that is, in another strain, not by way of imprecation,

but supplication, which last is, recorded in the word, 1 Kings xviii.

42, `He cast himself upon the earth, and put his face between his

knees,, which was an action of most humble and fervent prayer, by means

whereof God had determined to bestow a blessing.

And the heaven gave rain; that is, the air and clouds, as pe'teina

ouranou, `the fowls of heaven, are by us translated `the fowls of the

air,, Mat. vi. 26; so Deut. xi. 17, if `the Lord,s anger be kindled

against them, he can shut up the heavens that there be no rain,, that

is, the clouds. So in that climax, Hosea ii. 21, 22, `I will hear the

heavens, and they shall hear the earth,, &c., the heavens for clouds.

And the earth brought forth her fruit.--All causes depend upon one

another, and the highest on God; before this rain there was a great

famine through the drought.

From hence observe these points:--

Obs. 1. That when God meaneth to bestow blessings, he stirreth up the

hearts of the people to pray for them. God that decreeth the end,

decreeth the means: Ezek. xxxvi. 37, `I will yet for this be inquired

of by the house of Israel to do it for them:, so Jer. xxix. 12, `Then

shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will

hearken to you., When the time of deliverance was come, God would have

them sue it out by prayer. Well, then, look upon the effusion of the

spirit of supplications as a happy presage; it is the first intimation

and token for good of approaching mercy, like the chirping of birds

before the spring.

Obs. 2. Though we are sure of the accomplishment of a blessing, yet we

must not give over prayer. Elias had foretold rain, yet when he seemed

to hear the sound of it he falls a-praying. Daniel had understood by

books that the date of days was expired, therefore is he so earnest,

Dan. ix. 1-3. When Christ had intimated his coming, `Behold, I come

quickly,, the church taketh hold of that advantage, `Even so, Lord

Jesus, come quickly,, Rev. xxii. latter end. It showeth that it is an

ill confidence that maketh us to neglect means. God,s children are

never more diligent and free in their endeavours than when confident of

a blessing; hope is industrious, and draweth to action.

Obs. 3. Prayer is a good remedy in the most desperate cases, and when

you are lost to all other hopes, you are not lost to the hopes of

prayer. Though there had been three years, drought, yet he prayed till

he brought down sweet showers. One said of the prayers of Luther, Non

dubito quin multum subsidii ad desperatam hanc causam comitiorum preces

illius allaturae sunt--that he was confident the business had some life

in it, because Luther prayed. Well, then, continue prayer with some

hope, though the heaven be as brass, and the earth as iron. When the

case is desperate the Lord is wont to come in; he sendeth Moses when

the bricks were doubled.

Obs. 4. The efficacy of prayer is very great. Elias seemed to have the

key of heaven, to open it and shut it at pleasure. Nothing hath wrought

such wonderful effects in the world as prayer: it made the sun stand

still at Joshua,s request, Josh. x. 13; yea, to go backwards thus many

degrees when Hezekiah prayed, Isa. xxxviii. 8. It brought fire out of

heaven when Elias prayed, 2 Kings i. 10. Nay, it brought angels out of

heaven when Elisha prayed, 2 Kings vi. 17. Nay, God himself will seem

to yield to the importunity and force of prayer, Gen. xxxii. 24, 25; in

this wrestling he will be overcome. Certainly they that neglect prayer

do not only neglect the sweetest way of converse with God, but the most

forcible way of prevailing with him.

Obs. 5. From that the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her

fruit. That there is a mutual dependence and subordination between all

second causes. The creatures are serviceable to one another by mutual

ministries and supplies; the earth is cherished by the heat of the

stars, moistened by the water, and by the temperament of both made

fruitful, and so sendeth forth innumerable plants for the comfort and

use of living creatures, and living creatures are for the supply of

man. It is wonderful to consider the subordination of all causes, and

the proportion they bear to one another: the heavens work upon the

elements, the elements upon the earth, and the earth yieldeth fruits

for the use of man. The prophet taketh notice of this admirable

gradation, Hosea ii. 21, 22, `I will hear the heavens, and the heavens

shall hear the earth, and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine,

and the oil; and the corn and the wine and the oil shall hear Jezreel.,

We look for the supplies of corn, wine, and oil; but they can do

nothing without clouds, and the clouds can do nothing without stars,

and the stars can do nothing without God. The creatures are beholden to

one another, and all to God. In the order of the world there is an

excellent knot and chain of causes by which all things hang together,

that so they may lead up the soul to the Lord.

Ver. 19, 20. Brethren^ if any of you do err from the truth, and one

convert him; let him know that he which converteth a sinner from the

error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a

multitude of sins.

Here, from prayer, the apostle diverteth to another Christian office,

and that is admonition, wherein the work is propounded--turning a

sinner from the error of his way. A double fruit is annexed; we shall

be instruments in their conversion and pardon. Some do conceive that

this is an apology for the whole epistle; rather it may be referred to

the immediate context, for the apostle is treating of those acts of

Christian charity and relief that we owe to one another, visiting the

sick, praying for the distressed, and now of reclaiming the erroneous.

If any of you; that is, of your nation, or rather society; for he

supposeth them already gained to the knowledge of the truth.

Do err from the truth, planethe apo tes aletheias.--He understandeth

errors both in faith and manners. The word chiefly implieth errors in

the faith; but in the next verse he speaketh of `a sinner,, and of

`covering a multitude of sins;, which phrases imply errors of life, and

so both must be understood. By truth he understandeth the rule of the

gospel, whether condemning errors in judgment or indirect practices.

Thus, concerning the first, it is said of Hymeneus and Philetus, 2 Tim.

ii. 18, that `they erred concerning the truth, saying, the resurrection

is past., So concerning the second, it is said of Peter, Gal. ii. 14,

`That he walked not with a right foot according to the truth of the

gospel;, and the apostle John speaketh often of `walking in the truth;,

[399] that is, according to that rule and order which the gospel

prescribeth.

And one convert him.--To convert a sinner properly is God,s work. He

turneth us: `We are his workmanship in Christ Jesus,, Eph. ii. 10. Yet

it is ascribed to man, to the ministers and instruments of conversion,

as Acts xxvi. 18, `To turn them from Satan to the living God,, because

they use such means and helps by which God conveyeth a blessing. We

plant and water, and `God giveth the increase,, 1 Cor. iii. 5. Mark, he

saith, and one convert him; he doth not limit it to the minister only.

Acts of spiritual charity belong to the care of all believers. Wherever

there is true grace it will be assimilating: Luke xxii. 32, `Being

converted, strengthen thy brethren.,

Let him know, ginosketo. Some read gigno'skete, know, but to the same

effect.

That he which converteth a sinner; that is an instrument in God,s hand,

by contributing the help and counsel of his prayers and endeavours.

Shall save a soul.--Some expound it of the soul of the admonisher, his

own soul; but more properly it is understood of the soul of him that is

converted; and save, that is, be an instrument of his salvation. Words

proper to the supreme cause are often ascribed to the instrument. So

Rom. xi. 14, `That I may save them that are my own flesh,, &c. So 1

Tim. iv, 16, `Thou shalt save thyself, and them that hear thee., And a

soul, that is the person. The principal part is specified; which being

saved, the body also is saved. So 1 Peter i. 9, `Ye shall receive the

end of your faith, the salvation of your souls., So James i. 21, `Which

is able to save your souls.,

From death.--Eternal death, which hath no power on the converted, Rev.

xx. 6, and from many corrections in this life. In the whole clause

there is an argument. This was Christ,s work; to save souls from death,

he himself died to procure it; and shall not we contribute a few

endeavours? &c.

And shall hide a multitude of sins.--God,s act is again ascribed to the

instrument. The sense is, he shall be a means of hiding the sins of an

erring brother. I confess there is some difference about rendering the

sense of this phrase. Brugensis applieth it to the person converting,

he shall cover a multitude of his own sins. His reason is taken from a

parallel place of Peter, 1 Peter iv. 8, where it is said, `Have fervent

charity among yourselves, for charity shall cover a multitude of sins.,

Which place, together with this, he applieth to the merit of charity

before God. But to this I reply--(1.) That the doctrine itself is

false. Charity is indeed a sign and argument of the forgiveness of our

sins, but not a cause. To pardon others giveth us the greater

confidence and assurance of our own pardon, Mat. vi. 14. (2.) That it

is uncertain whether that expression in Peter, and this in James, have

the same aim and tendency; yea, there are strong reasons to the

contrary. (3.) Suppose that these places are parallel, yet that place

in Peter doth not speak of covering sins before God, but amongst men;

and not of the covering of the sins of the charitable person, but of

the person to whom charity is exercised. For that sentence is taken out

of Prov. x. 12, `Hatred stirreth up strifes, but love covereth all

sins;, that is, concealeth and burieth the faults of a neighbour, which

cannot but reductively, and by remote consequences, be applied to the

business of justification. I confess some apply this passage of James

the same way, `shall cover a multitude of sins;, that is, say they, by

brotherly admonitions shall seek to prevent or hide their infirmities;

whereas those that hate their brethren do not desire to admonish them,

but to divulge their sins, to their discredit and infamy. But to me the

clause seemeth to be of another use; for it is ranked among spiritual

benefits, and urged, not by way of duty, but motive; first shall save a

soul, and then shall cover, &c. Therefore I suppose it implieth the act

of justification, which is elsewhere expressed by `covering of sins,,

Ps. xxxii. 1. And he meaneth the sins of the converted person, which we

are said to cover, when, as instruments, by our admonitions, we reclaim

the erroneous person, and bring him to repentance. And mark, it is

said, `a multitude of sins,, for two reasons:--(1.) To take off

discouragement. Though they be very bad, neglect not to admonish and

reclaim them. Seasonable admonition may be a means to cover a

multitude, &c. (2.) To imply the contagion and spreading of this

leaven. One error and sin begetteth another, as circles do in the

water; and he that beginneth to wander goeth farther.

Observe hence:--

Obs. 1. Brethren may err from the truth. The apostle saith, `Brethren,

if any of you do err., There is no saint recorded in the word of God,

but his failings and errors are recorded. In the visible church there

may be errors; none doubteth but God,s children, the elect, may be

sometimes led aside, not totally, not finally, and very hardly, into

gross errors: Mat. xxiv. 24, `Insomuch as, if it were possible, they

would deceive the very elect;, it is not possible totally, because of

the infallible predestination and efficacious protection of God. [400]

It is true, they may die in a lesser error, such as is consistent with

faith and salvation, but otherwise they are under the conduct of God,s

Holy Spirit, that fundamentally they cannot err, or finally. Well,

then, the best had need be cautious. Christ saith to his own disciples,

Mat. xxiv. 4, `Take heed that no man deceive you., Error is taking and

catching, of a marvellous compliance with our natural thoughts; for

aught that is in us, we should soon miscarry. There is no ill opinion

can be represented to us, but the seeds of it are in our own souls.

Again, be not scandalised when you see stars of the first magnitude to

leave their orb and station, and glorious luminaries to fall from

heaven like lightning. God,s own children may err, and dangerously for

a while. Junius before conversion was an atheist.

Obs. 2. We are not only to take care of our salvation, but the

salvation of others. The apostle saith, `If any man of you,, &c. God

hath made us guardians of one another. It was a speech savouring of

Cain,s rudeness and profaneness, `Am I my brother,s keeper?, As God

hath set conscience to watch over the inward man, so for the

conversation, he hath set Christians to watch over one another: Heb.

iii. 12, `Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you,, &c., not

only in yourselves, but in any of you. So Heb. xii. 15, 16, `Looking

diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God, and lest any root of

bitterness springing up trouble you, and many be defiled., There must

be a constant watch kept, as over our own hearts, so over the societies

wherein we are engaged. Members must be careful one of another; this is

the communion between saints. (1.) It reproveth our neglect of this

duty. Straying would have been much prevented if we had been watchful,

or did we, in a Christian manner, reason together with each other; what

comfort and establishment might we receive from one another,s faith and

gifts! As no man is born for himself, so no man is born anew for

himself. We often converse together as men, but not as Christians. We

should paraxu'nein, Heb. x. 24, `quicken one another;, be as goads in

each others, sides, &c. (2.) It showeth what a heinous sin it is in

them that watch over each,s hurt; as the dragon for the man child, Rev.

xii. 4, or as angry Herod sought to destroy the babes of Bethlehem, or

a nipping March wind the early blossoms of the spring, so they nip and

discourage the infancy and first buddings of grace by censure,

reproach, carnal suggestions, and put stumbling-blocks in the way of

young converts, and so destroy Christianity in the birth. Usually thus

it is, when men begin to look after the ways of God, profane men make

them objects of their scorn and contempt, and fanatical men lie in wait

with sleight and crafty enterprise to deceive them. If to save a soul

be a duty, certainly to seduce a soul is a dangerous sin. Such men .are

devilised, factors for hell, and agents for the kingdom of darkness.

Satan goeth to and fro, and so do they. It is dangerous to partake of

other men,s sins, to draw that guilt upon your own head; you had need

be established in that way which you propagate and promote with a

zealous industry; you had need, I say, have high assurance of the truth

of it. But usually in them that propagate errors there may be observed

either a blind and rash zeal, or a corrupt aim usually. `With feigned

words they make merchandise of you,, 2 Peter ii. 3, and propagate their

opinion with heat and earnestness, that they may promote their own

gain.

Obs. 3. From that if any do err. If but one, there is none so base and

contemptible in the church but the care of their safety belongeth to

all. One root of bitterness defileth many; both in point of infection

and scandal we are all concerned; one spark may occasion a great

burning. As Arius; an inconsiderable spark at first kindled such a

flame as burned in all parts of the world: `Take the little foxes,,

Cant. ii. 15. It is good with a wise foresight to watch the first

appearances of sin and error in a congregation. It presseth us also to

be careful of the meanest in the communion of saints. Some think they

are too high in birth and parts for that social commerce and

intercourse that should be between member and member in the body of

Christ. Andronicus and Junia, two poor prisoners, were of great note in

the churches, Rom. xvi.

Obs. 4. From that and one convert him. The expression is indefinite,

not as limiting it to the officers of the church, though it be chiefly

their work. Besides the public exhortations of ministers, private

Christians should mutually confer for comfort and edification. I say

private Christians not only may, but must keep up a Christian communion

among themselves: Heb. iii. 13, `Exhort one another while it is called

to-day., They are mutually to stir up one another by speeches that tend

to discover sin, to prevent hardness of heart and apostasy. God hath

severally dispensed his gifts, that we might mutually be beholding to

one another. Therefore the apostle calleth it, 1 Peter iv. 10, `the

dispensation of the manifold grace of God., Now every one should cast

in his lot, according to his gifts and experiences; as the wicked said

one to another, Prov. i. 14, `Cast in your lot among us,, &c.

Obs. 5. From that convert him; that is, reduce him from his error.

Among other acts of Christian communion this is one of the chiefest, to

reduce those that are gone astray. We must not only exhort, but

reclaim; it is a duty we owe to our neighbour,s beast: Deut. xxii. 4,

`Thou shalt not see thy neighbour,s ox or ass fall down by the way, but

thou shalt help them., Say, it is said, Exod. xxiii. 4, `If thou meet

thine enemy,s ox or ass going astray, thou shalt bring him back again.,

Mark, in both places, if the beasts were either fallen or strayed, much

more if your neighbour himself be fallen by sin, or strayed by error,

it is charity to help and reduce him. Hath God a care of oxen or asses?

If we suffer sin upon them, we may suffer for their sin. Though it be

an unthankful office, yet it must not be declined; usually carnal

respects sway us, and we are loath to do that which is displeasant.

Well, then, if it be our duty to admonish, it is your duty to `suffer

the words of exhortation,, to bear a reproof patiently, otherwise you

oppose your own salvation. Error is touchy; carnal affections are loath

to have the judgment informed; they take away the light of reason, and

leave us only the pride of reason; therefore none so angry as they that

are seduced into an opinion by interest, their sore must not be

touched. Usually conviction and reproof beget hatred: `Am I become your

enemy because I tell you the truth?, Gal. iv. 16. Truth is a good

mother, but it begetteth a bad daughter, contempt and hatred. Oh! this

should not be so. David counted the smiting of the righteous `a chief

oil,, Ps. cxli. 5; faithful reproof and counsel is like a sword

anointed with balsam, that woundeth and healeth at the same time.

Obs. 6. Again from that convert him. He doth not say destroy him; the

work of Christians is not presently to accuse and condemn, but to

counsel and convert an erroneous person. To call for fire from heaven

presently argueth some hastiness and impatiency of revenge; first burn

them in the fire of love. Before any rigorous course be taken, we must

use all due means of information; the worst cause always is the most

bloody. It is the guise of heretics to `go in the way of Cain,, Jude

11. It is tyranny in the Papists to punish every scruple; if a doubt be

proposed, though in confession, it cannot be expiated with less than a

rack, or the torments of an inquisition. It was Tertullian,s complaint

of the heathens, Ex officina carniftcum solvunt argumenta--the

Christians disputed for their religion, and they had their answer from

the hangman. So Ambrose observeth, Quos sermonibus non possunt

decipere, gladiis clamant feriendos. False religions brook no

contradiction; and what is wanting in argument is made up in force; and

therefore are erroneous ways fell and cruel. No compulsive force should

be used before there be care had for better information, and resolving

the doubting conscience, as long as there appeareth a desire to be

informed, and meek endeavours after satisfaction. Paul is for two or

three admonitions before a church censure, Titus iii. 10. They are

cruel hangmen, not divines, saith Pareus, that care not to save a soul

from death, but presently to deliver it up to the devil, to the stake,

to the sword.

Obs. 7. From that let him know. To quicken ourselves in a good work, it

is good we should actually consider the dignity and benefits of it;

gignoske'to, let him consider what a high honour it is to have a hand

in such a work. So the apostle presseth to patience upon this ground,

Rom. v. 3, `Knowing that tribulation worketh experience., So to

sincerity, Col. iii. 23, 24, `Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive

the reward of inheritance., Well, then, learn this wisdom in case of

deadness and opposition of spirit, act your thoughts upon the worth of

your duties and the success of them. Man,s strength lieth in his

discourse and reason, and there is no such relief to the soul as that

which cometh by seasonable thoughts; Whom do I serve? the Lord? Can any

labour undertaken for his sake be in vain? &c.

Obs. 8. From that, he which converteth a sinner from the error of his

way. Before it was expressed by `erring from the truth,, and now by the

`error of his way., You may note that errors in doctrine usually end in

sins of life and practice: Jude 8, `Filthy dreamers, defiling the

flesh., First men dream, and then defile themselves. We often see that

impurity of religion is joined with uncleanness of body, and spiritual

fornication punished with corporal: Hosea iv. 12, 13, `They have gone

a-whoring from their God, therefore their daughters shall commit

whoredom., Austin saith, Anima quae fornicata est a Deo casta esse non

potest, [401] that those cannot be chaste that go a-whoring from God.

Truth aweth the soul, and a right belief guideth the conversation:

unbelief is the mother of sin, and misbelief the nurse of it. In error

there is a sinful confederacy between the rational and sensual part,

and so carnal affections are gratified with carnal doctrines. The

spirit or upper part of the soul gratifieth the flesh or lower

faculties, and therefore the convictive power of the word is said to

`distinguish between flesh [402] and spirit,, Heb. iv. 12, between

carnal affection and those crafty pretences and excuses by which it is

palliated.

Obs. 9. From that shall save. Man under God hath this honour, to be a

saviour. We are su'nergoi Theou, `workers together with God,, 2 Cor.

vi. 1. He is pleased to take us into a fellowship of his own work, and

to cast the glory of his grace upon our endeavours. It is a high honour

which the Lord doth us; we should learn to turn it back again to God,

to whom alone it is due: 1 Cor. xv. 10, `I laboured more abundantly

than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me;, Luke

xix. 16, `Thy pound hath gained ten pounds;, not my industry, but thy

pound: so Gal. ii. 20, `I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.,

When God shall put the glory of his own work upon the head of the

creature, certainly they have great cause to lay the crown of their

excellency at the feet of the Lord; and when the honour of the supreme

cause is put upon the instrument, the instrument may well ascribe all

to the efficacy of the supreme cause. Such is the grace of God, that

when thou hast used the means, he will reckon it to thy score: `Thou

hast gained thy brother,, Mat, xviii. 15. A man loseth. nothing by

being employed in God,s service. Oh! let us strive and take pains in

this work: Paul would be anything that he might gain some, 1 Cor. ix.

19-21. It serveth also for direction to Christians; you must not

neglect the means, God giveth them the terms proper to the supreme

cause. God saith to his interpreter, Job xxxiii. 24, `Deliver him from

going down into the pit,, &c. So the apostles and the ministers of the

gospel that were to preach to Idumaea for the conversion of the elect

there are called saviours: Obad. 21, `And saviours shall come from

Mount Sion to judge the mount of Esau., It is notable, that though the

work of conversion be properly the Lord,s, yet it is sometimes ascribed

to ourselves, to show that we must not be negligent; sometimes to the

ministers and instruments, to show that we must not contemn their help;

sometimes to God, that we may not be self-confident or unthankful.

Obs. 10. From that soul. Salvation is principally of the soul; the body

hath its share: `This vile body, shall be a `glorious body,, Phil, iii.

21. But the soul is first possessed of glory, and is the chief

receptacle of it, as it is of grace for the present; see 1 Peter i. 9.

Well, then, it teacheth us not to look for a carnal heaven, a Turkish

paradise, or a place of ease and sensitive pleasure. This is the heaven

of heaven, that the soul shall be filled up with God, shall understand

God, love God, and be satisfied with his presence. Complete knowledge,

complete love and union with Christ, are the things that Christians

should look after. And it teacheth us to keep our souls pure: `Fleshly

lusts war against the soul,, 1 Peter ii. 11, not only against the

present welfare of it. but your future hopes. It also comforteth the

children of God; whatever their estate be it shall go well with their

souls.

Obs. 11. From that from death. Errors are mortal and deadly to the

spirit. The wages of every sin is death, especially of sin countenanced

by error, for then there is a conspiracy of the whole soul against God.

The apostle Peter calleth heresies aire'seis apolei'as, `damnable

heresies,, or, as it is in the. original, `heresies of destruction., I

confess some heresies are more damnable and destructive than others,

but all do in their nature tend to damnation. The way of truth is alone

the way of life: some heresies there are which by no means can consist

with salvation for eternal life, such as are errors in fundamentals,

joined with an obstinacy and reluctation against the light, which is

the proper badge of a heretic that is in a state of damnation. Well,

then, let us take heed how we dally with errors; there is death in

them: would a man play with his own damnation? Usually in matters of

opinion we are the more careless, because there is less remorse of

conscience, for the light by which it should judge is perverted, and

because foul acts have more of turpitude and filthiness in them in

men,s eyes, and occasion more shame from without; but errors are as

dangerous; a man that huggeth them huggeth his own death. Besides it

confuteth them that say there is salvation in any way, so we be of good

life: they say some opinions are more compendious ways to salvation,

but all are ways; so some Libertines, and some of the Arminians in

Holland, as Caspar Barlaeus, Adolphus Venator, and others. The

Socinians also say that a man of any persuasion may be saved, if he

doth not walk contrary to his light. At the Council of Trent, the

salvation of the heathens by the power of nature without Christ was

much talked of. The divines of Collen set forth a book De Salute

Aristotelis, of the salvation of Aristotle the heathen. But the

scripture speaketh but of `one faith,, Eph. iv. 5, and that all the

nations should be brought to God by `this gospel,, Mat. xxiv. 14. That

you may conceive of this matter more distinctly, I shall lay down a few

propositions. (1.) None can be saved without Christ, there is `no other

foundation,, 1 Cor. iii. 11, that is, of hope and comfort; `No other

name under heaven,, &c., Acts iv. 12; `I am the way,, John xiv. 6.

Therefore the Papists are grossly deceived that say the Gentiles could

be saved by the law of nature, as Maldonate asserteth on Mat. xi. 21.

(2.) None can be saved by Christ but they that know him and believe in

him: John xvii. 3. `This is life eternal, to know thee,, &c. Adolphus

Venator said a man might be saved by Christ without so much as a

historical knowledge of him; Acosta [403] complaineth of the like tenet

held by some of the schoolmen. But in the word we know of no salvation

but by believing in Christ: John iii. 17, that `as many as believed in

him,, &c. (3.) We must believe in Christ according to the tenor of the

scriptures, that is the rule of faith without which it is vain, 1 Cor.

xv. 14; John vii. 38. The apostle everywhere speaketh against those

that do eterodidaskalein, otherwise-gospel it, and teach another

doctrine, Gal. i. 6-8; 1 Tim. vi. 3; 1 Tim. i. 3; therefore they are

deceived that say Christ will not regard how you believe, but how you

live, and put all upon good life. (4.) Lesser differences in and about

the doctrine of the scriptures, though consistent with the main tenor

of salvation, yet, if held up out of by-ends, or against conscience,

are damnable. Circumcision and uncircumcision is nothing to. the new

creature, yet to be of either of these against conscience is a matter

of sad consequence; for then a lesser opinion is in the same rank with

a known sin, as being deliberately maintained against light. Consider,

then, how much it concerneth you to be right in judgment and

profession, for though the error be not damnable in itself, it may be

so by circumstance, reluctation against light being so inconsistent

with grace , for there cannot be a greater argument of an unsubdued

will than to stand out against conviction out of secular respects; this

is to `love darkness more than light,, John iii. 19, and to prefer

present conveniences before those glorious recompenses which religion

propoundeth; and how inconsistent that is with faith or true grace,

Christ showeth in those passages, John v. 44, and John xii. 43. I know

men usually plead there may be salvation as long as the error is not

fundamental. Ay! but be the error never so small, the danger is great

in walking against light: `As many as are perfect must be thus minded,,

Phil. iii. 15; that is, walk up to the height of their light and

principles; and though in some cases profession may be forborne, and we

may `have faith to ourselves., Rom. xiv. 22, yet not in times of public

contest, and when we are solemnly called to give witness to truths; and

therefore be not deceived with that pretence that there may be

salvation in that way which you practise. As one [404] argueth well,

suppose you could be saved in that way which you acknowledge to be

erroneous, yet how can it stand with love, to be guilty of such

horrible contempt and ingratitude, as to be content that God may be

dishonoured provided that we may be saved? (5.) Gross negligence, or

not taking pains to know better, is equivalent to reluctation or

standing out against light. [405] There is deceit in laziness or

affected ignorance; men will not know that which they have a mind to

hate; it argueth a secret fear and suspicion of the truth; men are

loath to follow it too close, lest it cross their lusts and interests:

John iii. 20, `They will not come to the light, lest their deeds be

reproved;, so 2 Peter iii. 5, `They are willingly ignorant., Those that

can please themselves in the ignorance of any truth, err not only in

their minds but hearts; it is the practice of God,s people to be always

searching, Ps. i. 2; Rom. xii. 2; we should not only do what we know,

but search that we may know more. (6.) Those that live and die in a

lesser error about faith or worship, are saved with much difficulty, 1

Cor. iii. 13. The apostle speaketh of chaff and hay built on the golden

foundation, and he saith that he that so doth, `shall be saved as by

fire;, he loseth much of his comfort and peace, is much scorched in

spirit, and kept in a more dark, cold, and doubtful way.

Obs. 12. From that and shall hide. Justification consisteth in the

covering of our sins. It is removed out of God,s sight, and the sight

of our own consciences, chiefly out of God,s sight. God cannot choose

but see it as omniscient, hate it as holy, but he will not punish it as

just, having received satisfaction in Christ: peccata sic velantur ut

in judicio non revelentur--sins are so hidden that they shall not be

brought into judgment, nor hurt us when they do not please us. Such

like notions are elsewhere used: Ps. xxii. 1, `Blessed is the man whose

sin is covered., It is an allusion to the covering of the dung of the

Israelites. In their march they were to have a paddle tied to their

weapon, that when they went aside to ease themselves, they might dig

therewith, and cover that which came from them, that God might see no

unclean thing among them; Deut. xxiii. 13, 14. So this excrement is

covered, and the unsavoury filthiness removed out of the nostrils of

justice. Suitable expressions are those of `remembering our sins no

more,, Isa. xliii. 25, and `casting them behind his back,, Isa.

xxxviii. 17. God will remove them out of the sight of his justice. They

are in their own nature clamorous for revenge, and earnest inducements

to wrath; but God will take no notice of them. There are yet higher

forms of expression, of `removing them as far as the east is `from the

west,, Ps. ciii. 12, which chiefly respects the feeling of our

consciences. We dread them, and God will set them at distance enough.

So of `casting them into the depths of the sea,, Micah vii. 18. That

which is in the depths of the sea is lost and for gotten for ever. The

ocean is never like to be drained or dried up. All these words doth the

Lord use to persuade us that sins once pardoned are as if they were

never committed. Men forgive, but not easily forget; if the wound be

cured, the scar remaineth. But God accepteth as if there were no

breach.

Obs. 13. From that a multitude of sins. Many sins do not hinder our

pardon or conversion. God,s `free gift is of many offences unto

justification,, Rom. v. 16; and it is said, Isa. lv. 7, `He will

multiply to pardon., For these six thousand years God hath been

multiplying pardons, and yet free grace is not tired and grown weary.

The creatures owe a great debt to justice, but we have an able surety;

there is no want of mercy in the creditor, nor of sufficiency in the

surety. It is a folly to think that an emperor,s revenue will not pay a

beggar,s debt. Christ hath undertook to satisfy, and he hath money

enough to pay. We are of limited dispositions, and therefore straiten

the abundance of grace in our thoughts. But God is not as man, Hosea

xi. 9. The master can forgive talents when the servant would not

forgive pence; and ten thousand talents, when we grudge at a hundred

pence, Mat. xviii. 24, with 28. Mercy is a treasure that cannot easily

be spent. We have many sins, but God hath many mercies: `According to

the multitude of thy compassions,, Ps. li. 2. When conscience is bowed

down with a load of guilt, we may say, as Esau, `Hast thou but one

blessing, O my father?, Certainly mercy is an ocean that is ever full,

and ever flowing. The saints carry loads of experiences with them to

heaven. Free grace can show you largo accounts and a long bill,

cancelled by the blood of Christ. The Lord interest you in this

abundant mercy, through the blood of Christ and the sanctification of

the Spirit! Amen.

THE END OF VOL. IV.

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[342] `Ita fideles instruit ut infideles non negligat.,--Calvin.

[343] `Dantur bonis, ne putentur mala; malis, ne putentur bona.,

[344] `Dormit pauper Lazarus in sinu Abrahami divitis.,--Aug.

[345] Aristotle calleth them ania'tous, Ethic., lib. iv. cap. 1.

[346] `Si autem in se esse novit quae loquor, non hoc a mea lingua dici

existimet, sed a conscientia sua.,--Salvian. de Guber. Dei, lib. iv.

[347] See Josephus Antiq., lib. xviii.; and Philo in Hist. Legat. ad

Caium. See also Lightfoot in Comment, on Acts.

[348] `Non torquendus quia homicida es, quia fornicator, sed tantum

quia dives, quia divitiis male uteris, quia datas tibi divitias ad opus

sanctum non intelligis,--Salvian. ad Ecclesiam Catholicam, lib. i.

[349] `Hominem illum judicas; arca est; quis aerario, aut plenis

loculis invidet?,--Seneca.

[350] Calvisius in anno 1258. [Called by D,Herbelot Mostuzem. The

manner of his death is differently stated.--ED.]

[351] About hell fire see Aug. de Civitate Dei, lib. xxi. cap. 4.

[352] `Effunditur nobis ultrix imago peccati, nec quietum reum esse

permitit.,

[353] `Plus viatioi quaeritur, quo minus restat viae.,--Seneca.

[354] `Tunc magis irascitur Deus cum non irascitur; non enim cum nescio

sed cum sentio te iratum, tunc maxime confido propitium.,--Bernard.

Serm. 42 in Cant.

[355] `Qui propria non tribuunt, aliena detinent.,

[356] `Ostendit Dominus quam invitus puniat, etiam gravissimos

peccatores, dicens quod clamor Sodomorum ad se ascenderit; hoc est

dicere, misericordia quidem mea suadet ut parcam, sed tamen peccatorum

clamor cogit ut puniam.,--Salvian. de Provid., lib. i.

[357] See Mr Burrough,s his `Lord of Hosts;, and Dr Chappel on Ps.

ciii. 21.

[358] Josephus, Antiq. Judaeor., lib. v. cap. 6.

[359] `O animula vague a blandula, quos nunc adibis locos! nec dabis ut

solebas jocos,, &c.--Platina.

[360] `Domine hoc me docuisti, ut quemadmodum medicamenta, ita alimenta

sumpturus accedam.,--Aug. Confess.

[361] `Cum manducas, nequaquam totus manduces, sed corpore tuo suam

refectionem postulante, mens suam non negligat, memoria suavitatis

domini vel scripurarum poscat meditationes.,--Bernard.

[362] Clemens Constit. Apost., lib. ii. cap. 63.

[363] `Ratio humana tantum in praesenti sensu haeret, nihil aliud

audit, intelligit, sentit, videt, cogitat.,--Luther in Esaiam, liv. 7.

[364] `Sapienti nihil magnum est cui nota est aeternitatis magnitudo.,

[365] `Infensior est mihi quam ulli hactenus fuerint inimici.,

[366] `Non sic me Pupistae lacerant ac illi amici uostri.,

[367] `Praedicare nihil aliud est quam derivare in se furorem

mundi.,--Luther.

[368] `Non dubito quin magis laudaverim truncam istam manum Mutii quam

cujuslibet fortissimi salvain; melius est hostem amissa manu vicisse,

quam armata.,--Seneca.

[369] `Apo` tes peni'as la'mproteros ege'neto.,--Chrys.

[370] `Cicuta Socratem magnum fecit.,--Seneca.

[371] See the notes on chap. ii. 25.

[372] `De Job et Christo specialiter exemplificat, Job in Veteri

Testamento, Christus in Novo, quorum uni reddita sunt temporalia,

alteri aeterna. Sufferentiam Jobi audistis, quanta sustinuit a Diabolo,

a praedonibus, ab uxore, ab amicis; et fidem Domini vidistis, oculis

scilicet vestris, in cruce pendentem, longanimiter patientem,,

&c.--Thomas. in locum.

[373] `Polu'splanchnos abundat intima misericordia.,--Beza.

[374] `Ne praeponatis juramentum omnibus verbis et promissis.,

[375] To which the poet alludeth, `Jura, verpe, per

Anchialum.,--Martialis.

[376] `Quare ante omnia? Jurare pejus est quam furari? Jurare pejus est

quam adulterare? Jurare pejus est, quam hominem occidere? Absit; quare

ergo ante omnia? Ne surrepat vobis consuetudo jurandi; ut te adversus

consuetudinem infensissimum redderet.,--Aug. Serm. 28, de Verbis

Apostoli.

[377] Philo. in lib. peri` ton en ei'dei no'mon.

[378] `En matai'o,--Sept.

[379] `Eis eike.,--Aquila.

[380] `Non peccare metuunt sed ardere.,--Aug.

[381] Qu. `taking as well as giving,?--ED.

[382] `Qui majores terras possident, minores census

solvunt.,--Parisiensis de Ingratis.

[383] `Non exploratis rationibus traditionum, probabilem tantum fidem

portant.,--Cypr.

[384] `Post aquam manualem et lumina, ut quisque de scripturis vel

proprio ingenio potest, provocatur in medium Deo canere.,--Tertul. in

Apol., cap. 29. See the notes of Pamelius on that place.

[385] `�tate seniores in quavis vicinia aut societate fidelium.,--Aret.

in locum.

[386] Qu. `was not,?--ED.

[387] Tertul. ad Scapular.

[388] `Corporis gravia, et multa tormenta intelligit.,--Cyprian.

[389] `Non hic est sermo de confessione sacramentali; sacramentalis

enim confessio non fit invicem; sed sacerdotibus tantum.,--Cajetan, sic

et alii citati a Lorino et Paezio in locum.

[390] `Scire volunt secreta domus, atque inde timeri.,--Juvenal.

[391] `Haeresis est crimen quod nec confessio celat.,

[392] To this Solomon alludeth when he saith, `Who is this that goeth

in pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense?, Cant. iv.

6. The expression manifestly relateth to the smoke that went up out of

the censers.

[393] Austin upon that place glosseth thus: `Domine, quis tenet te?,

Let me alone, Lord, who holdeth thee? Who can lay fetters and

restraints upon Omnipotency? &c.

[394] `Omnis sanguis concolor.,--Petracha.

[395] `Ou tapeinophrosu'ne mo'non all' eugnomosu'ne.,--Chrysosiom, in

locum.

[396] `Non aliud in Jacobo dilexit, quam suam misericordiam.,--August.

[397] `Quibus arteriis opus est, si pro sono audiantur.,--Tertul. de

Orat. Dom.

[398] `Ana'basis tou nou pro`s theo`n.,--Damascen. Orthod. Fid., lib.

iii.

[399] That the gospel is eminently called truth, see Grotius in locum.

[400] It is said, Job xii. 16, `The deceiver and the deceived are his.,

He ordereth the persons who shall deceive, and who be deceived.

[401] Aug. adversus Julian., lib. iv.

[402] Qu. `soul,?--ED.

[403] `Vix satis mirari possum quid praeceptoribus quibusdam

scholasticis, viris certe gravibus nostri saeculi, in mentem venerit,

ut nunc quoque temporis, post tam diu revelatum Christum, sine Christi

notitia salutem cuiquam aeternam contingere posse confirment.,--Acosta,

de Procuranda Indorum Salute, lib. v. cap. 3.

[404] Despaigne,s New Observations on the Creed.

[405] `Crassa negligentia dolus est.,--Regula Juristarum.

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\* ou katerga'zetai: [4129]1

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epitunchano'nton: [4191]1

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\* proskalesastho: [4193]1

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\* sophoi` to aioni tou'to: [4202]1

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\* stoicheia: [4207]1

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\* su`n theo: [4209]1

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\* to epiklethen eph' humas: [4218]1

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\* te? philia autes peripheromenos po'llostos ese: [4221]1

\* te progno'sei: [4222]1

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\* te prothesi tes kardias: [4224]1

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\* tais en te diaspora: [4233]1

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\* te`n poli'an ma'tin phe'rpmtes: [4244]1

\* te`n tapei'nosin: [4245]1

\* ti` ophe'los toutois tes loi'pes aretes: [4246]1

\* time`: [4247]1

\* tis me'gas: [4248]1

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\* to` gnoston tou theou: [4250]1

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\* to` energein: [4252]1

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\* to` thelein: [4255]1

\* to` pur par' emon, ede phlo`x tou pneu'matos: [4256]1

\* to` reton: [4257]1

\* to`n di'kaion: [4258]1 [4259]2

\* to`n tro'chon tes gene'seos: [4260]1

\* to'pon idio'tou: [4261]1

\* tous o'ntos apophugo'ntas: [4262]1

\* tois agapetois autou u'pnon: [4263]1

\* tois anthra'xi tois eremikois: [4264]1

\* tois gegumnasmenois: [4265]1 [4266]2

\* tois thre'nois sungi'gnomai: [4267]1

\* tous presbute'rous: [4268]1

\* tolmerota'tes tes phu'seos a'galma: [4269]1

\* tou`s upome'mpmtas: [4270]1

\* tropes aposkiasma: [4271]1

\* upe'ronka mataio'tetos: [4272]1

\* phos ek photos, eo`s ale'thinos ek theou alethi'nou: [4273]1

\* phota: [4274]1

\* phe'masi bussi'oois: [4275]1

\* phthoneite: [4276]1

\* phlogizome'ne: [4277]1

\* phlogisome'ne: [4278]1

\* pho'rtia dusba'stakta: [4279]1

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\* psa'lmois kai` u'mnois kai` o'dais pneumatikais: [4296]1

\* psalle'to: [4297]1 [4298]2

\* psu'che: [4299]1 [4300]2

\* psu'chikoi: [4301]1

\* psu'chikoi, pneuma me` e'chontes: [4302]1

\* psuches: [4303]1

\* psuchike`: [4304]1

\* o' tes eucholi'as tou sunalla'gmatos: [4305]1

\* o'nion soi` to` thelesai mo'non to` a'gathon: [4306]1

\* os ia'tros, ouch os dikaste`s parage'gonen: [4307]1

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Index of Latin Words and Phrases

\* Crassa negligentia dolus est: [4308]1

\* �tate seniores in quavis vicinia aut societate fidelium.: [4309]1

\* Oxu'cholos: [4310]1

\* Polu'splanchnos: [4311]1

\* A Jove principium.: [4312]1

\* A quatenus ad omne valet consequentia.: [4313]1 [4314]2

\* Ab Ecclesia Romana non alio discessimus animo, quam ut si correcta

ad priorem ecclesiae formam redeat, nos quoque ad illam revertamur,

et communionem cum illa in suis porro caetibus habeamus, quod ut

tandem fiat, toto animo Dominum Jesum precamur; quid enim pio

cuique optatius, quam ubi per baptismum renati sumus, ibi etiam in

finem usque vivamus, modo in Domino; ego Hieronymus Zanchius

septuagenarius cum tota familia testatum hoc volo toti ecclesiae

Christi in omnem eternitatem.: [4315]1

\* Absque cruore Domini nemo appropinquat Deo.: [4316]1

\* Adverte coeleste consilium: non sapientes aliquos, non divites, non

nobiles, sed piscatores et publicanos, quos dirigeret, elegit; ne

traduxisse potentia, redemisse divitiis, nobilitatisque auctoritate

traxisse aliquos videretur, et veritatis ratio, non disputationis

gratia, praevaleret.: [4317]1

\* Affectavit quandoque diabolus veritatem defendendo concutere.:

[4318]1

\* Altera poscit opem res, et conjurat amice.: [4319]1

\* Alterius sic: [4320]1

\* Amor meus est pondus meum, eo feror quocunque feror.: [4321]1

\* Anima nunquam melius agit, quam ex impetu insignis alicujus

affectus: [4322]1

\* Anima quae fornicata est a Deo casta esse non potest: [4323]1

\* Apostatae sunt maximi osores sui ordinis.: [4324]1

\* Aspice, ut se mutuo diligunt Christiani!: [4325]1

\* Attendite similitudinem ab ipsis bestiis quas domamus. Equus non se

domat, camelus non se domat, aspis non se domat; sic et homo non se

domat, sed ut dometur equus, bos, camelus, elephantus, leo, aspis,

quaeritur homo; ergo Deus quaeratur ut dometur homo.: [4326]1

\* Audies plerosque dicentes, a quinquagesimo in otiuin secedam,

sexagesimus annus ab officiis me demittet; et quam tandem longioris

vitae praedam accipis? Quis ista sicuti disponis ire patiatur?:

[4327]1

\* Aut sumus, aut fuimus, aut possumus esse quod hic est.: [4328]1

\* Ave, sanctum balsamum: [4329]1

\* Ave, sanctum chrisma: [4330]1

\* Ave, sanctum oleum: [4331]1

\* Beatus vir, non mollis vel effoeminatus, sed vir: [4332]1

\* Bene orasse est bene studuisse.: [4333]1

\* Bona opera sunt spei quaedam seminaria, caritatis incentiva,

occulta praedestinationis judicia, non fiduciae fundamenta, futurae

felicitatis praesagia: [4334]1

\* Bone Christiane, haec nihil ad te: [4335]1

\* Boni esse desierunt simul ac docti evaserint.: [4336]1

\* Bonus animus nunquam erranti obsequium accommodat.: [4337]1

\* Bos mutus: [4338]1

\* Caedissem te nisi iratus essem.: [4339]1

\* Canticum novum et vetus homo male concordant.: [4340]1

\* Christianus rusticus: [4341]1

\* Cibus et potus sunt divitiae Christianorum.: [4342]1

\* Cicuta Socratem magnum fecit.: [4343]1

\* Coelestis ira quos premit miseros facit, humana nullos.: [4344]1

\* Communi sermone spreto, exoticum nescio quod idioma sibi fingunt,

interea nihil spirituals asserunt.: [4345]1

\* Compertum est damnata ut haeretica in libris Lutheri, quae in

Bernardi, Augustinique libris ut orthodoxa immo et pia leguntur.:

[4346]1

\* Contentionis studium quoddam irritatum ab importunis ostentatoribus

doctrinae fidei, longius hujus epistolae auctorem quasi extulisse

videri possit, nam hoc in certaminibus semper fieri consuevit.:

[4347]1

\* Contra eam charitatem facit, in qua pendent omnia.: [4348]1

\* Contumeliosum est in sanctum meritum Christi, asserere secundam

justificationem, quae in nostris operibus consistit, majorem et

auctiorem et digniorem esse apud Deum quam primam, quae solo merito

Christi nititur, et quidem non primam sed secundam justificationem

mereri vitam aeternam.: [4349]1

\* Cordis et oris orationem notat: [4350]1

\* Corporis gravia, et multa tormenta intelligit.: [4351]1

\* Crassa negligentia dolus est.: [4352]1

\* Cum manducas, nequaquam totus manduces, sed corpore tuo suam

refectionem postulante, mens suam non negligat, memoria suavitatis

domini vel scripurarum poscat meditationes.: [4353]1

\* Cur non et me quoque torque donas, et insignis hujus ordinis

militem creas?: [4354]1

\* Cur nullificas?: [4355]1

\* Da quod jubes, et jube quod vis: [4356]1 [4357]2

\* Dantur bonis ne putentur mala, malis ne putentur bona.: [4358]1

\* Dantur bonis, ne putentur mala; malis, ne putentur bona.: [4359]1

\* De Job et Christo specialiter exemplificat, Job in Veteri

Testamento, Christus in Novo, quorum uni reddita sunt temporalia,

alteri aeterna. Sufferentiam Jobi audistis, quanta sustinuit a

Diabolo, a praedonibus, ab uxore, ab amicis; et fidem Domini

vidistis, oculis scilicet vestris, in cruce pendentem, longanimiter

patientem,: [4360]1

\* Democritus excaecavit seipsum quod mulieres sine concupiscenti�

aspicere non posset, et doleret si non esset potitus: at

Christianus salvis oculis foeminam videt; animo adversus libidinem

caecus est.: [4361]1

\* Deo redempti sumus, Deum debemus.: [4362]1

\* Descripsit apostolus Jovinianum loquentem buccis tumentibus, et

inflata verba trutinantem: [4363]1

\* Desideravit guttam: [4364]1

\* Deus in ipso regenerationis opere adeo potenter in voluntatem agit,

ut actualiter resistendi potentia proxima pro illo tempore

suspendatur; emotam autem et in actu primo positam resistendi

potentiam non quidem funditus extirpat, sed in sua amara radice

delitessere permittit.: [4365]1

\* Deus nihil coronat nisi dona sua.: [4366]1

\* Diaboli decipientis calliditas, et hominis consentientis voluntas.:

[4367]1

\* Diabolus suadere et sollicitare potest, cogere omnino non potest;

non enim diabolus cogendo sed suadendo nocet, nec extorquet a nobis

consensum sed petit.: [4368]1

\* Diabolus tentat; Deus probat.: [4369]1

\* Discamus sanctam superbiam, et sciamus nos esse illis meliores.:

[4370]1

\* Discite habere in corde, quod habet omnis homo in lingua, quod vult

Deus hoc agat: [4371]1

\* Divitum nomina sciuntur, pauperum nesciuntur: [4372]1

\* Domat feram, non domat linguam: [4373]1

\* Domine hoc me docuisti, ut quemadmodum medicamenta, ita alimenta

sumpturus accedam.: [4374]1

\* Domine, da prius poenitentiam, et postea indulgentiam: [4375]1

\* Domine, quis tenet te?: [4376]1

\* Domitrix gentium, et captiva vitiorum.: [4377]1

\* Dormit pauper Lazarus in sinu Abrahami divitis.: [4378]1

\* Dubia Evangelica: [4379]1

\* Eadem velle et nolle, ea demum firma est amicitia.: [4380]1

\* Ecce: [4381]1

\* Ecclesia est haeres crucis: [4382]1

\* Ecclesia totum mundum convertit sanguine et oratione: [4383]1

\* Ecclesia vetus has epistolas canonicas et catholicas appellavit,

non ut aliis quidquam adimeret, sed ut has illis contra nonnullorum

sententias adjungeret.: [4384]1

\* Effice quicquid novisti nomini tuo honorificum.: [4385]1

\* Effunditur nobis ultrix imago peccati, nec quietum reum esse

permitit.: [4386]1

\* Ego a multis annis crastinum non habui: [4387]1

\* Eodem sanguine Christi glutinati: [4388]1

\* Eodem sanguine Christi glutinati.: [4389]1

\* Epistola Jacobi vere straminea epistola est, collata cum Evangelio

Johanniw et ejus Epistola prima, et cum Epistolis Paulinis,

imprimis quae ad Romanos, Galatas, Ephesios scriptae sunt; nec enim

genium indolemque habet evangelicam: [4390]1

\* Epistolam hanc, quamvis rejectam a veteribus, pro utili tamen et

non contemnenda habeo, vel ob hanc causam quod nihil plan� humanae

doctrinae offerat, ut legem Dei fortiter urgeat; verum ut meam de

illa sententiam candide promam extra praejudicium, existimo nullius

esse apostoli: [4391]1

\* Erat vero ille sicut benevolenti� praecipuus: ita ir� fervidus.:

[4392]1

\* Eum nulla adversitas dejicit, quem nulla prosperitas corrumpit.:

[4393]1

\* Ex cupiditatibus odia, dissidia, discordiae, seditiones, bella

nascuntur.: [4394]1

\* Ex officina carniftcum solvunt argumenta: [4395]1

\* Excitata fuit tempore apostolorum opinio, sufficere solam fidem ad

salutem obtinendam, si vel maxime bona opera negligerentur, contra

quam opinionem Apostolicae Epistolae Petri, Johannis, Jacobi,

Judae, maxime dirigunt intentionem, ut vehementer adstruant fidem

sine operibus nihil prodesse.: [4396]1

\* Exquisitior quaeque crudelitas vestra illecebra est; magis sectae,

plures efficimur, quoties metimur a vobis: [4397]1

\* Fabula Cliristi: [4398]1

\* Facessant de medio adversarii, cum suo Jacobo, quem toties nobis

objiciunt.: [4399]1

\* Ferendo discimus perferre; solidissima pars est corporis, quam

frequens usus agitavit.: [4400]1

\* Fides quae creditur, et fides qua creditur.: [4401]1

\* Fides, nisi bonorum operum fructibus perficiatur, justificationein

perfectam ac salutem sempiternam conciliare hominibus non potest,

ut apertissime testatur Jacobus.: [4402]1

\* Flectere, si nequeo superos: [4403]1

\* Fuerunt quidam nostrorum vel minus stabilita fide, vel minus docti,

vel minus cauti, qui dissidium facerent unitatis vel ecclesiam

dissiparent; sed ii quorum fides fuit lubrica, cum Deum nosse se

aut colere simularunt, augendis opibus et honori studentes

affectabant maximum sacerdotium, et a potioribus victi secedere cum

suffragatoribus suis maluerunt, quam eos ferre praepositos quibus

concupiebant ipsi praeponi,: [4404]1

\* Gaudium de veritate omnes volunt, multos expertus sum qui velint

fallere, qui autem falli neminem.: [4405]1

\* Genetivus hic non est objecti, sed attributi.: [4406]1

\* Genus hominum superstitionis malificae: [4407]1

\* Gratias agimus quod a molestis dominis liberemur: [4408]1

\* Gubernatoris artem tranquillum mare et obsequens ventus non

ostendit; adversi aliquid incurrat oportet, quod animum probet.:

[4409]1

\* Habebat silentium loquens: [4410]1

\* Habitat, sed non regnat; manet, sed non dominatur; evulsum

quodammodo, nec tamen expulsum; dejectum, sed non prorsus ejectum

tamen.: [4411]1

\* Haec beneficii inter duos lex est, alter oblivisci debet dati

statim, alter accepti nunquam.: [4412]1

\* Haeresis est crimen quod nec confessio celat.: [4413]1

\* Hic notantur non certi homines, sed certa hominum genera.: [4414]1

\* Hieme non seminavit; venit aestas, et nihil messuit.: [4415]1

\* Hoc age: [4416]1

\* Hoc et ratio doctis, et necessitas barbaris, et mos gentibus, et

feris natura ipsa praescripsit, ut omnem semper vim quacunque ope

possent, a corpore, a capite, a vita sua propulsarent.: [4417]1

\* Hoc sacramentum illi de cujus morte non timetur, dari non debet.:

[4418]1

\* Homicidii festinatio est prohibere nasci; etiam conceptum utero dum

adhuc sanguis in hominem delibatur dissolvere non licet, nec refert

natura natam quis eripiat animam an nascentem disturbet.: [4419]1

\* Hominem illum judicas; arca est; quis aerario, aut plenis loculis

invidet?: [4420]1

\* Homo Deum non nisi ex sensu suo metitur, nec de auctoritate ejus

cogitat, quin eam circumcidat, nec de libertate quin ei fibulam

impositam velit; Pelagiani omnes nascimur, immo cum supercilio

pharisaico. Hic character vix delebilis est: Homo sibi obnoxium

Deum existimat, non se Deo: [4421]1

\* Id agit tota scriptura, ut credamus Deum esse misericordem: [4422]1

\* Ignis non est diversus et diversa agit; paleam in cineres vertit;

auro sordes tollit.: [4423]1

\* Illa quae aliquando erat meretrix, jam Spiritu. Sancto repleta est,

et de praeteritis quidem confitetur, de presentibus vero credit,

prophetat et praenunciat de futuris.: [4424]1

\* Illic incipit, et illuc rapit.: [4425]1

\* Illud a'ge: [4426]1

\* Imago Dei domat feram: [4427]1

\* Immolari sibi Deus filium jussit, pater obtulit, et quantum ad

defunctionem cordis pertinet, immolavit.: [4428]1

\* In Alexandria una scintilla fuit, sed quia non statim oppressa est,

totum orbem ejus flamma populata est.: [4429]1

\* Incesta est et sine stupro quae stuprum cupit: [4430]1

\* Indulgere genio: [4431]1

\* Infensior est mihi quam ulli hactenus fuerint inimici.: [4432]1

\* Infirmitates, non iniquitates.: [4433]1

\* Infirmus hostis est qui non potest vincere nisi volentem.: [4434]1

\* Invidientia vitium diabolicum, quo solus diabolus reus est, et

inexpiabiliter reus; non enim dicitur diabolo ut damnetur,

adulterium commisisti, furtum fecisti, villam alienam rapuisti, sed

homini stanti lapsus invidisti.: [4435]1

\* Istae divitiae nec verae sunt, nec vestrae: [4436]1

\* Ita fideles instruit ut infideles non negligat.: [4437]1

\* Iter ad pietatem est intra pietatem.: [4438]1

\* Jacobus unam tantum scripsit : [4439]1

\* Judicium hoc omnium mortalium est: [4440]1

\* Jura, verpe, per Anchialum.: [4441]1

\* Jure matris naturae: [4442]1

\* Laudem non veniam meretur repudium agniti erroris.: [4443]1

\* Levis est dolor si nihil opinio adjecerit: [4444]1

\* Lex jubet, gratia juvat: [4445]1

\* Libera me a malo homine, a meipso.: [4446]1

\* Ligabantur, includebantur, caedebantur, torquebantur, urebantur,

laniabautur, trucidabantur et tamen multiplicabantur.: [4447]1

\* Maculae sunt peccata quae ostendit lex; aqua est sanguis Christi

quem ostendit evangelium.: [4448]1

\* Magis damnati quam absoluti gaudemus.: [4449]1

\* Magnum miraculum! altus est Deus; erigis te, et fugit a te.:

[4450]1

\* Malo de me dici nullum esse Plutarchum quam malum esse Plutarchum,

de Deo male sentire quam Deum esse negare pejus duco.: [4451]1

\* Maximi osores sui : [4452]1

\* Maximum remedium iraedilatio est, ut primus ejus fervor

relanguescat, et caligo quae premit mentem aut resiliat aut minus

densa sit; graves habet impetus primo.: [4453]1

\* Meliori major affectus, indigentiori major effectus, tribuendus

est: [4454]1

\* Melius est Herodis porcus esse quam filius: [4455]1

\* Mirum novumque dictu quod patri exhibeatur petitio et filius

exaudiat, cum exauditio ad eum pertineat cui est porrecta petitio.:

[4456]1

\* Miserum te judico quod nunquam fuisti miser; transistis sine

adversario vitam; nemo sciet quid potueris; ne tu quidem ipse; opus

est ad notitiam sui experimento, quae quisque posset nisi tentando

non didicit.: [4457]1

\* Mutat sententiam, sed non decretum: [4458]1

\* Ne dum humana foris jurgia metuant, interni foederis discussione

feriantur.: [4459]1

\* Ne praeponatis juramentum omnibus verbis et promissis.: [4460]1

\* Nec diis nec hominibus pepercit: [4461]1

\* Nec ego te, nec tu me, sed ambo audiamus apostolum: [4462]1

\* Nec sane, quantum arbitror, putandum est leve esse peccatum in

personarum acceptione habere fidem Domini nostri Jesu Christi, si

illam distantiam sedendi ac standi ad honores ecclesiasticos

referamus; quis enim ferat eligi divitem ad sedem honoris

ecclesiae, contempto paupere instructiore atque sanctio re.:

[4463]1

\* Nemo aliorum sensu miser est, sed suo: [4464]1

\* Nemo securus esse debet in ista vita quae tota tentalio nominatur.:

[4465]1

\* Nemo tam divos habuit faventes crastinum ut possit sibi polliceri.:

[4466]1

\* Nemo te quaerere potest, nisi qui prius invenerit; vis igitur

inveniri ut quaeraris, quaeri ut inveniaris; potes quidem inveniri,

non tamen praeveniri: [4467]1

\* Neophytos collocant, ut glori� eos obligent, quia veritate non

possunt: [4468]1

\* Nescio an dicenda sit vita mortalis, an vitalis mors.: [4469]1

\* Nesciunt suis parcere qtii nihil simm norunt.: [4470]1

\* Nihil bomim sine summo bono: [4471]1

\* Nihil est quod non tolerat qui perfecte diligit: [4472]1

\* Nihil habet fortuna magna majus quam ut possit, et natura bona

melius quam ut velit, benefacere quamplurimis.: [4473]1

\* Nihil oblivisci soles nisi injurias: [4474]1

\* Nisi justa bella suscipi possent, responderet iis, arma abjicite,

militari deserite,: [4475]1

\* Nobis dedit arrhabonem Spiritus; � nobis accepit arrhabonem carnis:

[4476]1

\* Noluit Deus pati cohabitationem superbiae: [4477]1

\* Noluit prius eligere senatores, sed piscatores, magna artificis

misericordia! Sciebat enim quia si eligeret senatorem, diceret

senator, dignitas mea electa est, &c. Et paulo post.--Da mihi,

inquit, istum piscatorem, veni tu pauper, sequere me, nihil habes,

nihil nosti, sequere me.: [4478]1

\* Non attendendum quid alii ante nos fecerint, sed quid Dominus, qui

ante omnes.: [4479]1

\* Non dicit e'rchetai: [4480]1

\* Non dicit, ut aliqui: [4481]1

\* Non dubitantis est, sed supponentis.: [4482]1

\* Non dubito quin magis laudaverim truncam istam manum Mutii quam

cujuslibet fortissimi salvain; melius est hostem amissa manu

vicisse, quam armata.: [4483]1

\* Non dubito quin multum subsidii ad desperatam hanc causam

comitiorum preces illius allaturae sunt: [4484]1

\* Non es ubi prius eras: [4485]1

\* Non est sportula quae negotiatur.: [4486]1

\* Non exploratis rationibus traditionum, probabilem tantum fidem

portant.: [4487]1

\* Non hic est sermo de confessione sacramentali; sacramentalis enim

confessio non fit invicem; sed sacerdotibus tantum.: [4488]1

\* Non incepisse sed perfecisse virtutis est.: [4489]1

\* Non judicamus ex personis fidem, sed ex fide personas.: [4490]1

\* Non minae civium, non bellorum pericula, non incendia patriae, non

suorum pericula terrent: disce, vir, disce, Christiane, quomodo

veruin Jesum sequi debeas, quando faemina contempsit omnia sua.:

[4491]1

\* Non peccare metuunt sed ardere.: [4492]1

\* Non periclitor dicere ipsas scripturas ita dispositas esse, ut

materiam subministrarent haereticis.: [4493]1

\* Non posse praetenditur, non velle in causa est.: [4494]1

\* Non possunt in coelum aspicere, quoniam mens eorum in humum prona,

terraeque defixa est; virtutis autem via non capit magna onera

portantes.: [4495]1

\* Non sic me Pupistae lacerant ac illi amici uostri.: [4496]1

\* Non torquendus quia homicida es, quia fornicator, sed tantum quia

dives, quia divitiis male uteris, quia datas tibi divitias ad opus

sanctum non intelligis: [4497]1

\* Novis semper cupiditatibus occupati, non quid habeamus, sed quid

petamus, inspicimus; non in id quod est, sed quod appetitur

intenti.: [4498]1

\* Nunquam citius proficitur quam in castris rebellium, ubi ipsum

illic esse promereri est: [4499]1

\* O animula vague a blandula, quos nunc adibis locos! nec dabis ut

solebas jocos: [4500]1

\* O homo, in praeceptione cognosce quid debeas habere, et in

correptione cognosce tuo te vitio non habere.: [4501]1

\* Observatum est a sacrificantibus, ut si hostia quae ad aras

duceretur fuisset vehementer reluctata, ostendissetque se invitam

altaribus admoveri, amoveretur, quia invito deo eam efferri

putabant; quae vero stetisset oblata, hanc volenti numini dari

existimabant.: [4502]1

\* Omne virtutis nostrae meritum est vitium, et omnis humana justitia

injustitia est si stricte judicetur.: [4503]1

\* Omnia dicta tanti existimantur, quantus est ipse qui dixerit, nec

tam dictionis vim atque virtutem quam dictatoris cogitant

dignitatem.: [4504]1

\* Omnis dives aut iniquus est, aut iniqui haeres: [4505]1

\* Omnis sanguis concolor.: [4506]1

\* Opera non sunt causa quod aliquis justus sit apud Deum, sed potius

sunt executiones et manifestationes justitiae: [4507]1

\* Opus bonum optime factum mortals peccatum est,; et paulo post,

`Omne opus justi damnabile est, et mortale peccatum, si judicio Dei

judicetur.: [4508]1

\* Ostendit Dominus quam invitus puniat, etiam gravissimos peccatores,

dicens quod clamor Sodomorum ad se ascenderit; hoc est dicere,

misericordia quidem mea suadet ut parcam, sed tamen peccatorum

clamor cogit ut puniam.: [4509]1

\* Paulus cum negat nos ex operibus justificari, nomine operum

perfectam per totam vitam legis divinae observationem intelligit,

nec aliud quidquam dicere vult, nisi nos ex merito ipsorum operum

nequaquam justificari coram Deo, non autem ad nos coram ipso

justificandos nulla opera nostra requiri; sunt enim opera, id est

obedientia quam Cliristo praestamus, licet nec efficiens, nec

meritoria, tamen causa sine qua non justificationis coram Deo atque

aeternae salutis.: [4510]1

\* Paulus ea a fide opera removet quae perpetuum perfectissimumque per

omnem vitae cursum obedientiam continent. Jacobus vero ea

intelligit opera quae homines spe praemiorum divinorum ducti ex

animo, omnibusque viribus perficiunt, quamvis omni prolapsione

nequaquam careant, habitus tamen vitiorum quidem omnium exuisse,

omnium autem virtutum sibi comparasse, merito dici possint.:

[4511]1

\* Paulus loquitur de prima justificatione, et nomine operum

intelligit opera quae fiunt sine fide et gratia, solis viribus

liberi arbitrii. Jacobus autem de secunda justincatione: [4512]1

\* Peccata elongant uos voluntate, non loco.: [4513]1

\* Peccatum quod alter incurrit operando, tuum facis obloquendo.:

[4514]1

\* Penes reges est inferre bellum, penes autem Deum terminare: [4515]1

\* Penes reges est inferre bellum; penes autem Deum terminare.:

[4516]1

\* Per conventum significantur coetus seu cougregationes publicae

profanae, in quibus conveniebant Christiani ut justis legibus et

arbitris domesticas vel politicas communesque lites dirimerent.:

[4517]1

\* Pericula non respicit martyr, coronas respicit.: [4518]1

\* Periissemus nisi periissemus: [4519]1

\* Planctus lugentium: [4520]1

\* Pluit Gehennam e coelo.: [4521]1

\* Plus est in auribus quam in oculis situm, quoniam doctrina et

sapientia percipi auribus solia potest, oculis soils non potest.:

[4522]1

\* Plus viatioi quaeritur, quo minus restat viae.: [4523]1

\* Post aquam manualem et lumina, ut quisque de scripturis vel proprio

ingenio potest, provocatur in medium Deo canere.: [4524]1

\* Potius ruat coelum quam pereat una mica veritatis.: [4525]1

\* Praedicare nihil aliud est quam derivare in se furorem mundi.:

[4526]1

\* Praef. in hanc epistolam, ubi dicit, Haec verba Mosis violenter a

Jacobo trahi et torqueri: [4527]1

\* President probati quique seniores, honorem istum non pretio sed

testimonio adepti.: [4528]1

\* Primus locus viduis univiris, proximus virginibus, deinde

matronis.: [4529]1

\* Probatio innocentiae nostrae est iniquitas vestra.: [4530]1

\* Proculum Christianum qui Torpacion nominabatur, Evodiae

procuratorem, qui eum per oleum aliquando curaverat, et in palatio

suo : [4531]1

\* Professus est se divinas martyrum consolationes sensisse.: [4532]1

\* Professus est se habere duas animas in eodem corpore, unam Deo

dicatam, alteram unicuique illam vellet.: [4533]1

\* Promittendo se debitorem fecit.: [4534]1

\* Prorsus in Montani partes transivit.: [4535]1

\* Qualia principia, talia principiata.: [4536]1

\* Quantum flevimus in hymnis et canticis suavisonantis ecclesiae,

&c.: [4537]1

\* Quare ante omnia? Jurare pejus est quam furari? Jurare pejus est

quam adulterare? Jurare pejus est, quam hominem occidere? Absit;

quare ergo ante omnia? Ne surrepat vobis consuetudo jurandi; ut te

adversus consuetudinem infensissimum redderet.: [4538]1

\* Quem discordiae, quem caedes civium, quem bellum civile delectat,

eum ex numero hominum, ex finibus humanae naturae exterminandum

puto.: [4539]1

\* Quemadmodurn canis assistens mensae, si viderit hominem vescentem,

subinde aliquid eorum quae in mensa sunt ipsi projicientem, manet

assidue: quod si semel atque iterum sic astitit ut discesserit

nihil adeptus, protinus abstinet, veluti qui jam frustra et

incassum assistat; itidem et diabolus jugiter nobis inhiat; si quod

blasphemum verbum ipsi ceu cani projiciamus, hoc accepto rursus

aggreditur; quod si perseveraveris gratias agere, jugulaveris illum

fame celeriterque abegeris.: [4540]1

\* Qui exemplo peccat bis peccat.: [4541]1

\* Qui facit solummodo ea quae vult facere, non dominicam voluntatem

implet, sed suam.: [4542]1

\* Qui majores terras possident, minores census solvunt.: [4543]1

\* Qui propria non tribuunt, aliena detinent.: [4544]1

\* Qui referre injuriam nititur, eum ipsum a quo laesus est gestit

imitari; et qui malum imitatur bonus esse nullo pacto potest.:

[4545]1

\* Quia per peccatum deseruit homo eum sub quo esse debuit, subditus

est iis supra quae esse debebat.: [4546]1

\* Quia vera erant dicta credebantur: [4547]1

\* Quibus arteriis opus est, si pro sono audiantur.: [4548]1

\* Quibus proprium stipendium sufficere debere praecepit, militare

utique non prohibuit.: [4549]1

\* Quid prosit medicus novit, non aegrotus.: [4550]1

\* Quod fratres nos vocamus, infamant: [4551]1

\* Quod videri vis, illud esse debes.: [4552]1

\* Quod vivamus, deorum munus est; quod bene vivamus, nostrum: [4553]1

\* Quos sermonibus non possunt decipere, gladiis clamant feriendos.:

[4554]1

\* Quoties diis genitum se putavit, toties in barbaros, multo ferocius

et insolentius pugnavit.: [4555]1

\* Ratio humana tantum in praesenti sensu haeret, nihil aliud audit,

intelligit, sentit, videt, cogitat: [4556]1

\* Recordare nominis Alexandri: [4557]1

\* Reliquit haec sane Deus humanis ingeniis eruenda; tamen fieri non

potest quin ipsius sint omnia, qui et sapientiam tribuit homini ut

inveniret, et illa ipsa quae possunt inveniri primus invenit.:

[4558]1

\* Sacramentum extremae unctionis non nisi petentibus verbo vel signo

dari debet: [4559]1

\* Sancti ad salutem per omnia exaudiuntur, sed non ad voluntatem, ad

voluntatem etiam Daemones exauditi sunt, et ad porcos quos

petiverant ire missi sunt.: [4560]1

\* Sapiens ad omnem incursum munitus et intentus, non si paupertas,

non si ignominia, non si dolor impetum faciant, pedem referet;

iuterritus et contra illa ibit et inter illa.: [4561]1

\* Sapientes sapienter descendant in infernum.: [4562]1

\* Sapienti nihil magnum est cui nota est aeternitatis magnitudo.:

[4563]1

\* Sapientia eorum plerwnque abscondit vitia, non abscindit: [4564]1

\* Scire volunt secreta domus, atque inde timeri.: [4565]1

\* Senecae praedivitis hortos.: [4566]1

\* Servatur pauper Lazarus, sed in sinu Abrahami divitis.: [4567]1

\* Servus herilis imperii non servus est sed minister.: [4568]1

\* Si David, cur non et ego? si Noah, cur non et ego?: [4569]1

\* Si amatur, quomodo infirmatur?: [4570]1

\* Si autem in se esse novit quae loquor, non hoc a mea lingua dici

existimet, sed a conscientia sua.: [4571]1

\* Si bonum petant boni, bene, ad bonum: [4572]1

\* Si dimidio Christi contenti essemus, facile transigeremus omnia.:

[4573]1

\* Sic Ecebolius de ipso: [4574]1

\* Singulos dies singulas vitas puta, et quotidie demitur aliqua pars

vitae; hunc ipsum quem vivimus diem cum morte dividimus.: [4575]1

\* Sola cognitio Dei, quam Deus animo ejus indidit, eam eximit a

culpa, tanquam solutam communi lege, quamvis ad eum usque diem

obstricta fuisset suis popularibus; ubi tamen co-optata fuisset in

corpus Ecclesiae, nova conditio manumissio fuit a jure societatis,

quo jure devinciuntur cives.: [4576]1

\* Sola fides justificat, sed non fides quae est sola: [4577]1

\* Solve leonem et senties.: [4578]1

\* Surgunt indocti, et rapiunt coelum, et nos cum omnibus doctrinis

nostris detrudimur in Gehennam.: [4579]1

\* Synagogae traditio est ut sedentes disputent, seniores dignitate in

cathedris, sequentes in subselliis, novissimi in pavimento super

mattas.: [4580]1

\* Tam pater nemo, tam pius nemo: [4581]1

\* Te non amittit nisi qui dimittit: et qui te dimittit quo fugit,

nisi a te placato ad te iratum?: [4582]1

\* Timeo Danaos, et dona ferentes.: [4583]1

\* Tolle meum et tolle Deum: [4584]1

\* Totam ipsius occupationem esse in elevatione humilium, et

superborum dejectione: [4585]1

\* Totius orbis praedo: [4586]1

\* Tunc magis irascitur Deus cum non irascitur; non enim cum nescio

sed cum sentio te iratum, tunc maxime confido propitium.: [4587]1

\* Turbo quidam animos nostros rotat, et involvit fugientes

petentesque eadem, et nunc in sublime allevatos, nunc in infima

allisos rapit.: [4588]1

\* Turcicum imperium, quantum quantum est, mica est quam paterfamilias

canibus projicit.: [4589]1

\* Turpe est cedere oneri, et luctari cum officio quod semel

recepisti; non est vir fortis et strenuus qui laborem fugit, nec

crescit illi animus ipsa rerum difficultate.: [4590]1

\* Unde apparet quo sensu dicit, fidem sine operibus mortuam esse, non

quod sentiat opera esse formam fidei, sed quod sentit opera esse

concomitantia fidei, sic at halitus concomitatur vitam corporis.:

[4591]1

\* Unguo te oleo sancto in nomine Patris, &c., ut more militis

praeparatus, &c.: [4592]1

\* Ut dominetur aliis prius servit; curvatur obsequio ut honore

donetur.: [4593]1

\* Utinam eodem ardore orare possem: [4594]1

\* Valde protestatus sum me nolle sic ab eo satiari.: [4595]1

\* Venter non habet aures.: [4596]1

\* Verbalia addita verbis: [4597]1

\* Veritatem, non similitudinem.: [4598]1

\* Veterem : [4599]1

\* Vide Sanctium in locum: [4600]1

\* Vidi zelantem parvulum: [4601]1

\* Vivere nolunt, mori nesciunt: [4602]1

\* Vix satis mirari possum quid praeceptoribus quibusdam scholasticis,

viris certe gravibus nostri saeculi, in mentem venerit, ut nunc

quoque temporis, post tam diu revelatum Christum, sine Christi

notitia salutem cuiquam aeternam contingere posse confirment.:

[4603]1

\* Voe: [4604]1

\* Voe soli.: [4605]1

\* Vos mali fratres, quia parum homines: [4606]1

\* a mandato ad effectum: [4607]1

\* ab implacabilibus odiis theologorum: [4608]1

\* ad Divites: [4609]1

\* ad bonum: [4610]1

\* ad pocula faciles: [4611]1

\* administrum peccati: [4612]1

\* adulteri: [4613]1

\* aequa: [4614]1

\* aequitas prosequentis: [4615]1

\* alicubi: [4616]1

\* aliquid latentis energiae: [4617]1

\* animalis: [4618]1

\* anno exacto: [4619]1

\* ascende per hominem et pervenies ad Deum: [4620]1

\* assensus axiomati: [4621]1

\* assidua precatio: [4622]1

\* battalia: [4623]1 [4624]2

\* censores morum: [4625]1

\* cogita te Caesarem esse: [4626]1

\* completiv�: [4627]1

\* conatum, non eventum: [4628]1

\* confessarius: [4629]1

\* conjunctim: [4630]1

\* cum privilegio: [4631]1

\* de Verbis Domini.: [4632]1

\* de omni scibili: [4633]1

\* deam cloacinam: [4634]1

\* decimum tertium apostolum: [4635]1

\* desitio virorum: [4636]1

\* diligunt in inimico naturam, non vitium: [4637]1

\* disjunctim: [4638]1

\* efficaciter: [4639]1

\* ego non sum ego: [4640]1

\* eo nomine: [4641]1

\* eos qui paululum effugiunt: [4642]1

\* et ibi citatos: [4643]1

\* et sequentibus: [4644]1

\* ethnicus Alexander: [4645]1

\* ex putri materia: [4646]1

\* exercent carnificinam animarum: [4647]1

\* felix culpa: [4648]1

\* fiat quod velis: [4649]1

\* finem quem ei fecit Dominus: [4650]1

\* fons et fomes: [4651]1

\* formido oppositi: [4652]1

\* fornax mali: [4653]1

\* foro divino: [4654]1 [4655]2

\* generat meritori�: [4656]1

\* gestando Christum corde quam utero: [4657]1

\* gratis: [4658]1

\* haereticum fidem: [4659]1

\* hominibus praefracti ingenii: [4660]1 [4661]2

\* honorabilia legis: [4662]1

\* humano: [4663]1

\* hymnos antelucanos: [4664]1

\* id est, non pro ullo merito, sed ex me a bonitate, quod alibi

distinctius enunciat apostolus,: [4665]1

\* ignota capita: [4666]1

\* imperium sui: [4667]1

\* imperium suum: [4668]1

\* impetrare: [4669]1

\* impetus primo primi: [4670]1

\* in curia: [4671]1

\* in foro divino: [4672]1

\* in foro lmmano: [4673]1

\* in locum: [4674]1

\* in terminis: [4675]1

\* infeliciter felices: [4676]1

\* inferiora fulminant: [4677]1

\* infirmitas animositatis: [4678]1

\* intentio finis convenientis: [4679]1

\* intuitu voluntatis: [4680]1 [4681]2 [4682]3

\* involucra veritatis: [4683]1

\* jurisdictio judicantis: [4684]1

\* loquere ut videam: [4685]1

\* mal� coloratum: [4686]1

\* male parta male dilabuntur: [4687]1

\* mente operibus malis intenta: [4688]1

\* mereri: [4689]1

\* minus solvit, qui minus tempore solvit: [4690]1

\* monstrum ex variis diversisque et inter se pugnantibus naturis

conflatum: [4691]1

\* more hominum: [4692]1

\* ne damnet: [4693]1

\* ne regnet: [4694]1

\* nodosa aeternitas: [4695]1

\* non nova, sed aucta fide: [4696]1

\* non proferitate, sed pro consuetudine latrant: [4697]1

\* non tibi, sed religioni: [4698]1

\* non vestigiis corporis, sed animo: [4699]1

\* nunc oblita mihi: [4700]1

\* nusquam residentis animi volutatio: [4701]1

\* obsolefieri: [4702]1

\* offensio patientis: [4703]1

\* oleum symbolum erat valetudinis recuparatae, et quod apostoli

nullos unguerent nisi � morbo liberatos: [4704]1

\* oratio efficax: [4705]1

\* orthodoxos mores: [4706]1

\* pacatum animum: [4707]1

\* partus sequitur ventrem: [4708]1

\* peccata sic velantur ut in judicio non revelentur: [4709]1

\* penitus decrevi: [4710]1

\* per piissimam misericordiam: [4711]1

\* per totum: [4712]1

\* permissiv�: [4713]1

\* piissimam misericordiam: [4714]1

\* plausus theatrorum: [4715]1

\* ponere obicem: [4716]1

\* potestatem vitae et necis: [4717]1

\* primum mobile: [4718]1

\* pro imperio: [4719]1

\* projicere oscula, adorare vulgus, et omnia serviliter pro imperio:

[4720]1

\* prona spectare terram: [4721]1

\* pronuncianti quam canenti vicinior: [4722]1

\* propter ardorem cupidinis: [4723]1

\* propter teporem charitatis: [4724]1

\* psychicos: [4725]1

\* qu� regeneramur: [4726]1

\* qu� renascimur: [4727]1

\* qua: [4728]1

\* quantus quantus est: [4729]1 [4730]2

\* quasi manu fact�: [4731]1

\* quatenus: [4732]1

\* quem fugiam video, quem sequar non video: [4733]1

\* qui agebant vitam paganam sub Christiano nomine: [4734]1

\* qui theologiam in caninam maledicentiam transferunt: [4735]1

\* qui unum diem velit esse in voluptate: [4736]1

\* quia lingu� plus peccaverat: [4737]1

\* quicquid est male coloratum: [4738]1

\* quis, quid, ubi, quibus, auxiliis: [4739]1

\* quod edere non potuit, oculo devoravit: [4740]1

\* rectus m curia: [4741]1

\* rem, quocunque modo rem: [4742]1

\* renitenti animo: [4743]1

\* salubria medicamenta non negligant: [4744]1

\* sanctum sanctorum: [4745]1

\* sensu forensi non architectonico: [4746]1

\* sensu transumptivo: [4747]1

\* servi servorum: [4748]1

\* sibi soli injuriosus fuit: [4749]1

\* sine phaleris et ephippio: [4750]1

\* sit nihil in te Bdbylonicum: [4751]1

\* stramineam epistolam: [4752]1

\* sub initio: [4753]1

\* subactum solum: [4754]1

\* tanquam aliquem magnum: [4755]1

\* totam legem: [4756]1

\* toties quoties: [4757]1

\* totum legis: [4758]1

\* ultor: [4759]1

\* ut anima sit subjecta Deo et pacata sibi: [4760]1

\* ut imponant ei manus: [4761]1

\* ut mitius ardeant: [4762]1

\* utinam omnes essent liypocritae: [4763]1

\* vellent, sed nolunt: [4764]1

\* verba mentis: [4765]1

\* verbum mentis: [4766]1

\* vestigia: [4767]1

\* vidi zelantem parvulum: [4768]1

\* vita pendens: [4769]1

\* voluptates experiendo contemnat: [4770]1

\* vulgus: [4771]1

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101. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=2&scrV=14#vii-p178.1

102. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=2&scrV=24#viii-p32.3

103. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=3&scrV=9#viii-p32.4

104. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=3&scrV=14#iv-p334.3

105. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=4&scrV=0#v-p46.5

106. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=4&scrV=6#iv-p324.2

107. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=4&scrV=10#iv-p423.6

108. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=4&scrV=11#iv-p423.7

109. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=4&scrV=19#viii-p218.10

110. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=6&scrV=12#vii-p157.2

111. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=11&scrV=0#viii-p126.7

112. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=11&scrV=8#iv-p404.3

113. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=12&scrV=41#viii-p35.12

114. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=15&scrV=0#vi-p32.6

115. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=15&scrV=1#viii-p173.3

116. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=15&scrV=9#iv-p292.2

117. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=15&scrV=9#vii-p34.8

118. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=15&scrV=11#v-p17.5

119. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=15&scrV=11#vii-p210.6

120. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=15&scrV=26#viii-p214.7

121. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=16&scrV=28#v-p106.4

122. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=17&scrV=2#iv-p97.19

123. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=17&scrV=12#viii-p89.3

124. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=19&scrV=0#vii-p145.5

125. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=19&scrV=10#iv-p422.1

126. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=20&scrV=1#v-p117.4

127. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=20&scrV=6#iv-p196.1

128. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=20&scrV=6#v-p43.2

129. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=20&scrV=7#viii-p141.1

130. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=20&scrV=8#iv-p491.12

131. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=22&scrV=11#viii-p146.4

132. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=22&scrV=12#viii-p146.5

133. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=22&scrV=23#viii-p32.5

134. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=22&scrV=27#viii-p32.6

135. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=23&scrV=3#iv-p147.1

136. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=23&scrV=4#viii-p280.2

137. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=28&scrV=38#viii-p250.3

138. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=30&scrV=15#iv-p147.5

139. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=30&scrV=15#iv-p165.10

140. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=30&scrV=15#v-p15.18

141. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=31&scrV=3#vi-p26.7

142. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=32&scrV=0#v-p90.3

143. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=32&scrV=10#viii-p236.1

144. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=32&scrV=23#iv-p221.1

145. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=32&scrV=24#iv-p221.2

146. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=33&scrV=11#v-p249.20

147. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=34&scrV=6#viii-p129.1

148. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=34&scrV=6#viii-p132.1

149. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Exod&scrCh=40&scrV=0#vii-p145.7

150. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Lev&scrCh=2&scrV=15#viii-p51.2

151. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Lev&scrCh=10&scrV=3#vii-p134.10

152. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Lev&scrCh=10&scrV=3#viii-p77.4

153. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Lev&scrCh=11&scrV=10#iv-p72.10

154. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Lev&scrCh=11&scrV=10#viii-p90.3

155. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Lev&scrCh=13&scrV=45#iv-p222.1

156. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Lev&scrCh=14&scrV=0#iv-p425.4

157. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Lev&scrCh=16&scrV=21#viii-p223.1

158. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Lev&scrCh=19&scrV=5#v-p21.18

159. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Lev&scrCh=19&scrV=15#v-p12.1

160. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Lev&scrCh=19&scrV=15#v-p96.1

161. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Lev&scrCh=19&scrV=16#vii-p176.2

162. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Lev&scrCh=19&scrV=16#vii-p176.4

163. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Lev&scrCh=19&scrV=18#v-p79.1

164. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Lev&scrCh=19&scrV=18#v-p96.2

165. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Lev&scrCh=19&scrV=30#viii-p33.8

166. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Lev&scrCh=19&scrV=37#iv-p17.1

167. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Lev&scrCh=24&scrV=10#iv-p221.7

168. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Lev&scrCh=24&scrV=13#v-p72.1

169. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Lev&scrCh=24&scrV=14#iv-p223.5

170. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Lev&scrCh=24&scrV=14#v-p72.2

171. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Lev&scrCh=24&scrV=17#v-p117.2

172. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Lev&scrCh=26&scrV=33#iv-p22.3

173. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Lev&scrCh=26&scrV=41#viii-p77.3

174. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Num&scrCh=6&scrV=12#iv-p73.16

175. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Num&scrCh=9&scrV=8#iv-p382.1

176. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Num&scrCh=11&scrV=28#vi-p108.8

177. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Num&scrCh=11&scrV=29#vi-p108.9

178. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Num&scrCh=11&scrV=29#vii-p75.3

179. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Num&scrCh=12&scrV=3#iv-p404.7

180. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Num&scrCh=12&scrV=8#vii-p176.5

181. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Num&scrCh=12&scrV=14#iv-p425.7

182. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Num&scrCh=15&scrV=40#iv-p491.14

183. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Num&scrCh=20&scrV=11#v-p277.1

184. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Num&scrCh=21&scrV=0#v-p150.14

185. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Num&scrCh=21&scrV=22#v-p78.2

186. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Num&scrCh=22&scrV=25#vii-p34.4

187. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Num&scrCh=23&scrV=1#iv-p231.3

188. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Num&scrCh=23&scrV=19#iv-p210.5

189. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Num&scrCh=23&scrV=19#v-p232.17

190. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Deut&scrCh=1&scrV=17#v-p12.2

191. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Deut&scrCh=4&scrV=0#iv-p477.5

192. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Deut&scrCh=4&scrV=6#vi-p94.1

193. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Deut&scrCh=4&scrV=6#vi-p134.1

194. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Deut&scrCh=6&scrV=0#iv-p376.4

195. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Deut&scrCh=6&scrV=4#v-p204.1

196. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Deut&scrCh=6&scrV=13#viii-p148.1

197. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Deut&scrCh=7&scrV=0#v-p84.5

198. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Deut&scrCh=7&scrV=7#iv-p342.3

199. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Deut&scrCh=7&scrV=8#iv-p342.4

200. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Deut&scrCh=8&scrV=16#iv-p48.2

201. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Deut&scrCh=9&scrV=4#iv-p92.8

202. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Deut&scrCh=9&scrV=7#iv-p491.17

203. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Deut&scrCh=11&scrV=17#viii-p257.3

204. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Deut&scrCh=17&scrV=6#v-p227.8

205. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Deut&scrCh=19&scrV=13#v-p117.3

206. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Deut&scrCh=20&scrV=10#vii-p11.30

207. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Deut&scrCh=22&scrV=4#viii-p280.1

208. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Deut&scrCh=22&scrV=22#v-p117.1

209. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Deut&scrCh=23&scrV=13#viii-p287.3

210. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Deut&scrCh=23&scrV=14#viii-p287.4

211. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Deut&scrCh=24&scrV=14#viii-p33.6

212. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Deut&scrCh=24&scrV=15#viii-p33.1

213. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Deut&scrCh=24&scrV=15#viii-p33.7

214. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Deut&scrCh=27&scrV=26#v-p105.6

215. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Deut&scrCh=27&scrV=26#viii-p77.7

216. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Deut&scrCh=28&scrV=10#v-p74.7

217. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Deut&scrCh=28&scrV=21#viii-p214.8

218. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Deut&scrCh=28&scrV=22#viii-p214.9

219. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Deut&scrCh=28&scrV=64#iv-p22.4

220. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Deut&scrCh=29&scrV=19#v-p33.4

221. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Deut&scrCh=32&scrV=5#iv-p428.7

222. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Deut&scrCh=32&scrV=5#vi-p45.2

223. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Deut&scrCh=32&scrV=15#vi-p27.3

224. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Deut&scrCh=32&scrV=15#viii-p47.1

225. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Deut&scrCh=32&scrV=39#vii-p194.1

226. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Deut&scrCh=32&scrV=41#vii-p63.3

227. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Josh&scrCh=2&scrV=9#v-p270.1

228. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Josh&scrCh=2&scrV=11#v-p270.4

229. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Josh&scrCh=7&scrV=0#vii-p32.5

230. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Josh&scrCh=7&scrV=19#viii-p224.5

231. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Josh&scrCh=10&scrV=13#viii-p263.1

232. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Josh&scrCh=14&scrV=2#v-p224.10

233. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Josh&scrCh=24&scrV=19#vii-p145.2

234. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Judg&scrCh=1&scrV=0#v-p153.2

235. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Judg&scrCh=5&scrV=0#vii-p205.1

236. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Judg&scrCh=5&scrV=20#viii-p35.10

237. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Judg&scrCh=8&scrV=0#v-p113.1

238. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Judg&scrCh=11&scrV=3#v-p214.4

239. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Judg&scrCh=17&scrV=13#iv-p444.4

240. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Judg&scrCh=18&scrV=0#iv-p236.3

241. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ruth&scrCh=2&scrV=16#vii-p117.1

242. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Sam&scrCh=1&scrV=14#vi-p8.9

243. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Sam&scrCh=1&scrV=15#vi-p8.10

244. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Sam&scrCh=2&scrV=3#vi-p32.3

245. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Sam&scrCh=2&scrV=30#v-p17.7

246. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Sam&scrCh=3&scrV=1#iv-p377.2

247. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Sam&scrCh=6&scrV=20#v-p139.1

248. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Sam&scrCh=14&scrV=43#v-p114.2

249. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Sam&scrCh=15&scrV=15#iv-p221.5

250. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Sam&scrCh=15&scrV=23#iv-p223.4

251. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Sam&scrCh=15&scrV=24#iv-p221.6

252. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Sam&scrCh=16&scrV=7#vii-p169.5

253. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Sam&scrCh=17&scrV=37#iv-p96.3

254. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Sam&scrCh=18&scrV=9#vi-p106.8

255. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Sam&scrCh=19&scrV=24#v-p169.3

256. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Sam&scrCh=21&scrV=15#iv-p395.1

257. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Sam&scrCh=25&scrV=11#vii-p63.1

258. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Sam&scrCh=25&scrV=32#iv-p296.2

259. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Sam&scrCh=25&scrV=32#vii-p29.1

260. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Sam&scrCh=25&scrV=33#vi-p144.16

261. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Sam&scrCh=2&scrV=26#vi-p33.9

262. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Sam&scrCh=6&scrV=8#iv-p228.1

263. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Sam&scrCh=6&scrV=22#v-p17.20

264. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Sam&scrCh=7&scrV=2#iv-p21.11

265. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Sam&scrCh=7&scrV=19#iv-p96.4

266. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Sam&scrCh=7&scrV=19#v-p177.7

267. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Sam&scrCh=7&scrV=21#iv-p81.8

268. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Sam&scrCh=12&scrV=0#v-p177.1

269. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Sam&scrCh=12&scrV=0#vi-p5.8

270. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Sam&scrCh=12&scrV=7#v-p62.1

271. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Sam&scrCh=12&scrV=9#vii-p94.4

272. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Sam&scrCh=12&scrV=9#vii-p181.1

273. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Sam&scrCh=12&scrV=13#iv-p388.1

274. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Sam&scrCh=12&scrV=13#viii-p224.4

275. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Sam&scrCh=12&scrV=24#iv-p186.5

276. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Sam&scrCh=12&scrV=25#iv-p186.6

277. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Sam&scrCh=12&scrV=31#vi-p137.6

278. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Sam&scrCh=13&scrV=2#iv-p273.2

279. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Sam&scrCh=13&scrV=4#v-p51.32

280. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Sam&scrCh=14&scrV=1#v-p154.3

281. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Sam&scrCh=15&scrV=0#iv-p21.7

282. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Sam&scrCh=16&scrV=17#v-p249.37

283. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Sam&scrCh=20&scrV=18#vii-p11.31

284. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Sam&scrCh=21&scrV=2#viii-p64.3

285. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Sam&scrCh=23&scrV=17#iv-p270.2

286. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Sam&scrCh=24&scrV=1#iv-p240.5

287. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Sam&scrCh=24&scrV=14#viii-p129.2

288. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Sam&scrCh=24&scrV=23#iv-p95.7

289. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Kgs&scrCh=3&scrV=9#vi-p118.3

290. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Kgs&scrCh=3&scrV=13#iv-p94.2

291. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Kgs&scrCh=3&scrV=26#viii-p128.2

292. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Kgs&scrCh=8&scrV=18#v-p232.3

293. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Kgs&scrCh=8&scrV=38#viii-p228.5

294. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Kgs&scrCh=13&scrV=23#viii-p62.4

295. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Kgs&scrCh=17&scrV=0#viii-p239.3

296. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Kgs&scrCh=17&scrV=1#viii-p242.1

297. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Kgs&scrCh=17&scrV=10#viii-p243.3

298. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Kgs&scrCh=17&scrV=11#viii-p240.4

299. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Kgs&scrCh=17&scrV=14#viii-p243.6

300. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Kgs&scrCh=17&scrV=21#viii-p185.2

301. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Kgs&scrCh=17&scrV=22#viii-p239.1

302. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Kgs&scrCh=18&scrV=1#viii-p243.2

303. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Kgs&scrCh=18&scrV=1#viii-p242.2

304. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Kgs&scrCh=18&scrV=21#iv-p134.6

305. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Kgs&scrCh=18&scrV=38#viii-p239.2

306. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Kgs&scrCh=18&scrV=42#viii-p256.1

307. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Kgs&scrCh=19&scrV=3#viii-p240.5

308. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Kgs&scrCh=19&scrV=4#viii-p240.6

309. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Kgs&scrCh=19&scrV=8#viii-p239.4

310. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Kgs&scrCh=19&scrV=13#vii-p170.2

311. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Kgs&scrCh=20&scrV=10#vii-p210.7

312. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Kgs&scrCh=20&scrV=11#vii-p210.8

313. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Kgs&scrCh=20&scrV=39#iv-p299.4

314. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Kgs&scrCh=20&scrV=39#vi-p5.9

315. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Kgs&scrCh=21&scrV=1#vii-p22.4

316. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Kgs&scrCh=21&scrV=2#vii-p22.5

317. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Kgs&scrCh=21&scrV=4#iv-p273.3

318. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Kgs&scrCh=21&scrV=25#viii-p62.5

319. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Kgs&scrCh=22&scrV=9#viii-p35.6

320. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Kgs&scrCh=22&scrV=22#iv-p241.1

321. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Kgs&scrCh=22&scrV=22#iv-p250.1

322. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Kgs&scrCh=1&scrV=0#vii-p34.3

323. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Kgs&scrCh=1&scrV=10#viii-p239.5

324. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Kgs&scrCh=1&scrV=10#viii-p263.3

325. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Kgs&scrCh=2&scrV=8#viii-p239.6

326. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Kgs&scrCh=2&scrV=11#viii-p239.7

327. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Kgs&scrCh=3&scrV=14#v-p15.11

328. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Kgs&scrCh=4&scrV=13#iv-p171.5

329. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Kgs&scrCh=4&scrV=24#viii-p185.3

330. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Kgs&scrCh=5&scrV=1#iv-p510.4

331. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Kgs&scrCh=5&scrV=12#vi-p144.15

332. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Kgs&scrCh=5&scrV=13#v-p63.6

333. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Kgs&scrCh=5&scrV=19#v-p172.3

334. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Kgs&scrCh=5&scrV=27#viii-p228.3

335. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Kgs&scrCh=6&scrV=17#viii-p263.4

336. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Kgs&scrCh=7&scrV=2#iv-p110.3

337. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Kgs&scrCh=8&scrV=5#iv-p171.6

338. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Kgs&scrCh=10&scrV=16#vi-p109.2

339. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Kgs&scrCh=10&scrV=30#vii-p42.1

340. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Kgs&scrCh=17&scrV=0#viii-p35.17

341. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Kgs&scrCh=17&scrV=25#vi-p62.10

342. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Kgs&scrCh=17&scrV=33#iv-p130.8

343. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Kgs&scrCh=20&scrV=1#viii-p197.4

344. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Kgs&scrCh=20&scrV=2#viii-p197.5

345. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Kgs&scrCh=20&scrV=19#vi-p140.1

346. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Chr&scrCh=4&scrV=22#vi-p73.6

347. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Chr&scrCh=5&scrV=26#iv-p240.4

348. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Chr&scrCh=15&scrV=26#v-p240.9

349. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=1Chr&scrCh=21&scrV=1#iv-p240.6

350. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Chr&scrCh=5&scrV=13#viii-p173.4

351. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Chr&scrCh=7&scrV=14#v-p74.6

352. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Chr&scrCh=16&scrV=9#viii-p214.10

353. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Chr&scrCh=16&scrV=12#viii-p195.1

354. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Chr&scrCh=16&scrV=12#viii-p214.11

355. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Chr&scrCh=19&scrV=6#vii-p190.2

356. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Chr&scrCh=20&scrV=12#v-p228.6

357. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Chr&scrCh=20&scrV=19#iv-p422.2

358. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Chr&scrCh=24&scrV=21#viii-p254.3

359. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Chr&scrCh=26&scrV=16#vii-p93.7

360. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Chr&scrCh=29&scrV=8#vii-p93.9

361. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Chr&scrCh=30&scrV=19#viii-p250.1

362. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=2Chr&scrCh=32&scrV=31#iv-p249.1

363. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ezra&scrCh=1&scrV=0#viii-p126.8

364. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ezra&scrCh=9&scrV=13#viii-p77.8

365. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Neh&scrCh=1&scrV=11#iv-p268.2

366. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Neh&scrCh=1&scrV=11#v-p232.7

367. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Neh&scrCh=5&scrV=0#viii-p90.2

368. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Neh&scrCh=8&scrV=10#iv-p136.3

369. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Neh&scrCh=8&scrV=10#v-p240.10

370. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Neh&scrCh=9&scrV=3#viii-p223.2

371. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Neh&scrCh=13&scrV=22#v-p228.4

372. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Esth&scrCh=5&scrV=0#iv-p273.4

373. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Esth&scrCh=5&scrV=10#iv-p354.4

374. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Esth&scrCh=8&scrV=8#v-p22.4

375. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=1&scrV=0#iv-p47.2

376. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=1&scrV=8#iv-p165.7

377. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=1&scrV=13#viii-p22.1

378. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=1&scrV=23#viii-p124.1

379. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=2&scrV=5#vii-p122.16

380. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=2&scrV=7#iv-p57.18

381. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=3&scrV=3#iv-p227.1

382. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=3&scrV=15#v-p63.2

383. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=3&scrV=19#i\_2-p4.1

384. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=3&scrV=19#v-p49.1

385. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=4&scrV=8#vi-p156.3

386. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=4&scrV=9#vii-p109.3

387. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=4&scrV=11#iv-p460.4

388. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=4&scrV=45#iv-p57.10

389. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=5&scrV=17#iv-p189.1

390. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=5&scrV=22#iv-p45.1

391. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=5&scrV=27#iv-p490.6

392. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=5&scrV=27#vii-p57.1

393. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=5&scrV=27#vii-p103.3

394. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=6&scrV=4#iv-p57.17

395. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=6&scrV=4#iv-p464.2

396. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=7&scrV=7#vii-p214.3

397. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=7&scrV=20#viii-p124.2

398. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=8&scrV=13#iv-p491.2

399. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=8&scrV=20#iv-p425.8

400. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=8&scrV=20#vii-p145.3

401. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=8&scrV=20#viii-p234.5

402. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=9&scrV=2#v-p257.11

403. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=9&scrV=3#v-p257.12

404. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=9&scrV=3#vi-p13.15

405. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=9&scrV=12#iv-p210.6

406. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=9&scrV=12#viii-p77.6

407. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=9&scrV=20#v-p257.13

408. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=9&scrV=25#vii-p214.6

409. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=9&scrV=30#v-p257.14

410. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=12&scrV=7#viii-p86.1

411. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=12&scrV=8#viii-p86.2

412. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=12&scrV=16#iv-p250.2

413. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=12&scrV=16#viii-p276.3

414. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=13&scrV=15#iv-p71.4

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431. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=22&scrV=21#iv-p96.1

432. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=22&scrV=21#vi-p158.2

433. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=22&scrV=22#v-p64.11

434. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=22&scrV=28#vii-p210.5

435. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=22&scrV=29#vii-p172.5

436. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=23&scrV=9#viii-p218.11

437. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=23&scrV=10#iv-p59.8

438. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=27&scrV=8#iv-p435.3

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458. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=34&scrV=32#iv-p427.6

459. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Job&scrCh=38&scrV=22#viii-p35.15

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547. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=22&scrV=6#iv-p149.4

548. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=22&scrV=7#vi-p108.7

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552. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=24&scrV=6#iv-p90.6

553. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=24&scrV=7#iv-p94.15

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556. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=25&scrV=4#vi-p118.4

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561. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=26&scrV=8#iv-p377.4

562. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=26&scrV=8#v-p54.3

563. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=27&scrV=3#iv-p112.1

564. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=27&scrV=8#vii-p103.6

565. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=27&scrV=8#vii-p136.1

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569. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=31&scrV=15#vii-p210.1

570. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=31&scrV=19#v-p51.14

571. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=31&scrV=22#viii-p130.2

572. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=32&scrV=0#vi-p158.3

573. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=32&scrV=1#viii-p274.4

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638. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=51&scrV=3#vii-p159.1

639. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=51&scrV=3#viii-p218.7

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642. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=51&scrV=5#viii-p245.4

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723. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=103&scrV=2#iv-p491.16

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727. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=103&scrV=15#iv-p169.1

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733. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=104&scrV=34#v-p210.5

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736. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=106&scrV=4#iv-p326.7

737. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=106&scrV=4#v-p46.9

738. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=106&scrV=4#viii-p6.5

739. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=106&scrV=5#viii-p6.6

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742. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=106&scrV=33#iv-p404.9

743. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=106&scrV=33#iv-p223.6

744. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=106&scrV=33#vi-p49.5

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746. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=107&scrV=0#viii-p164.3

747. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=107&scrV=6#viii-p164.4

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751. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=108&scrV=1#vi-p44.5

752. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=108&scrV=1#viii-p172.1

753. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=108&scrV=2#viii-p167.3

754. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=109&scrV=10#v-p178.4

755. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=110&scrV=4#iv-p348.10

756. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=112&scrV=3#iv-p165.13

757. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=112&scrV=7#iv-p134.1

758. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=112&scrV=8#viii-p90.1

759. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=115&scrV=0#viii-p252.3

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764. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=116&scrV=7#iv-p116.1

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768. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=119&scrV=0#iv-p490.4

769. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=119&scrV=0#v-p198.1

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776. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=119&scrV=11#iv-p491.15

777. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=119&scrV=18#iv-p372.2

778. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=119&scrV=26#viii-p218.12

779. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=119&scrV=45#iv-p483.5

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781. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=119&scrV=49#v-p53.1

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789. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=119&scrV=93#iv-p490.13

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806. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=123&scrV=2#iv-p15.2

807. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=125&scrV=3#viii-p164.1

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834. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=143&scrV=3#v-p257.15

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857. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Prov&scrCh=2&scrV=10#iv-p445.8

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867. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Prov&scrCh=4&scrV=23#vi-p19.2

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872. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Prov&scrCh=5&scrV=11#vii-p233.2

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927. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Prov&scrCh=14&scrV=24#iv-p165.14

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933. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Prov&scrCh=15&scrV=25#iv-p521.3

934. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Prov&scrCh=15&scrV=25#vii-p93.11

935. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Prov&scrCh=15&scrV=27#vii-p32.1

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938. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Prov&scrCh=16&scrV=2#iv-p224.2

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941. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Prov&scrCh=16&scrV=9#vii-p222.8

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958. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Prov&scrCh=18&scrV=19#iv-p145.7

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962. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Prov&scrCh=19&scrV=3#vii-p128.1

963. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Prov&scrCh=19&scrV=11#iv-p87.8

964. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Prov&scrCh=19&scrV=11#iv-p389.3

965. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Prov&scrCh=19&scrV=11#vi-p95.2

966. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Prov&scrCh=19&scrV=11#vi-p145.1

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972. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Prov&scrCh=20&scrV=27#iv-p452.13

973. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Prov&scrCh=20&scrV=27#v-p227.5

974. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Prov&scrCh=21&scrV=1#vii-p122.10

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1054. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Eccl&scrCh=11&scrV=9#v-p139.7

1055. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Eccl&scrCh=12&scrV=1#iv-p491.13

1056. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Eccl&scrCh=12&scrV=13#v-p133.3

1057. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Eccl&scrCh=12&scrV=13#v-p137.5

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1060. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Song&scrCh=1&scrV=0#iv-p161.7

1061. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Song&scrCh=1&scrV=0#iv-p168.3

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1182. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=40&scrV=6#vii-p214.1

1183. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=40&scrV=7#iv-p163.4

1184. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=40&scrV=7#vii-p214.2

1185. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=40&scrV=27#viii-p130.3

1186. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=41&scrV=8#v-p247.3

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1188. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=42&scrV=23#iv-p490.2

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1196. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=48&scrV=9#iv-p59.5

1197. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=48&scrV=10#iv-p59.6

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1205. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=53&scrV=3#iv-p149.2

1206. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=53&scrV=4#iv-p348.6

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1213. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=53&scrV=10#iv-p344.1

1214. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=53&scrV=10#iv-p342.10

1215. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=53&scrV=10#v-p147.15

1216. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=53&scrV=12#viii-p252.2

1217. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=54&scrV=6#viii-p156.1

1218. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=54&scrV=10#viii-p156.2

1219. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=54&scrV=11#viii-p160.3

1220. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=54&scrV=16#vi-p26.4

1221. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=55&scrV=1#iv-p85.1

1222. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=55&scrV=1#iv-p92.1

1223. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=55&scrV=1#iv-p325.1

1224. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=55&scrV=3#iv-p368.1

1225. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=55&scrV=7#v-p34.5

1226. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=55&scrV=7#v-p155.8

1227. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=55&scrV=7#vii-p150.3

1228. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=55&scrV=7#viii-p288.2

1229. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=55&scrV=8#iv-p95.4

1230. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=55&scrV=8#viii-p10.1

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1232. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=56&scrV=3#v-p46.11

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1236. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=57&scrV=15#iv-p432.1

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1238. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=57&scrV=15#vii-p155.8

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1256. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=61&scrV=1#iv-p431.1

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1258. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=61&scrV=6#vii-p204.1

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1273. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=66&scrV=2#iv-p432.2

1274. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Jer&scrCh=1&scrV=6#iv-p423.5

1275. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Jer&scrCh=2&scrV=3#iv-p340.3

1276. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Jer&scrCh=2&scrV=5#v-p84.10

1277. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Jer&scrCh=2&scrV=5#vi-p157.5

1278. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Jer&scrCh=2&scrV=23#vii-p202.2

1279. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Jer&scrCh=2&scrV=25#iv-p431.3

1280. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Jer&scrCh=2&scrV=25#vi-p144.11

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1293. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Jer&scrCh=5&scrV=5#i\_2-p5.6

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1309. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Jer&scrCh=9&scrV=1#vii-p158.7

1310. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Jer&scrCh=9&scrV=5#iv-p275.2

1311. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Jer&scrCh=9&scrV=19#iv-p21.4

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1313. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Jer&scrCh=9&scrV=23#v-p64.5

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1325. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Jer&scrCh=20&scrV=12#vii-p176.13

1326. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Jer&scrCh=22&scrV=10#viii-p163.2

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1337. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Jer&scrCh=31&scrV=18#vii-p15.5

1338. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Jer&scrCh=31&scrV=18#vii-p138.3

1339. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Jer&scrCh=31&scrV=20#v-p232.15

1340. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Jer&scrCh=31&scrV=33#iv-p433.1

1341. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Jer&scrCh=31&scrV=33#v-p249.6

1342. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Jer&scrCh=32&scrV=29#v-p249.7

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1357. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Lam&scrCh=2&scrV=18#viii-p34.4

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1367. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ezek&scrCh=3&scrV=18#iv-p223.3

1368. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ezek&scrCh=7&scrV=5#iv-p59.1

1369. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ezek&scrCh=7&scrV=5#v-p147.2

1370. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ezek&scrCh=7&scrV=11#iv-p433.7

1371. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ezek&scrCh=11&scrV=16#iv-p18.1

1372. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ezek&scrCh=14&scrV=15#vi-p62.11

1373. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ezek&scrCh=16&scrV=14#v-p17.3

1374. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ezek&scrCh=16&scrV=49#iv-p181.1

1375. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ezek&scrCh=16&scrV=63#iv-p451.7

1376. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ezek&scrCh=17&scrV=10#iv-p179.4

1377. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ezek&scrCh=18&scrV=0#v-p147.1

1378. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ezek&scrCh=18&scrV=4#iv-p297.2

1379. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ezek&scrCh=18&scrV=24#iv-p73.15

1380. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ezek&scrCh=18&scrV=25#vii-p181.2

1381. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ezek&scrCh=22&scrV=14#v-p33.5

1382. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ezek&scrCh=22&scrV=14#vii-p63.2

1383. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ezek&scrCh=22&scrV=14#vii-p109.6

1384. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ezek&scrCh=22&scrV=14#vii-p196.5

1385. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ezek&scrCh=28&scrV=5#v-p71.1

1386. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ezek&scrCh=28&scrV=6#v-p71.2

1387. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ezek&scrCh=28&scrV=6#vii-p94.2

1388. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ezek&scrCh=33&scrV=6#vi-p4.3

1389. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ezek&scrCh=33&scrV=11#iv-p298.2

1390. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ezek&scrCh=33&scrV=13#v-p110.1

1391. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ezek&scrCh=33&scrV=13#v-p113.3

1392. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ezek&scrCh=33&scrV=13#v-p150.15

1393. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ezek&scrCh=33&scrV=30#vii-p176.14

1394. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ezek&scrCh=33&scrV=31#iv-p445.11

1395. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ezek&scrCh=33&scrV=32#iv-p445.4

1396. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ezek&scrCh=34&scrV=26#v-p249.11

1397. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ezek&scrCh=36&scrV=26#vi-p144.6

1398. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ezek&scrCh=36&scrV=26#vii-p122.9

1399. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ezek&scrCh=36&scrV=37#iv-p90.1

1400. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ezek&scrCh=36&scrV=37#vii-p35.1

1401. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ezek&scrCh=36&scrV=37#viii-p260.1

1402. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Ezek&scrCh=44&scrV=10#iv-p11.2

1403. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Dan&scrCh=2&scrV=21#vi-p118.6

1404. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Dan&scrCh=2&scrV=37#vi-p33.10

1405. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Dan&scrCh=4&scrV=17#v-p15.7

1406. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Dan&scrCh=4&scrV=27#iv-p533.4

1407. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Dan&scrCh=4&scrV=30#iv-p21.8

1408. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Dan&scrCh=4&scrV=34#vii-p105.3

1409. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Dan&scrCh=5&scrV=2#viii-p55.3

1410. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Dan&scrCh=5&scrV=22#vii-p97.2

1411. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Dan&scrCh=6&scrV=1#vi-p54.2

1412. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Dan&scrCh=7&scrV=9#v-p139.2

1413. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Dan&scrCh=7&scrV=10#v-p147.8

1414. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Dan&scrCh=9&scrV=1#viii-p261.1

1415. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Dan&scrCh=9&scrV=2#iv-p371.6

1416. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Dan&scrCh=9&scrV=27#iv-p429.2

1417. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Dan&scrCh=9&scrV=27#vi-p44.3

1418. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Dan&scrCh=11&scrV=12#viii-p119.1

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1420. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Dan&scrCh=11&scrV=35#iv-p59.3

1421. file://localhost/ccel/m/manton/manton04/cache/manton04.html3?scrBook=Hos&scrCh=1&scrV=4#vii-p42.2

1422. file://lo