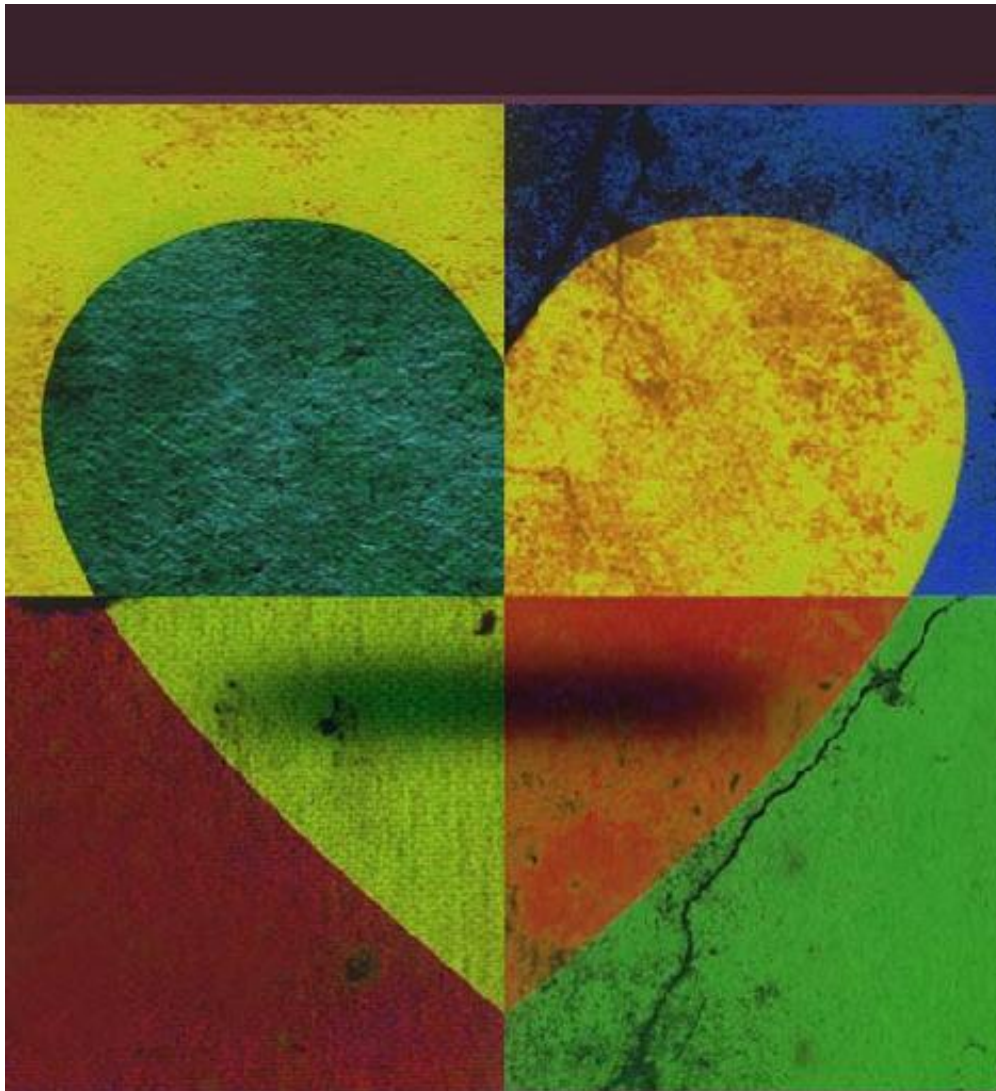




OF GOSPEL HOLINESS  
IN THE HEART AND LIFE

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# Of Gospel Holiness in the Heart and Life

by Thomas Goodwin

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**BOOK I.—That graces and holy dispositions wrought in the soul**

That graces and holy dispositions wrought in the soul are the springs and principles of evangelical obedience.—The first streams which flow from hence are inward actions of our souls in holy thoughts, and a lively sense and perception of spiritual things, and a due approbation and judgment of them as most excellent.—That our holiness ought to be sincere and blameless.—That our holiness ought to abound in all fruits of righteousness, and to continue until the day of Christ.

And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere, and without offence, till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.—PHILIP. 1:9–11.

## CHAPTER I

The words of the text explained; what the apostle means by abounding in all knowledge, and sense, or judgment.

THIS is one of Paul's prayers, several whereof we find dispersed up and down in his epistles, and they are put up to God for those he wrote to. The prayers of holy men are usually the utmost and choicest expressions of their graces—the drawings forth, or pourings forth rather, of their deepest affections and desires, for things which the light of the Spirit in them judgeth to be most excellent. And the words of the text are the prayer of the apostle Paul, who was filled with the Holy Ghost; and you see it is for holiness, and the increase of it.

'This I pray,' &c.; so he begins. You that have very holy hearts, if God should from heaven bid you ask some one thing,—as David speaks, 'This one thing have I asked,'—it should be τούτο, this thing, Paul prays for here, to be 'holy before him in love.' That which concerning holiness he prays for may be reduced to three heads:

I. Such graces and dispositions as are the inward springs, or primary essential principles, of holiness, which are three: 1. Love; 2. Knowledge; 3. Sense.

II. The next immediate consequents of these; the next streams from these in their inward man are, that in their judgments (which is τὸ ἡγεμονικὸν of all both holy affections and actions) they might, 1. 'Approve of things most excellent;' 2. 'Discern things different:' the words import either; 3. That in their hearts they might be 'sincere.' These are inward.

III. The third thing which the apostle prays for is, that holiness be perfectly, and all sorts of ways, held forth in their lives: 1. Negatively, 'blameless,' or 'without offence,' or 'without accusation,' as the word is used, 1 Thes. 5:23. 2. Positively, that they might be 'filled with the fruits of righteousness.' And yet, 3. Because it is not the outward appearance of fruit, bigness, colour, fairness, but the kind, the constitution, and relish of it that commends it, he therefore describes these fruits he prays for in the highest spiritualness of them. (1.) That they are such as are by Jesus Christ, which grow on that tree, and on hearts engrafted on that root. Paradise, no, nor the tree of life, knew none such; that is, these are a more excellent kind of fruit than ever did or should have grown on Adam's heart. (2.) He describes them to be such fruit, which are immediately and eminently directed 'to the glory and praise of God,' that have Christ and union with him for their efficient, and God's glory for their end. And as the end makes the means lovely and desirable, so this great end of God's glory gives the relish to all the fruit that comes from us, since none other is fruit to God, as the apostle speaks, Rom. 7:4, that is, for God's taste and acceptance.

IV. The fourth and last thing is, the extent and continuance of this holiness for the time of it. It is to be found in them, 'in the day of Christ,' or 'until the day of Christ.'

These are the main branches that the bulk and body of this tree divides itself into; and this is a gross view of what grows thereon. Let us but shake a little, and gather up what will easily and naturally fall.

The 9th verse is such, that in it (as the psalmist says) 'all our springs are found,' namely, the inward springs of true holiness. I may call them springs, not without the apostle's allusion here: the word is περισσεύη, that it may abundantly flow, as from a spring; so Musculus. In ver. 11 he useth the metaphor of fruit and a tree; but here, of streams and of a spring. The principles of holiness in us are in Scripture compared to both, to a root from whence fruit grows (Gal. 5:22, 23, 'the fruits of the Spirit'), and to a fountain: John 4:14, 'There shall be a well of water in him that believes, springing up into everlasting life.'

1. Grace and love to God should flow naturally; springs do so. Trees must be watered (that metaphor is not enough expressive of the naturalness of the workings of grace), but springs flow readily; 1 Thes. 4:9, 'I need not to write to you to love; ye are taught that of God.' 'Out of his belly,' says Christ, 'shall these waters flow.' The inwards he calls the belly, which should have love in them, as the earth hath water in the bowels of it.

2. In a fountain, as you take away, still more comes, and the faster it comes; and thus as a spring retains not its water to itself, so love keeps nothing to itself, but it flows to the use and benefit of God and men.

3. As fountains have their rise in hills, so this of love is first in God's heart in heaven: 'We love God, because he loved us first,' 1 John 4:10. 'It springeth up,' says Christ, 'to eternal life,' i.e., its original. Aqua in tantum ascendit, &c.

I have done with the metaphor; I come to the naked sense intended, ἔτι μᾶλλον καὶ μᾶλλον περισσεύη, 'may abound yet more and more.'



It had abounded already; the love of the primitive times it abounded, as you read, 1 Thess. 4:9, 10. One rivulet remains of the former metaphor to convey this to us, which we have, John 7:38, 39, 'He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this,' says John, 'he spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.' When Christ was now glorified, the graces of the Spirit were not brooks, but rivers; he poured, not dropped, down his Spirit, and love made the greatest channel. *Ecce qui diligunt*, was the common observation of the heathens, 'See how they love one another,' speaking of Christians. It held till Tertullian's time. Were there a cause concerned the common good of saints? Their principle was, they would 'lay down their lives for the brethren,' 1 John 3:6. Was it the cause of God? 'They loved not their lives to the death.' It is the character of those Christians, Rev. 12:11. Our springs are not only dried up, but turned back, as Jordan was; the hatred among the saints abounds yet more and more, and is like to swell higher yet. Oh, my brethren, is not Christ yet glorified?

The apostle adds these words, 'yet more and more.' To have said that it may abound, had an emphasis with it; but he adds ἔτι, yet, and adds to that μᾶλλον, more, and καὶ μᾶλλον, more still. God can never have enough of your love, nor you of grace. Paul that knew him thought so, and therefore prayed so. Seest thou a spark of fire; lay straw to it, and then add more fuel, it abounds more and more according to its fuel. This whole inferior world will not be a sufficient prey for the fire one day; it will melt the elements, as Peter says, yea, the heavens that now are it will consume. Such a thing is grace and love: all the excellencies in God are ordained to be the object, the fuel of it; yet it can neither consume, nor be consumed, but abounds still yet more and more.

But why is love first? Doth not faith and knowledge in order of nature go before? You must remember (as I told you) he speaks here of the principles of obedience, and so love is the more

immediate, for faith works by love. It is love (says the apostle, 1 John 5:3) makes all the commands not grievous.' 'Provoke one another,' says the apostle Paul, Heb. 10:24, 'to love and to good works.' Enkindle, stir up that principle, and then good works, as the flame, will arise. When Christ would move Peter to take pains for him and feed his lambs, and in doing so run through all the difficulties that attended an apostle's work and calling, what says he to him? 'Peter, lovest thou me?' He says no more. And what says Peter? 'Lord, I love thee.' It was enough between them two, to put him on to anything. Faith is indeed the only principle by which we deal with God and Christ for justification and communion with them; but love is that which incites us to holiness and obedience. We are 'ordained to be holy before him in love;' holiness riseth from love. oh, therefore, get your hearts inflamed with the love of God!

The apostle farther adds these words, 'that your love may abound in knowledge.' Ordinarily men had need pray that their love might grow up to their knowledge; but Paul here prays that their knowledge might grow up with, and to, their love. Usually men's knowledge is larger than their affections. It was, it seems, otherwise with these Philippians. There are usually extant these two sorts of Christians: affectionate, fond souls of Christ, but less knowing; others more knowing, yet less passionate, though true Christians both. The primitive times give instances of both. The Corinthians were knowing Christians: 1 Cor. 1:4, 5, 'I thank God that in every thing ye are enriched in all knowledge and utterance;' but they were short in love. 1 Cor. 8:2, 3, 'If any man thinks that he knoweth anything,'—he speaks home to them—'he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. But if any man love God, the same is known of him.' And chap. 12:31, they were for gifts: 'But yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.' And what was that? LOVE. So in chap. 13:1, 'Though I speak with tongues of men and angels, and have not love,' &c., throughout. But to return to that chap. 8:3, 'If any man love God, the same is known of him.' The speech carries the highest reproof with it; it is as if he had said, You take care to get more knowledge, but God knows enough for you, if he knows you to be his. Take care

to get more love, for 'if any man love God, the same is known of him.' And conform yourselves to God herein. God's loving of you is termed his knowing of you; they are adequate, let them be so in you to him.

But the Philippians and the Thessalonians were a more plain, sincere, affectionate sort of Christians, whose affections had been hitherto more than their knowledge; he therefore prays that their distinct knowledge might grow up with their love—'That their love might abound in knowledge'—and both grow together. As 2 Pet. 3:18, 'Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ;' not in blind affections, but such which spiritual knowledge may stir up. What is grace? It is but knowledge concocted into the affections, to have suitable impressions, dispositions on the affections to the things known. 2 Cor. 3:18, 'We are changed' (by beholding) 'into the same image.'

3. The apostle adds these words, 'and in all sense,' και πάση αίσθήσει. It is translated 'judgment,' but in the Greek, 'sense,' and so in your margins varied. The apostle puts the emphasis here, saying, 'in all sense' as the main, for it is such knowledge as hath sense added to. We are to inquire what is meant by sense, and why it is added to knowledge. It is all sense, let us therefore take in all senses may be given of it.

(1.) Sense is here added to knowledge, to express the true nature of spiritual faith in two words, added the one to the other, which is elsewhere expressed by one single word. Faith, what is it? A spiritual sense of spiritual things, or things excellent (as it follows in the text, Philip. 1:10). And the same apostle speaking of grown Christians, says, that they have, 'their senses exercised,' τὰ αἰσθητήρια, Heb. 5:14. Though he speaks this indeed of grown Christians, that they have their senses exercised, yet he supposeth that as Christians they have the senses themselves, that is, the faculties of them; and he says not sense only in the singular, as here (Philip. 1:9), but senses, making an allusion of the new creation of

the spiritual man to the outward man; for as the outward man hath divers organs and instruments of sense, so hath the new creation. That look as God made an outward world, in which are all sorts of objects, beauty, colours, sweet smells, pleasant fruits, so he placed in man's body αἰσθητήρια, senses suited to these, to take in the real comfort from these; and there is no creature outward, but there is a sense suited to it. So he hath made an invisible world, with variety of things spiritual, and that variety is but the several appearances of himself; and in the new creature there are suitable spiritual senses made to entertain them, and take them into the soul. In the Scripture you find that there is no particular sense, but faith is expressed by it; you have seeing and tasting in one verse: Ps. 34:9, 'Taste and see that the Lord is good;' and both put to express faith, for it follows, 'Blessed is the man that trusts in him.' To see God in his beauty and goodness, and in the heart and affection, and to taste of that goodness (to which Peter alludes, 1 Peter 2:2), are the acts of faith. Then, for hearing, I need not enlarge upon it. 'He that hath an ear, let him hear' with an inward ear, Rev. 2:7. For men may naturally hear and see God's wonders, and yet not with a spiritual ear; for, Deut. 29:3, 4, 'The great signs and miracles which thine eyes have seen, yet the Lord hath not given you eyes to see, and ears to hear, to this day.' But Christ gives another character of believers, when he says, John 10:3, 'My sheep hear my voice;' that is, discern and distinguish his voice by an inward sense; for it follows, ver. 5, 'The voice of a stranger they will not follow.' As the ear tries words, says Job, so they by an instinct know the mind of Christ, 1 Cor. 2:15, 16. Thus likewise as to smelling: 2 Cor. 2:15, 16, 'We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life.' We are, that is, our ministry; he compares the effect of it to that of vapours or smells. There are some vapours and smells that, as soon as they come into the nostrils, suffocate the spirits, strike dead, as in those famous caverns in Italy. Such are the threatenings of the gospel to a man that will not leave his lusts and believe, they are the savour of death, the occasion of his ruin; and not only so, but his conscience (which

is a principle suited to the threatening, as smell is to savour) smells the savour of fire and brimstone of hell in them, and he goes away with sense of condemnation unto him, for those courses he is resolved to go on in. But it is contrary to those that believe and obey, for unto them this ministry is the savour of life unto life. some smells recover men when in a swoon; so do the promises quicken and revive men's souls by their scent from them. They send forth the perfume of heaven, of God's love and free grace; it is the savour of life unto life. And as to feeling, which is another sense, what says the apostle? 1 John 1:1, 'What our hands have handled of the word of faith.' He speaks not of outward conversion, but inward, as ver. 3, 'that which we have seen and heard,' &c., of that fellowship their souls had had with him, as seals on that of their senses.

(2.) By sense is meant experience, as it is a distinct thing from faith; for the apostle, Rom. 5, after he had said, by faith a Christian hath peace with God, shews how faith is improved and added unto, through God's dealings with us: 'tribulation worketh patience,' and submission to God; 'and patience, experience.' So in such and such afflictions, after we had submitted to God, God came in and delivered or upheld with comforts, and thereby faith was strengthened against the next; for 'experience breeds hope,' or confidence of God's carrying us on to life and glory, when we have found God faithful in relieving us, and sticking close to us in all sorts of trials, and so it grows up to assurance (as hope is there, and 1 John 3:1, taken in that sense). Now experience is an acquired knowledge in matters spiritual, founded on sense—a collection of conclusions from what we have the sense of, as all artists gather conclusions from experiments made. A man at first sets out to believe with faith barely founded on the promise; as suppose he relies on this, that God favours him and loves him, and will do him good, and that God is faithful in man and such promises, afore ever he sees any performance, a man believes this with spiritual faith, and a faith that hath sense in it. Take seeing for the reality of the things, as they lie in the promise, and that God is the promiser. But afterwards look as God performeth in process of time any promises

of his, there is then a sense of experience superadded, and a collection from thence of the truth of the promise. Ps. 41:11, 'By this I know that thou favourest me, because my enemies do not triumph over me;' especially when withal I find, as it follows, that 'as for me, thou upholdest me in mine integrity.' A man believes that 'there is a God, who is the rewarder of them that seek him,' Heb. 11; a God that judgeth the earth, and therefore comes to him as a God that suffers not the wicked always to prosper, but in the end heareth the prayers of his poor people. And the man hath learned this, first (as the psalmist says, Ps. 73:17, 18) in the sanctuary, that is, out of the bare word. But having now believed this, he afterwards sees with his eyes a vengeance executed, as in Ps. 58:10, 'The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance.' He sees the vengeance by experience, and so from experience collects and strengthens faith anew, namely, in this great point of faith which follows there: 'A man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth.' Thus also David, Ps. 37:34, 'Wait on the Lord, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it,' that is, have experience of it. And David confirms this by his own instance, ver. 35, 36, 'I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree: yet he passed away, and, so, he was not; yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.' Thus promises brought home in trials and temptations breed experience: Ps. 119:50, 'This is my comfort in my affliction,' says he, for thy word hath quickened me.' Here is a conclusion, a trial of a receipt in time of malady, with a probatum est from experience. And such was the experience of a dying Christian: 'Is there not (said he) such a promise—I will be with thee in the fire and in the water?' 'Yes,' said they that stood by. 'Read, I pray' (replied he); which done, 'Bear witness (said he) that I die, testifying that God is true in that promise to my soul,' which is the similar to that of David's, 'This is my comfort in my affliction,' &c. Thus in hearing a man's prayer, what a world of experiments hath an experienced Christian. The whole 116th Psalm is a record of it, and so likewise the 18th Psalm: 'In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple,

and my cry came before him, even into his ears.' And how it doth set heaven and earth on work, the rest of that psalm shews; and therefore, as David learnt himself by experience, so he teacheth others: Ps. 66:16, 17, 19, 'Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul. I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue. But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer.' Thus by experience we know our own graces, and 'things given us of God,' as 1 Cor. 2 and the 119th Psalm throughout shews. And 'Oh how good is it to draw near to God!' says David, upon a taste and experiment of it, Ps. 73:28. Of grown Christians we say, they are experimental Christians; and those that were babes, the apostle describes such to be ἄπειροι, such that have no experience; whereas a grown Christian hath 'his senses exercised to discern both good and evil.' Such an one discerns the difference of things readily, not from reason, but skill that hath been contracted from the sense of experience. Thus of Christ it is said, 'that he learned obedience by the things he suffered,' Heb. 5:8. Take a man that hath naturally a wise head, and the grain, the current of his understanding lies and runs that way; yet if such a man hath been further versed in the world, and hath been tumbled and tossed up and down therein, and hath been used to business or affairs of state, &c., he will have an experimental acquired wisdom added, if not to increase, yet to confirm all those principles naturally engrafted in him; and through both these a man proves a wise man indeed, as Solomon throughout did.

Thus Christ our Lord, though his manhood was furnished with all sorts of abilities, principles of faith and knowledge spiritual, yet God did put this great scholar to school, to learn (says the apostle, Heb. 5:8) knowledge of this other kind. And the schoolmaster he sets him to was patience, which breeds up experience, as the same apostle saith, Rom. 5:4. The school was obedience, that so he might have sense added to his faith and knowledge. The heart of Christ had an ocean of love naturally flowing in it, and yet he must learn mercy and pity to us, in a way of sense, as it is said, 'inasmuch as he also was tempted,' Heb. 2:18. And this is the meaning of that

passage in the 10th verse of that chapter, 'He was made perfect through sufferings.' God would have his eldest Son educated in all sorts of faculties and learnings (whose type was Moses), that so he might be perfect; and therefore he ran through all courses as we mortals run through, that he might be perfect in all sorts of experimental knowledge; and especially because sufferings teach most compendiously, he was therefore made perfect through sufferings. And as use, we say, makes perfect, so did experience him; and thus as to us (as the apostle says, Heb. 12:11), 'Afflictions bring forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness, to them that are exercised therein.' The word exercised is the same that is used in that forementioned Heb. 5:14, concerning our senses being exercised; and it is a metaphor taken from the knowledge that is obtained in schools, whether either of arts and sciences, through exercising themselves therein, as fencing, grammar, &c., by performing such exercises whereby youths grow up to such a perfection. The same word we have again, 1 Tim. 4:7, 'Exercise (γυμναζε) thyself to godliness;' that is, get such a skill by performing the exercises of it as scholars at school do; run through all sorts of duties, as scholars do through all sorts of forms (which seeing the Holy Ghost so often alludes unto, to express the practical part of godliness hereby, it is unsavoury to call, as some do, the set performance of such holy duties, forms, and tasks); but, says the apostle in direct opposition to these, they diligently run through all parts of piety, which will procure an exquisite knowledge by experience, which is equivalent to sense here in the text. So then when the apostle here prays they might abound in all sense, his meaning is, they might run through all courses of godliness, and be carried through all the varieties of God's dealings and dispensations, all sorts of trial of graces on their part, and performance of promises on God's; that so, having tried all conclusions, they might be perfect Christians in experimental knowledge, even in all sense.

(3.) By sense he means deep and glorious impressions on the soul, over and above the light of faith or knowledge by ordinary experiences; and such impressions are truly rather sense than



knowledge, as all find that enjoy them; and they are therefore said to 'pass knowledge,' Eph. 3:19, and are entitled, 'the peace of God which passeth understanding,' Phil. 4:7. And the same is hinted Rom. 5:5, 6, 'Patience breedeth experience, and experience hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.' A man had before by faith peace with God (thus ver. 1), but now he comes to have experience with hope or assurance from the love of God shed, not manifested or apprehended by knowledge so much as shed, whereof the subject is said to be the heart rather than the understanding; and this is that which Christ promiseth, John 14:21. And this the primitive Christians more generally enjoyed: 1 Peter 1:8, 'Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now you see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.' Thus were those Peter wrote to, and so were the Philippians and Romans, as you heard; as for the Thessalonians, the word 'came unto them in much assurance, and joy in the Holy Ghost,' 1 Thes. 1:5. And this high and heavenly sense and enjoyment the apostles used to pray for in behalf of those they wrote to. Thus Paul for the Romans, Rom. 15:18, 'Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.' And Peter exhorts those Christians he wrote unto to maintain and not to lose this; for having said, 1 Peter 1:8, 9, that they had been filled (as at conversion, or soon after ordinarily) with joy unspeakable and glorious, he exhorts them (chap. 2:2, 3) that they would keep up that sense and taste, even as new-born babes; he would have them, though men in understanding, yet always to be as babes in their appetites and tastings of the love and goodness of God, and if they wanted it, to cry for it.

Use 1. Hath faith and the new creature these senses joined to and implanted in them? Then may a Christian, if it be not his fault, lead the most sensual life (pardon the expression) of any creature. For as God hath made a world for sense, so God hath prepared Christ, and all things spiritual to the new creature. You see what pleasures are in the visible world, which the senses let in; but the soul is able to

drink in more at one draught in a moment than all the senses can let in, or the world afford us in ages. Now, what the world is to the body, that God and Christ are to the soul. Of this sense the Psalmist speaks, Ps. 36:8, 9, 'They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the liver of thy pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.' He instanceth in those senses of sight, and taste, and the objects thereof, which bring in so much pleasure to the body.

Use 2. See the reason why the same truth meditated on, or conferred on, or heard again and again, to hearts prepared to relish spirituals, still affects with a new and fresh sweetness. If our souls only entertained, and took them in by bare knowledge, it would not be so; but faith, containing all the senses in it, hence, if we receive them by faith, a fresh and rich pleasure springs out of them.

Use 3. See the reason why faith hath the greatest certainty of knowledge about its objects of any other knowledge. The philosopher says, *Sensus non fallitur circa proprium objectum*: the senses are not deceived about their proper objects (due circumstances and proportions of distance, &c., being observed), and that the speech of Christ confirms it. When the disciples thought Christ to be but a spirit, he appeals for the final determination to two senses, seeing and feeling; for, says he, 'Hath a spirit flesh and bones as I have?' Now, faith hath not one only, but all the senses conjunct with it, and implanted in the nature of it; so far, therefore, as we believe, we are certain of the object, the reality, the existence of it, though of our interest therein we may be doubtful.

## **CHAPTER II**

The inward effects of an holy disposition and temper in the soul are an ability in the understanding to discern, judge of, and approve

spiritual things, and a sincerity in the heart, inclining a man to walk in God's ways; what it is to be sincere and without offence.

The inward fruits and effects that flow from a principle of holiness, and do constitute and form such an habitual frame of spirit as may practically fit a man to walk holily, are men to be considered, and they are two:

1. In the understanding, an ability to discern upon all occasions the difference of things, and upon an act of discretion choose and approve what is best; or (as the words may be varied) a judgment to discern of the excellency of things in the ways of religion, what is more excellent than other, and to approve of and cleave thereto.

2. In the heart ('that ye may be sincere,' which respects walking), a sincerity to incline and direct a man in his way, to keep him so as not to turn to the right hand or the left, and to preserve him from stumbling and falling from his course; and therefore it is joined here with ἀπρόσκοποι, which signifies both those that walk without wandering from their scope, their mark,\* which in their course they are bound for, as also that are void of offence, or stumbling, or giving occasion to others so to do; and therefore I added, which practically fit a man to walk holily.

1. In the understanding there are holy principles: εἰς τὸ δοκιμάζειν τὰ διαφέροντα. Both words here used have an amplitude, a comprehensiveness in them. I will open each apart, and fit them each to the other, and all to the thing in hand.

(1.) It signifies to try and discern the difference of things from their counterfeit or contraries—a word taken from goldsmiths, as the use of the word in 1 Peter 1:7 evidently shews, where he speaks of the trial (δοκιμιον) of faith, which is 'found more precious than gold, though tried with the fire' (the goldsmith tries gold and metals either by the touchstone or by the fire). And in an allusion to this metaphor, it is applied to a discerning the difference of doctrines,

whether about things to be done or believed: 1 Thes. 5:21, 'Prove,' or try, 'all things.' He had spoken of prophesying in the words afore, in which ordinary gifted men being not infallible, might mingle versimilia, errors like truth, or dross and corrupt doctrine with truth, he exhorts them δοκιμάζειν, to try, or prove, and so hold fast what is good.

(2.) It imports, withal, an approving in judgment of what is good, a savouring, relishing, closing with and cleaving to the goodness of it as good and best for him. Thus, Rom. 12:2, 3, 'Be renewed in your mind, that you may prove what is that good, that perfect will of God' (it is the same word), not only to discern the will of God in its truth from falsehood in all the latitude and perfection of it (as David speaks, Ps. 119:97, 'I have seen an end of all perfection, but thy commandments are exceeding broad'), but to approve it. There is a vastness and variety of duties commanded, sins forbidden; and to discern those, especially the spiritual part of them, which is the perfection that gives the acceptation, this no man can do but by being renewed in his mind; but farther, so as withal to prove and close with the goodness of that will of God in each particular thereof, to like it, relish it, savour it (as Rom. 1:28 the word is used), under this consideration and respect, that it is acceptable to God, as well as perfect in itself; yea, and also as good, yea, best for a man's self that is to do it, and all this out of a suitableness: this, to be sure, is found only in and from a renewed mind. And thus in that former place, 1 Thes. 5:21, this word δοκιμάζειν is to be understood, 'Try and prove all things, hold fast what is good.' There is, you see, 1, a discerning the difference, prove or try, joined with holding fast, or cleaving to the mind of God as good, as good for me; that if I were to make my own statutes I would live by, it should be those and no other which I find revealed in God's word. Ps. 119:127, 128, 'Therefore I love thy commandments above gold, yea, above fine gold. Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way.' The expressions are as full as full may be: I esteem, I love, yea, I esteem thy precepts out of love to their suitableness; therefore I esteem them because I love them,

and all and every one of them, and that concerning all things, as they direct me in all and each circumstance of my ways, as they concern any part of my life, oppose my dearest lusts, or cross my strongest desires. And not content with this, he expresseth it by his hatred of its contrary, 'I hate every false way.'

As these are the two imports of the word δοκιμάζειν, namely, both, 1, to try, and 2, to approve, so suitably the other word, which here expresses the object of these acts, τὰ διαφέροντα, translated 'things that differ,' is such a word, and so industriously singled out, as answers to both; clasps in with both; for it signifies either, 1, 'things that differ,' and so yokes well with 'to try or discern,' the object of which is the difference of things. 2. They are 'things that excel,' and are more excellent, and so yokes with the other import, to 'approve as best,' or most excellent. I need not give you an account of the first, that διαφέροντα signifies things that differ, ἀδιάφορα are things indifferent. But for the second import of the word take Luke 12:7, 'Ye are of more value,' of more excellency in God's esteem, than many sparrows.' Yet it is the same word that is used here. So likewise when it is said, 1 Cor. 15:41, that 'one star differs from another star in glory;' that is, excels another. We say of things more excellent, compared with things less, that there is a great deal of difference. Christ 'obtained a more excellent name,' διαφορώτερον. So then let us take up the apostle's meaning, as it comprehendeth both these senses.

1. He prays their understanding may be so habited with spiritual judgment and sense upon all occasions, whether of proposals of doctrines to them, matters of controversy, wherein there is an aptness to deceit, through a likeness, that yet when they see reasons on this side and on that side, they might be able out of sense to say, This is truth; that they might discern truth from falsehood, and approve it; or in matters of practice, in all turnings of their lives, or cases of conscience, they might quickly discern and judge what they were to do, to see and say, This is my way; and that they might know this clearly, so as not to be deceived, but so as to walk comfortably,

as knowing they are doing the will of God. And this is one frame or constitution of spirit the judgments of God's people are clothed with. Of Christ it is said, Isa. 11:2, 3, 'The Spirit of the Lord,' and 'a Spirit of wisdom and understanding,' as the fruit of that Spirit,' should 'rest on him,' and he should be of 'quick understanding in the fear of the Lord'; that is, he should be quick-eyed, nimble-sighted, to discern the difference of things; and answerably every Christian is made more or less a sagacious creature. He receives wisdom in matters doctrinal, prudence in matters practical, Eph. 1:8, Col. 1:9, a skill to know at the instant how to walk, which all the notional knowledge in the world cannot stamp on the mind; for that is not ad manum at every turn when a man is to act, but a practical skill is needful. If a scholar had learnt all the art of fencing in all the postures of it, and had the rules imprinted on his fancy, yet a fencer brought up to it hath a skill beyond him, a sagacity impressed through use on his eye, his hand, to spy out every advantage. Such a practical art in discerning a man's way doth the Holy Ghost stamp on the judgment of a man regenerate, which no use nor learning can ever enable unto. Then again, apply the use of this word to a discerning a difference in things. When a man is turned to God, how is this fulfilled in him? He is enabled to see a strange difference, as in things and persons both worldly and spiritual, so in the ways of men, and in the difference of ministers. When a man is unregenerate, he is darkness, and to men in the dark color omnibus unus, all colours are alike. Morality and natural devotion in men go for grace and holiness. Glow-worms shine as well as stars, but when a man is converted, 'the darkness is past, and the true light shineth,' as John speaks. And then he discerns and knows, as the same John says, 1 John 5:19, that 'we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.' The Scriptures afford a thousand such instances. And all this the regenerate man discerns by a kind of sense and infused sagacity. For the farther increase of such light doth the apostle here pray; for as this increaseth, so likewise holiness increaseth in the heart and life.

2. He prays that their judgment might be so habited as to close with, approve, savour the goodness and excellency of things spiritual, according to their several degrees of excellency as best for them; that they might approve the excellency of spiritual things in comparison of things and persons worldly, and answerably esteem and value Christ and all his excellencies, so as to give up all for him, as Paul did, Phil. 3:8, 'I account all things as loss and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ.' And thus Peter speaks, 'To you that believe he is precious,' 1 Peter 2:7, whenas all disobedient ones refuse him. To such a man the saints of God are the excellent ones of the earth, as they were to David and Christ, Ps. 16. Likewise the things of the law are excellent things, as the prophet speaks, and accordingly are valued by such a man. And he so values them as to choose these as best, and best for him. Ps. 119:30, 'I have chosen the way of truth, thy judgments have I laid before me,' I have deliberately viewed and considered them all, and as deliberately chosen them, and that as my heritage to live upon; ver. 111 of that psalm.

3. Besides approving in common the excellency of things spiritual in comparison to earthly and carnal, the apostle's meaning is of their approving among things spiritual those that are most excelling. Our apostle praying for grown Christians, as these Philippians were, the aim of his prayer was, that among those more excellent things they might still more and more, as he had spoken of abounding, approve of what was most excelling. In those primitive times, though there were not several forms of religion, and all of them acceptable to God, as some have dangerously spoken, for there is but one God, one faith, one baptism—which latter is by a synecdoche put for all other instituted ways of worship—yet according to the several degrees of light there were in some churches and persons further and more excellent attainments; and in this regard it is he prays for these Philippians that they might be heightened to the approbation of what was most excellent, that they might abound in knowledge, love, and sense, so as to embrace and pursue after of all other what was most excellent, by perceiving the comparative different

excellency that was between spiritual things. Acts 18:25, 26, you read of a man of God, Apollos, who was 'instructed in the way of God,' and one that was 'fervent in spirit,' that taught and 'spoke diligently the things of the Lord,' yet 'knowing only the baptism of John.' You read likewise, chapter 19, of certain disciples that were true Christians, and have that testimony given them, both here in the story of Apollos, chapter 18:27, and also in that succeeding chapter 19:1-3, &c.; and these had all been instructed in what was fundamental, for even John had taught them that 'they should believe on him who should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus, so ver. 4, who yet, ver. 2, are said 'not to have heard so much as whether there be any Holy Ghost,' that is, either in those his gifts which accompanied the profession of Christ, as risen and ascended, or perhaps because they were not struck with any special intensive apprehension of it, to take up their heedful regard to him; yet it was accounted sufficient that they and he believed on Christ. And therefore Aquila and Priscilla took Apollos, as Paul also those disciples, and instructed him, as it is said, more perfectly, or 'expounded unto him more perfectly the way of the Lord,' Acts 18:26. It was not teaching him a new way, but in a way of superstruction of what he knew before. What says the apostle, 1 Cor. 3:11? 'Other foundation can no man lay than what is laid,' and, as you see, was unto them laid, even Jesus Christ; and yet, says Paul, 'I shew you a more excellent way.' Take the apostles themselves: there were many things which they could not bear; their weak stomachs would have cast them up again. John 16:12, 'I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now.' And that them now refers to an after time, in which they should 'receive a Spirit of truth,' ver. 13. To the apostles there was a double coming of the Spirit, as to us and them there is of Christ. The one secret, when he regenerated them, as of Christ when he stole into the world unknown: John 1:10, 11, 'He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not.' The other coming of the Spirit is, when he comes as a comforter: John 14:20, 'And in that day,' says Christ, 'you shall know that I am in the Father, and you in



me, and I in you.' As you see an instance of attaining things more excellent in the apostles themselves, and Apollos, and those at Ephesus, so you may see the like in the Corinthians, 1 Cor. 2:6 and 1 Cor. 3:1, 2. The apostle is bold to distinguish and put difference between them that are perfect, and what he taught unto such, and the Corinthians themselves he wrote to. Of the first says he, 'we speak wisdom among them that are perfect,' so chap. 2:6; but as for the other, you read what he says, chap. 3:1, 2, 'And I, brethren, could not speak to you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.' Nay, after he had written and almost concluded that epistle (that I may bring it to the very language of the text), 1 Cor. 12:31, he says to the same Corinthians, 'And yet I shew unto you a more excellent way.'

This I insinuate, 1, to shew how remote those are from this primitive spirit, that would include all within their circle, and that circle must be what a whole nation, yea, churches of nations, agree upon, as if there were not room still for something more excelling, built on the former foundations; though indeed to destroy or alter principles fundamental, is to destroy the church universal, both that which is now on earth and hath been. But soberly compare these instances (if there were no other) with the attempts and principles of this and the former times, and let none of us exclude himself out of Paul's prayers; that is, of professing ourselves to be in a capacity still to approve of things more excelling than yet we do; and let us pray to God daily to deprive us of no manifestation of himself which saints in this life are and have been capable of.

The only observation (besides those which have been insinuated and scattered as I have gone along) I centre on, is from the coherence of those words, ver. 9 and ver. 10, 'That your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and

without offence till the day of Christ: ' εἰς τὸ δοκιμάζειν, to the end you may approve, &c., and it is this.

Obs. That the readiest and speediest way for any or every Christian to come to discern and judge aright of things that differ (as matters of doctrine controverted, cases of conscience, and also of ways that are more excellent in religion) is this, that they abound in love, knowledge, with all sense, as was explained. This observation is natural from the words εἰς τὸ δοκιμάζειν, 'to the end you approve,' &c. Take sense here in all the senses I have mentioned; for faith, as it hath all senses annexed to it and found in it, Heb. 5:14, seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, so faith conduceth to the discerning of things spiritual, which are not taken by reason only, but by a spiritual sense joined thereto: Job 12:11, 'Doth not the ear try words, and the mouth taste its meats?' which conjunction and comparison signifies, that the discerning of truths is as discerning by the taste. The understanding, as made spiritual, is the palate of the soul: 'The spiritual man discerneth all things,' 1 Cor. 2:15. The word φρονεῖν, put for wisdom, is savouring; and says Job, Job 6:30, 'Cannot my taste discern perverse things?' He appeals to sense for things that are grossly perverse, as a man by taste discerns his meat if it be stale or corrupted. Peter's judgment having a vitiated humour overflowing it, hereupon says Christ, 'Thou savourest not the things of God,' Mat. 16:23. My brethren, the regenerate part hath all truth and goodness originally wrought and interwoven into the temper and constitution of it, itself is nothing but truth and goodness; and so all spiritual things are but prepared (as 1 Cor. 2) or suited and fitted for it, and so thereby a Christian hath a great predisposition to judge of doctrines and practices. This suits, or this suits not, says he, with the regenerate part; and however, though that is not the sole determiner (for then there would be no want nor need of reason or others' teaching), yet when reason hath done all it can, if this neither approves nor relisheth, there is a bearing off, a not closing with what is propounded.

Or if we take sense for experience, as it is superadded to faith, Rom. 5, this is an help to judge. The apostle speaks, Heb. 5:14, of strong meat. The strongest truths are suited to be digested and taken in by those that have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. He speaks of experimental Christians trained up in temptations and cases of difficulty; whereas one (as afore) that is unskilful in the word of righteousness (the word in the margin is, hath no experience) will be able to digest only milk. A man discerns in things spiritual the difference, not by argument merely, but by aim, that he presently says, This is crooked, that is straight; as a merchant's taste who is used to wines, or an experienced apothecary judgeth of drugs, and as jewellers judge even by sense of jewels. Or if we take sense for extraordinary impressions from communion with God and sense of his love in the heart, these mightily enable and guide a man, confirm him, and lead him into truth. How come men to discern ἄδολον γάλα, 'the sincere milk of the word'? 1 Pet. 2:2. It follows, 'If so be you have tasted,' says he, 'that the Lord is gracious.' Infants discern the sweetness of their milk by sense, not reason. I cannot dispute, but can die for the truth, said the holy woman martyr. Thus John exhorts them to communion with God the Father, shewing this as one privilege of it, that being pre-informed therewith, he tells them, chap. 2, 'Ye have received an anointing that teacheth you all things;' not that they needed not teaching, for then why should he have written to them against them that seduced them? but he recalls them in those words unto that principle which would exceedingly further them in judging of truths; even as Paul in the case of justification by works bids them but to have recourse to the thoughts they had at conversion, when they were first humbled for sin—Did you then trust in your works for salvation?—this was enough to confute that wicked opinion. 'This persuasion came not of him that called you,' says Gal. 5:8; and so chap. 3:2, he appeals to experience in the same or like question to decide it: 'This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?'

Lastly, to grow up in love. Working by faith is the shortest way to know God's will. There is a blessing of God that guideth such a man: John 7:17, 'If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.' And David confirms it: Ps. 119:98–100, 'Thou, through thy commandments, hast made me wiser than mine enemies; for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.'

Having shewed you what it is to approve the things that are excellent, I come in the next place to explain to you what it is to be sincere.

1. Sincerity is opposed to what is counterfeit. Thus the apostle joins sincerity and truth together, 1 Cor. 5:8. That then is sincere which is genuine, which is right, which is true, as when we say, This is true gold.

2. Sincerity is opposed,\* also, to that which is void of mixture. Thus sincera, in the Roman language, is sine cerâ, without wax mingled. We do not huckster the truth, saith Paul, we do not mingle it with false wares, but as in sincerity, 2 Cor. 2:17. Sincerity there is opposed to mixture. Now then, apply it to grace. A sincere heart is, as the apostle calls it, a true heart, an heart genuinely holy. Heb. 10:22, 'Let us draw near with a true heart,' true to God, faithful to him in all things, as David is said to have been. A sincere heart is a sound heart, 2 Tim. 2:22, an heart that hath a principle of life and health in it, which works out all mixture of ill humours, and purgeth itself from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and mingleth with no sin, in the constancy of a man's course. He keeps himself that the evil one touch him not, as sound, pure wine bokes, and seeks to cast out the scum.

3. Sincerity signifies that which may be brought to the sun; so in 2 Cor. 1:12, 'We have had our conversation in this world, not in fleshly

wisdom, but in godly sincerity,' or in the sincerity of God, εἰλικρινεῖα Θεοῦ, that is, whereof God is witness, which may be brought to him, be held up to the sun, and be judged to be such, according to that of Christ, John 2:21, 'But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God.'

4. But sincerity hath a peculiar relation to walking with God (as the word shews with which it is joined, ἀπρόσκοποι, without stumbling in his way, for that word is properly used only of the feet), and so it importeth a sound constitution of spirit both towards God and the commandments of God in walking with him, &c. (as David expresseth it), being upright in the way: 1 Kings 9:4, 'If thou wilt walk before me' (speaking to Solomon), 'in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I command thee, and keep my statutes and my judgments,' &c.

5. But sincerity implies more particularly these two things:

(1.) A right intention aiming at God. It is therefore called the sincerity of God in that 2 Cor. 1:12, and it is opposed there to fleshly wisdom, whereby a man seeks to bring the world and religion together. No (saith the apostle); I aimed at God sincerely, and that is the testimony of my conscience. In that 2 Cor. 1:12, he joins with it simplicity. Now in Mat. 6:22, that which the apostle calleth simplicity, Christ there calleth singleness. 'If thine eye be single,' saith he; it is the same word. Now Christ his aim and scope is evidently in that place to speak of sincerity of intention in aiming at God, and in throwing out worldly ends; for he speaks it in relation to a sincere purpose of not serving two masters. Men think to compound with both, to have the world and religion too. No, saith he; God will have all; he that serveth him must serve him singly, and his eye must be single. And because Christ spake of the aim and intention which guides the whole conversation, therefore he adds, 'If the eye be single, the whole body is full of light.' For a sincere intention is to direct the whole man in his walking, as the eye doth

the body in acting; if this intention be kept single, a man will not err. John 7:18, He who seeks his glory that sent him (viz., God's), the same is true, sincere, and upright, and there is no unrighteousness in him, he having nothing to bias him, or to make him swerve. And then take sincerity for such a temper of heart as can come to the sun, and abide the light of it; he who thus sincerely aims at God's glory 'comes to the light' (as Christ says), John 3:21, 'that his deeds may be manifest that they are wrought in God,' and for God, because such an heart can bear all that the word says.

(2.) It notes out a bent of will to all the commandments that he knoweth to be such. I shall only name but one place: Ps. 119:112, 'I have inclined my heart to perform thy statutes alway, even unto the end.' In such an inclination of heart that is thus constant to all the commandments, lies sincerity.

Which sincerity ariseth, 1, from a love to God and his commands; therefore the apostle prayeth that they may abound in love. 2. It ariseth from a sense and taste that a man hath of the sweetness of God (through communion with him), and of that which he finds in his commands; he tasteth how good God is, and how good the word is. 'Oh how I love thy law!' says David. And 3, it ariseth from knowledge; for, as David says in Ps. 119:30, 'Thy judgments have I laid before me,' therefore (saith he, verse 128) 'I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right, and I hate every false way;' as he also saith in the 112th verse. Read that whole psalm. I may style it a mirror of sincerity. As the Holy Ghost hath used the penmen of Holy Writ to utter divine truths scatteredly and apart, so some more special subjects he hath been pleased to write set treatises of. Thus Solomon's Song is of Christ and the church, and his Ecclesiastes is of the vanity of all things. Thus John wrote an epistle of an union with God, and Jude wrote another of false teachers; and so David wrote this psalm of sincerity and the characters of it, and accordingly he begins, 'Blessed are they that are upright in the way of God.' And this is called the integrity of God, as to give one instance concerning the meanest service done to God:

Eph. 6:5, 'Servants, be obedient unto them that are your masters according to the flesh, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;' that is, aiming at him, even as if you served the Lord Jesus, and as if he bid you do everything. And do this, 'not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as servants of Christ,' 'doing the will of God from the heart,' 'with good will doing service, as to the Lord and not to men.' I instance in this, to let you see how a sincere heart works towards God in one particular condition and part of obedience, that you may understand what it is to be sincere in any other part, be it recreation, or whatever work God sets thee about. All these put together make up this integrity, this sincerity, this right frame of spirit towards God and his commands, that here the apostle prays for. This is that which Job saith he would not part with, that though he was not able to answer God one of a thousand, that is, if he came to actions and thoughts, yet for this frame of spirit, saith he, 'till I die I will not remove my integrity from me,' and let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know my integrity.

It remains that we explain what it is to be without offence. It is to walk without stumbling, as the word signifies. The place in Acts 24:16 (where the same word is used) openeth it: 'Herein do I exercise myself,' saith Paul, 'to have always a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men;' that is, that I might not sin against light in my inward converse before God, or outward before men, grossly and willingly against light; for otherwise in all things we do offend, as James saith. And certainly Paul to the day of his death lived so, for we find no sin against light, either in his epistles or in the story of the Acts recorded of him, but rather the contrary. Elsewhere also you have it explained; as in Luke 1:6, it is said of Zacharias and Elizabeth, that they walked blameless in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord; that is, the precepts of the moral law, and also ordinances of worship. You have the like phrase 2 Cor. 1:8, 1 Thess. 5:23, that you may be preserved blameless, ἀμώμητοι, without reproof or accusation, or just cause of it; sine querela, without just cause of complaint by men, 1 Peter 3:16; or of Satan, 1 Tim. 3:7, and 5:14, who is called the adversary

and the accuser, Rev. 12:10. But he hath not power to accuse in such cases where the believer walks without offence.

To be without offence is to be ἀπόσκοποι. Προσκόπη is put properly to signify the errings, mistreadings, stumblings and bruising of the feet in walking.\* As afore in that of sincerity, the intention of the mind signified therein was compared to the eye, so this hath allusion to the steps. I shall make up the full comprehension of what this word holds forth, by what offences I find in the New Testament the word is applied to.

1. Heedfully to avoid all such footsteps and ways before others, as may induce them to sin, or we know may prove an occasion to others of stumbling, or that edify them in their corrupt principles,—this is to be ἀπόσκοποι, or void of offence in walking. Thus. 1 Cor. 10:32, ἀπόσκοποι γίνεσθε (the same word that is used here). 'be not offensive,' or be blameless; give no scandal (the particular instance he was upon, was eating in the idol's temple), 'neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God.' He reckons up all sorts of religion then in the world, to all which that one action would be an occasion of offence. The Jews would say, These men profess to worship one God as we do, and yet partake with idols, as we do not. The Grecians would say, We may then lawfully sacrifice to our gods, for lo these Christians join with us in eating the sacrifices offered up to them in the temples of our gods, which we (as they know) intend as a part of our worship and religion performed unto them. The church of God would be scandalised, 1, passively, in that religion was blamed for it, that it would allow men any kind of practices, though contradictory to the principles of itself; 2, actively, that weak ones would and were thereby drawn and encouraged against the scruples of their consciences (to avoid persecution) to the like compliance, which also proved a step to apostasy in many. Thus when, by our footsteps and example, we invite others to follow us in evil, or give occasion to others to stumble, we are not ἀπόσκοποι, blameless or inoffensive.



2. To walk in any action contradictory to a man's own principles he professeth before others, is to be offensive, and not ἀπρόσκοπος, in the apostle's sense. Besides what the foregoing instance contributes, that phrase which Paul applies to Peter and his companions in that case is the opposite to this. The word here, as was said, properly regards ἐπὶ πόδων, and is properly applied to walking, and but metaphorically to other things; therefore. inoffenso pede, with an inoffensive foot, say some; inoffenso cursu, others. Most fitly therefore doth that of Paul, Gal. 2:16, explain it, when he charged Peter 'not to have walked with a right foot,' and that according to the principles himself professed; therefore it follows, 'and not according to the truth of the gospel,' that is, as the principles thereof, and those professed by a man's self, do require. This was Peter's apparent fault there, for he, of all the apostles, was the first that, by a revelation given in and warranted by a vision from heaven, was himself the first who had been taught not to forbear eating with Gentiles as unclean,' Acts 10:28. 'Ye know,' says he, 'that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or to come unto one of another nation. But God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.' That principle was, and had been, a partition-wall between Jew and Gentile, Acts 11:3, &c., and so on in that chapter; yea, and himself glories of it, as a peculiar honour vouchsafed him by God, in a public synod, Acts 15:7; yea, and at Antioch himself practised it, and did freely eat with the Gentiles; but when certain Jews came thither, he, for fear of them, separated himself, Gal. 2:12. This was a contradiction so notorious and visible, and his example had such influence on others, and so justly offended them, that Paul could not forbear, but openly falls upon him: 'When I saw,' says the apostle, 'that they walked not with a right foot, I said to Peter, before them all,' that is, reproved him, for, ver. 11, 'he was to be blamed;' and so it comes home to the text, to explain it in the very phrase of it.

3. As thus to be void of offence before men, so not to do anything contradictory to that light which a man's own conscience hath received to walk by, not between God and himself, is to be without

offence. In this sense also, Acts 24:16, Paul useth the word, applying it to himself, so as we may understand his prayers for them here from his own principles in walking, instanced in by himself: 'Herein,' says he, 'I exercise myself, to have a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men:' ἀπρόσκοπον συνείδησιν, it is the same word, 'a blameless conscience,' nil conscire sibi. He says not only a blameless conversation, that others shall not be able to blame me, but a blameless conscience, not to men only, so as not to offend them, or give them cause of accusation, but before God also. Conscience is that principle which is the seat and principle of all that practical light which is to guide us in our walkings with God, and is the receptacle of all the guilt, or opposition to that light in any action of ours, which is refunded back into it. Now Paul's conscience had received in more light than any man's in the world, and had therefore the hardest task of it that any man ever had, to walk up to it, and needed the more diligence and study how to manage every action, and the circumstances of it (which is the greatest study of the two), that not only his outward conversation to men might be without blame or offence, his conscience bearing witness of that (as 1 Pet. 3:16, 'Having a good conscience, that whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ'), but so as if you brought his outward walking to his conscience itself, and that conscience to God, the Searcher of hearts, he endeavoured so to walk, as that conscience might not have a spot, a darkness, a contrariety in actings of spirit, or converse, to that light which shined into his soul from God, no, not in his actings between God and himself. I follow this metapher, because the apostle's parallel expression glanceth at it, 2 Cor. 1:12, 'For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-wards.' That ἐλικρινεῖα Θεοῦ is a metapher from bringing fine linen, as lawn, &c., to the sun, to view if there be any spots in them, by putting them between our eye and the sun. Now, says Paul, so have I done, and so I do; I hold my conscience (for of the rejoicing of his

conscience he there speaks) to God, as to my sun and judge; and I am not conscious, says he, no, not between him and me, of any action in my converse wherein I made an interposition, or cast a shadow against that light he hath seated therein to guide me. He brought his works to the light of God in his conscience, to see whether they were 'wrought in God,' John 3:21, for thus Christ speaks of him that doth the truth. Or if you will take it up in the metaphor used in the text, when a man, in all duties between God and him, as well as men, hath not dashed his foot against his light, and so is free from all bruises and wounds which his conscience would feel, and which a tender conscience easily feels, and which all men's consciences one day shall feel, when the heat of lust and pleasure of action are past and gone, it is then that man is without offence. This light of God in the conscience is, as Christ himself is said to be, 'a stone of stumbling, on which if a man fall, it bruise or breaks him;' and a sin against conscience is a dashing against it, a kicking against the prickings of it. But Paul professeth his religion to consist in two things: 1. For matter of faith and opinion, and way of worship, he confesseth himself a Christian: Acts 24:14, 'After the way which they call heresy,' says he, 'so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets.' And 'herein,' saith he, ver. 16, 'I exercise myself to have a good conscience.' The translation, 'I exercise myself,' is, methinks, a little too low and flat, for it doth not reach the higher emphasis of the words in the original, ἐν τούτῳ δὲ ἀσκῶ, i.e., 'in this,' or 'unto this,' as the main study and design of my life and soul, 'do I give up myself, devote myself.' Those devout Christians were anciently called Ascetæ, that gave up themselves wholly to God in contemplation and mortification therewith, and made it their business. And as Paul made this his study, so (as I take it by all that ever I have observed recorded of him) he made this his glory, that he never, after his conversion, sinned against his light, no, not between God and himself, which was rarely any man's glory before or since; to be sure it was not Peter's. He had set that down as an excellency he affected, to keep his conscience a virgin pure; and this made him so studious, and versed, and exercised in this point. Unto

this, says he, I give all my study, meditation, ἀσκῶ, the best study in the world, for conscience unblotted is the best, yea, only book in the world that will remain unburnt, and be opened and exposed, and we examined by it, at the latter day; and when a man hath studied to get much knowledge, he is thereby (if he will be answerably holy) further and anew put upon a far greater and more exact study, exercise, and meditation; and that is, how to walk up to the light of what he knows. And that this Paul made his glory, the Scripture everywhere testifies upon all occasions: Acts 23:1, 'And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.' So 1 Cor. 4:4, 'For I know nothing by myself, yet am I not hereby justified; but he that judgeth me is the Lord.' It is as if he had said, I am not conscious to myself of anything, though I am not hereby justified; that is, I do not say I am without sin (for we must accord Paul with John, who says, 'He that says he hath no sin deceives himself'), because God knows that sin in me for which I cannot be justified; yet I have not to my knowledge in any action gone against my light. Also, 2 Cor. 1:12, he thus speaks, 'For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-wards.' And 2 Tim. 1:3, 'I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day.' And Heb. 13:18, 'Pray for us, for we trust we have a good conscience in all things, willing to live honestly.' This blamelessness himself having kept, he prays might be in these Philippians, and ought to be in all Christians, and possibly might be, for it was in Paul.

### **CHAPTER III**

What is meant by these words in Philip. 1:10, 'until the day of Christ.' The different significations of those phrases used in Scripture, 'unto the end,' and 'until the day of Christ.'

The next words to be considered in the text, Philip. 1:10, are these, 'till the day of Christ.'

I should come next, according to the order of the division of the text given, to the positive part of holiness, 'being filled,' &c.; but these words coming in between, I had rather handle them as the Holy Ghost hath placed them. And indeed, these words come in in the midst between both, and so appertain in common to both, and that as to this sense and purpose, both, 'that you may be without offence until that day,' or 'in that day,' and also, 'that ye be filled with the fruits of righteousness in and at that day.' This is inserted as a matter of greatest moment, both, 1, in itself, as a necessary requisite, that holiness in us be continued until that day without interruption, and also crowned with perseverance. And also, 2, in that relation which holiness hath unto that day, or the stead which in that day it will stand us in; that day is the special time and season which holiness and blamelessness is ordained and serves for, the day when it will stand us in most stead, and shine in its greatest lustre. Which therefore, 3, we should have most in our eye, as a great incentive to abound in it, that in and at that day we may be found to have been blameless, that in and at that day we may appear filled with the fruits of righteousness, &c.

Now, 1st, to clear this phrase itself, as the words refer to that first import, being blameless until that day, there is a difficulty hath often presented itself to my thoughts which I will endeavour to assoil: why the apostle should not rather have said in his petition, till the day of death; but still almost everywhere in his epistles, should mention the day of Christ. Now that he should assign that day to bear the date of his prayers and consolation to expire at, not extending his petitions to that eternity after that day, it looks as if he supposed, even after death, some danger to remain until that day, which after that day they are for ever free from, and after which they would not need any such petition, but were secure for ever.

1. Some make the foundation of these and such like phrases to be, that Paul was of the mind and opinion that the day of judgment would fall out in his and their days. And that this was his opinion they allege other like expressions that seem to look that way, 1 Cor. 15:51, where, speaking of the judgment-day, he says, as in the person of himself, and them of that age, 'we shall not all die, but we shall all be changed;' why did he not rather say, they then living shall not all die, but he says, we, &c. And he again utters himself in like manner, 1 Thes. 4:17, 'Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.' And to the same purpose (say they), he supposing that Timothy might live to that day, it was that he says, 1 Tim. 6:4, 'That thou keep this commandment without spot unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.' All which is further backed with that of Christ's speech, 'Watch ye; you know not what hour;' &c., 'and what I say to you, I say to all.' He speaks not as\* if he would have those his disciples then living and present, to apprehend the day of judgment might fall out in their time.

But (1.) on the contrary, it seems evident that Paul did think and judge that the day of judgment would not be in that age, and that therefore this is not the import of this and the like phrases. And to that end compare we but his speech in two epistles to the same persons, the Thessalonians: in the first of which he maketh the same prayer that is here, 1 Thess. 5:23, he prays for them in the same style that here: 'I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.' Yet again speaking to the same persons, 2 Thess. 2:2, he exhorts them 'not to be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from him, as that the day of Christ is at hand.' That one particular enumerated, not by letter, sufficiently cuts off any expression in his former epistle written, to import so much, and therefore cuts off too that fore-mentioned prayer, to keep them blameless to that day. And this reason is the same by which we may argue the like even in these latter days, that this day cannot fall out

in this age, because there is yet so much business to be done in the world, for which there is express prophecy unfulfilled, as it will ask more than the time of an age: 'For that day (2 Thess. 2:3) shall not come except there be a falling away first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.' And so we may say, the ten kings must destroy the whore, and the Jews be called, and the whole earth be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, ere that day come. As therefore, as he says, so say I, they deceive you that tell you so; and for those phrases, 'We that are alive,' &c., they are easily solved. He considers the succession of Christians in all generations as one body and community, in distinction from all others reprobated, and accordingly says, we shall not all die.

But (2.) in the original, the word translated until, is not ἄχρι, as at the 6th ver., nor μέχρι, as 1 Tim. 6:14, but it is εἰς, which is often put for ἐν, and so signifies in that day, as 1 Cor. 1:8; ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ, in the day of Christ, and 1 Thes. 5:23, kept blameless, ἐν παρουσίᾳ, in the coming of Christ; and so it is all one as to say, in, at, or against, that day—a day for which holiness is mainly designed, when blamelessness and holiness will be at the highest value, and of more use to you than at all times else. And so there may be an observable difference made between the phrase he had used in the 6th ver. of Philip. 1, where, expressing his confidence that God would perfect the work he had begun, he says manifestly, until the day of Christ, ἄχρι. For the perfection of glory (whereof grace is the foundation) is not till then and there both in body and soul accomplished; but here in 1 Thes. 5:23 it is, 'that you may be blameless, in or at the day of Christ.' And in this sense wicked men are said to treasure up wrath ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ, 'against that day of wrath,' Rom. 2:5; so it is there translated, and might be here.

There is only one place, 1 Tim. 6:14, hath μέχρι, until: 'That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.' But the answer to that one place is ready and easy, and carries a great truth with it. Paul wrote to Timothy as an evangelist, who being set over churches in that

age, when churches were to be constituted, to set them in order, they accordingly received directions from the apostles according to Christ's institutions; yet so as their offices ceasing (which, whether they did or no, I will not here dispute), the same directions were intended to all ordinary officers of churches settled. Now then, in speaking to him, he in him speaks unto all saints and officers entrusted, how to guide and govern churches in the ordinary way unto the end: 1 Tim. 3:15, 'That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God.' To instruct all saints and officers entrusted with the government of churches to the end of the world, and to shew he intended the succession of officers and Christians in what he wrote to Timothy, he gives him, and in him them, warning of what should fall out in several successions at the latter days of the church: '1 Tim. 4:1, 'Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some should depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils;' wherein he forewarns them of the apostasy of popery, which fell out in the latter days, the middle age of Christianity, when Paul and Timothy were dust. He speaks here too of carnal protestants, that have a form of godliness; and he speaks too of all that fry of errors that should infest the churches; from all which his counsel is to turn away and separate from them, ver. 5. I allege these places for this, that he speaks to Timothy, as bearing the person of them that should come after him many hundred years (as Peter also did in receiving the keys), and so that charge, 1 Tim. 6:13, is not barely personal, but to others after him to the end of the world; and so he might well lay a charge μέχρι, 'until the day of Christ,' and the 'commandment' there is all the doctrine in that epistle, where church institution and rules for worship and government take up a great part. Thus 'commandment' is taken for the whole doctrine delivered: 2 Pet. 2:21, 'For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.' Thus also in chap. 3:2, 'That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour.' And the



truth which I said this explication carries with it, is this great and manifest one; that church institution for worship and government contained in that and other epistles (I say other also, for who shall put the difference of these in this, from those in other epistles?) are the commandments of Jesus Christ, the charge of which lies upon the churches of God to the coming of Christ. Similarly unto the style of which injunction here in Timothy, Paul elsewhere speaks, when he says of the great ordinance of the Lord's supper, 'ye shew forth his death till he comes;' and Christ answerably gives forth his promise, reaching to the same date that Paul's charge doth. And as he speaks to the saints under Timothy's name, so Christ under his disciples' names speaks to all others: 'Go, teach and baptize' (synecdochically put for all outward administrations); 'I will be with you to the end of the world.' so then ordinances and the command for them continues to the end. This we have only gained by the way, to give an account why μέχρι, until, is used in that passage, more especially as noting out the whole continuance of time till the day of judgment, which yet is not in these other passages of Paul's prayers, which are rather to be understood of being kept blameless in the day, and in the coming of Christ.

But a third satisfaction to the objection mentioned is, that if the reading be retained until, εἰς for usque ad (as Beza explains it), as noting the continuance of their being preserved all the time until then (which, because the word may signify, I would take in), yet for the thing itself, both phrases come all to one, as in the reality of the event; and it is all one to say, to be kept till the day of death, or till the day of Christ. And this interpretation two places do warrant: the first is Rev. 2:10, 'Be thou faithful unto the death, and I will give thee a crown of life,' which manifestly argues that the faithfulness which is continued until death hath an immediate reward of a crown of life, and is completed then, so as to admit no addition of flowers to that crown by any faithfulness after; for only so much as till death is rewarded, and no more accounted. And thus Paul reckons his account finished, his computes perfected at death: 2 Tim. 4:7, 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I

have kept the faith.' When I come to die, there is an end of, a finishing of all, unto which any degree of glory is accounted; when I come to die, I shall have done my part, I shall have finished my course. As for that τὸ λοιπὸν (which we translate 'henceforth'), that remainder for ever after, that noway lies in me, it is God's part, I shall have done all mine; nothing remains but for him to give me a crown of life. So then to be kept blameless to the day of death, as it is enough for our parts, so it is all one with this here, until the day of Christ. The second text is 1 Cor. 1:8, 'Who shall confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.' Here is both the one and the other mentioned together, to that sense which I have given; for to confirm to the end, is to the end of our lives; and if we are so confirmed till the end of our lives, we shall be blameless in the day of Christ. For such we shall be found at the latter day, as we were in our lives to the day of our death. And thus it is necessary to distinguish these two phrases, to the end, as meant of death, from that other, as of the day of Christ, for else it had been a tautology, when yet the latter is made the end of the former; and the reason why yet these two are one in the issue and reality and event is, because as the tree falls it lies, qualis hinc exit, talis judicandus in isto die, there being indeed no account to arise from all that passeth between the day of death and this of judgment; for, 2 Cor. 5:10, we are to be judged only for what the soul doth in the body: 'For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.' The account is not for what is done out of the body, which is alike common both to wicked and godly men, to those that have done good or evil; and therefore Paul, Heb. 9:27, makes no more between, but that it is appointed for all men to die, and after this the judgment; and he speaks of the general judgment, for it is brought as a parallel instance, to prove Christ's coming the second time, as it followeth there, ver. 28, 'So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many: and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin unto salvation.'

But if the question be asked why, since these two phrases, 'to the end,' and 'to the day of Christ,' come both to one sense in reality, he should choose rather and more frequently to use this latter, 'till the day of Christ'? the answer is, Because holiness is of more concernment to us at that day than at all times else; therefore he contents not himself here, nor also, 1 Cor. 1:8, to have said, who shall confirm you to the end, viz., till death, but adds also, is the day of Christ.

## CHAPTER IV

How we may be said to be kept blameless until the day of Christ.

Thus much touching the difficulty in the phrase; there is another remaining in the thing itself, which is concerning the blamelessness, or being void of offence; how both in this and other places, as 1 Cor. 1:8, 1 Thes. 5:23, the promise included in these prayers, to present us blameless in that day, is to be understood. For men shall be presented such as they were in this life; and in this life in many things, as James says, we offend all; and many of the saints after conversion run into scandals and offences to others, and their own consciences. How then are such prayers and promises fulfilled?

To this an antinomian would be ready to give an easy answer with respect to their principles: that all this is accomplished in justification; because Christ shall present us then to himself and his Father, clothed with his righteousness, we shall be spotless and without wrinkle. But the blamelessness of the saints here, and in other the like places at that day, is not that of justification, but sanctification. 1. For here he speaks of sincerity, 'being filled with the fruits of righteousness.' 2. And elsewhere, 1 Thes. 5:23, 'The God of peace sanctify you wholly, that your whole soul and body be preserved blameless at the coming of Christ.' It is spoken of sanctification, you see; and as so taken, I find it sometimes uttered (1.) as an absolute promise which God undertakes to perform, as

well as that the saints shall persevere; 2. sometimes as a prayer for, and exhortation to, us to be found as such, so here. And the several consideration of either will answerably afford a double distinction of blamelessness, even of sanctification intended in this and the like places.

1. We find absolute promises annexed to the prayers he makes for their being kept blameless to that day, that God will perform it: 1 Cor. 1:8, 'Who shall also confirm you, to the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.' And that it is an absolute promise the 9th verse shews: 'God is faithful, by whom ye were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.' And in more absolute terms yet, 1 Thes. 5, you have heard how he prays, even as here in ver. 23; and yet, verse 24, it follows, 'Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.' He first engageth God's faithfulness, and then doubles the assurance, 'he will do it,' yea 'also do it,' as sure as he hath called you. Yea, and it is such a promise as shall be performed unto all saints called, small and great; for the promise is founded upon a consideration, that in common holds true of all the saints, 'faithful is he that calleth you;' and all saints are saints by calling, in the same 1 Cor. 1:2. Of necessity, therefore, such a blamelessness, of that latitude and size, must be understood in these places, as is a common privilege to all saints that ever were, or shall be, and common even to those that have run into offences, as many of those he wrote to also did. And to interpret this only of that perfect sanctification, wrought just at the parting of soul and body, is too dilute; because Paul prays and exhorts, and accordingly promiseth from God, that during the whole course and time of their lives they be so kept, even blameless. There is therefore, brethren, a blamelessness and sincerity in the saints, some especially, in respect of all that vacuity of all sorts of offences, such as in the sense the word was interpreted. But in respect to those principles and laws which the state of grace is bounded with, and men preserved in that state, notwithstanding such particular offences, there are certain principles which are essential to the being and keeping of us in the state of grace, as that a man should live in no

known sin, but live in the constant practice of known duties, seeking the glory of God in all. The apostle John hath everlastingly stated such principles as the bounds, the limits between both estates: 1 John 3:7, 'Let no man deceive you; he that doth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.' He speaks not of particular acts; wicked men may do some things righteous, and godly men do things that are evil. But his ποιεῖν, is a man's course, work, business, to go on in an ill track, as the devil from the beginning. Another like principle: Paul inculcates, Rom. 14:7, 8: 'None of us lives to himself, but to the Lord;' that is, maketh God's glory the end of his course and ways. This is a fundamental maxim of our livery, they are none of us that do not; we own them not, nor will Christ own them. To be kept then to the practice of these and such like, is radically and essentially necessary to the being kept in the state of grace. Again, if a man falls into particular acts of sin through temptation, wherein a Christian offendeth his own conscience or others, an essential law to the being kept in the state of grace is to return and convert, humbling themselves, renewing their repentance, as Peter did whose faith was recovered. 'I have prayed,' says Christ, 'thy faith fail not.' He wept bitterly, repentance was renewed, and he loved Christ more than ever: 'Lord,' says he, 'thou knowest I love thee.' Now then, as in respect to such principles as these there is a blamelessness, a being void of offence according to the rules of the gospel, whenas in respect of acts there is not a blamelessness in conversation, this is such a blamelessness as that perfection of heart is said to be in David,\* 1 Chron. 28:9, and in Asa all his days, 2 Chron. 15:17, though with a nevertheless (as there) of many foul acts, the particulars of which you may read in chap. 16. It was a comparative perfection, taking their whole course and summing up the account of all their days, as it is there said; yea, and further, when in respect of such acts committed a man is to be blamed, Gal. 2:11, yet if a man renews faith and repentance, he is, according to the rules and verdict of the gospel (which is that royal law of liberty), rendered pure and void of offence. Again, this Paul upon these principles pronounceth of the Corinthians in a matter wherein they had been highly guilty (as in the business about the

incestuous person, 1 Cor. 5); yet in 2 Cor. 7, after he had related how they had 'sorrowed' (for their sin) 'to God,' and 'after a godly manner' (witness all those gracious dispositions he rehearseth, ver. 11), in the conclusion he gives forth this gracious sentence of the gospel thereupon: 'In all things you have approved yourselves clear in this matter,' ἀγνοῦς (as high a word as any other, equivalent to that 'without spot or wrinkle'), clear, not in respect only to other things in their lives wherein they had done worthily; but even in this very matter wherein they had afore been so fully faulty. The sin they had committed could not be undone, but yet they had done all ('in all, things we have shewn,' &c.), all, namely, which the law of liberty, the gospel, requires in such a case (the particulars of which he had reckoned up), upon which it declares a man pure. Neither speaks he of purity through justification, that is, only by faith, not repentance; but according to the rules and maxims which about sanctification the gospel holds forth, and according to which the day of judgment shall proceed.

So then we see one sense in which those speeches of the apostle (take them as absolute promises) are to be understood; and this kind of blamelessness must needs be supposed at least to be intended in these prayers of Paul, especially in that parallel prayer of his (1 Thes. 5:23), where the promise of keeping all the saints in this respect blameless is also annexed; and this to be sure his prayers attained for them that were true saints among them.

But yet, my brethren, this is the lowest, and if I may call it so, the worsor sort of blamelessness; though indeed thus to be kept all a man's days in the midst of many offences, still within the circle and limits of the state of grace, is an infinite privilege and high specimen and argument of God's free grace, according to that of Hosea 14:4, 'I will heal their backslidings, I will love them freely.' In the state of nature, God gives examples in various proportions, and degrees, and sizes, how far in common righteousness men unregenerate may proceed, and yet remain unregenerate, and be still in that estate. Some attain to the height of morality, as Socrates; others of legality,

'as concerning the law blameless,' as Paul, Philip. 3:6; others attain to a degree of a work evangelical, yet not saving: 2 Peter 2:19, 20, 'While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.' They do escape the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of Christ, who yet remain in their nature; swines washed outwardly yet not renewed, but returning to their former vomit. And God in his actings towards those in a state of grace, to shew the glory of his free grace in the variety of dispensations, doth preserve in and amidst several sizes and degrees of unblameworthiness those whom he saves. Some run out farther, others in lesser measures as to particular acts of sin, and yet still so as they remain within the line of communication of those principles mentioned. And as it is a matter of difficulty to define how far a man unregenerate may go in external acts of virtue, and yet still continue within the sphere and dominion of that unregenerate estate, so it is as hard to say how far saints may fall, or how often, into offence and blameworthiness, and yet this radical fundamental blamelessness as to the principles of the state of grace, both for his whole course and reducements by repentance, be preserved. Some are more scarcely saved, though certainly saved; some are suffered to put the sure mercies of David to it. Thus the sureness of God's mercies were exemplified in David and Solomon, for they tried, especially Solomon, how far they would hold. I sinned, saith Solomon, to the utmost of the tether, as far as the lines of the principles of grace would reach, as far as would be consistent with them. Himself expresseth it thus in the sad story of all his vanities, in Eccles. chap. 1 and 2. He inserts this, Eccles. 2:3, that he 'yet acquainted his heart with wisdom;' and his reducements by repentance are known to you, for the title of his book is a testimony of it, and yet he was so scarcely saved, that it is a controversy in the church to this day whether he were saved yea or no. And although this may be an encouragement to some souls who

have had great diversions from God in their lives since their calling, that the prerogative sovereignty and the faithfulness of that grace they are under the dominion of hath reduced them, and hath in all their goings astray kept them within the fore-mentioned principles of this state, and hath reduced them from their wanderings; yet whoever he be that, having the work of God upon his soul, will think with himself, I will be sure to sin but so as to keep within that compass, let that soul know that he into whose heart this thought enters, or takes any hold in, is at the next step to outsin those principles, and to sink into eternal perdition. For, poor soul, though the free grace that is in God may say it, I will suffer such an one to sin, and yet keep him blameless according to the covenant of grace, yet it is desperate daring for thee to say this, or to presume upon it; and it is indeed utterly against the ingenuity\* of grace, and argues nothing but selfishness in thy soul. Thus much of the first sort of blamelessness which the absolute promise is made to.

2. There is certainly, in the second place, another sort intended; for the apostle prays not barely that they may be kept blameless, according to the principles of the state of grace; but this being a prayer indefinitely uttered, therefore that sort of blamelessness which is possible to be attained by saints must be intended here; and my reasons are, 1. Because in prayer we are allowed to seek for ourselves and others the utmost good which by any kind of promise we judge they may possibly attain to. And 2. It is evident he stints not himself here barely to pray for perseverance, but for their abounding more and more, so ver. 9, and that they might be filled down, laden with the fruits of righteousness; and he aimed therefore at the highest blamelessness in his prayer for these. I will not dispute now whether the desires of our prayer may not be extended beyond what we know God in his decrees will grant, when yet his revealed will propounds it as what should and ought to be in us, and as what we should aim at and endeavour to attain. Thus, in Mat. 6:10, 'Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven;' and also, 2 Cor. 13:7, 'I pray God ye do no evil;' all which will one day be accomplished on this earth when Christ comes to judgment. But



take this blamelessness de facto, attained at the highest pin (without breaking the strings of mortality) it hath in any been wound up unto, and as we descended to the lowest degrees in the other interpretation, so let us ascend up to the highest possible in this other. And such a blamelessness (we may well understand) he intended for these Philippians; and what was the aim of his prayers should be the aim, yea, hope, of our endeavours; and to understand what blamelessness this is, let us take his own example, 1 Cor. 4:4, 'I know nothing by myself' (not any fact against light, and he speaks it as in relation to a censure of him by the Corinthians), and though I am not justified (which belongs to another court) by this kind of blamelessness (for I do not say I am without sin), yet this blamelessness I have (says he) that I never sinned against light from the first of my conversion, I know nothing by myself. If he had so sinned he must have known it, and his conscience have checked him in the writing this.

So then, from hence I gather that besides the former there is a blamelessness possible to be attained as a more special privilege, and to be aimed at by Christians, even to be void of offence against light of conscience all the residue of a man's days. I say it is a special privilege for him who attains to it. The chief of the apostles, that forsook Christ, did not attain it, yet Paul did; therefore propounds himself as an example: Follow me, as I follow Christ. And it would seem that Paul was kept to the very end of his days, to his offering up. For, 2 Tim. 4:18, he expresseth his confidence in him that had hitherto kept him, 'that he would deliver him from every evil work, and would preserve him unto his heavenly kingdom.' His meaning is not simply that God would save his soul, and accordingly keep him from such ways of sinning as could not stand with the principles of grace; but further, so to keep him in his heavenly kingdom as he might be kept from every evil work, such as was contrary to the principles which he professed before others, or which his own conscience had the impression of. And that place is not so fairly or honourably enough to Paul's spirit, nor rightly as to his scope, interpreted of deliverance from persecution, and the evil

workings of evil men against him. For this interpretation is grounded on that false pretence that the occasion of that speech was the narrative of his being delivered out of the mouth of the lion Nero, in the words before, and so as that confidence of his should intend only like deliverances from the bloody hands of persecutors. No; for he was not delivered, but died by the sword of the same Nero, whose power he had now escaped. But Paul's confidence had a further deliverance in his eye, which that very deliverance was a pledge of. His case stood thus: I Paul (I speak in his person to utter his sense) have been often before the bus of kings and great ones for my life in the profession of Christianity, (yon read how before Felix, Agrippa, and the high priest in the Acts), in all such pressures I never did anything at any time (I thank God) unworthy of my profession. You read how, instead of pleading for his life, he still endeavours at the bar to turn them Christians he spake to. God still preserved him from every evil work; upon all such sore trials he came not off halting. Now in my old age (for so it was when he wrote this, now he was ready to be offered, and the time of his departure was at hand, and this story was then newly acted) I was called before Nero, and I was more put to it than ever. Ver. 16, 'At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge.' Yet, as at all other times you have heard or read of, I have undergone great trials, this time of temptation is as great as I ever underwent, and yet, notwithstanding, the Lord stood with me and strengthened me. The chief of his intention, you see, was not upon outward deliverance, but how not to sin, how to carry it so as to credit religion, to come off so as to make a good confession for the advantage of the gospel, as elsewhere he had done; and that this is his meaning the next words shew: 'that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear.' Paul having thus as a lion kept his integrity in this great certamen in his old age, and having made this his glory, besides his being delivered out of the mouth of the lion, what was his reward? God came in upon his spirit with fresh assurance, not only that he would preserve him unto his heavenly kingdom, so as not to fall away, but that he would from thenceforth

deliver him from every evil work. Oh, that gladdened Paul's heart! I shewed you formerly how Paul made this his glory, but we could not tell certainly whether he might not blemish his glory after; but this scripture shews that, as he had made it his ambition not to sin against his light, to be void of offence all along, so he had now the security of it as a special privilege. An holy man that affected the same exemption came once to me, and professed he had read all the Scriptures over, and could not find one promise to keep a believer from a gross sin as long as he lived. I thought of this, I know no other. I observe that, upon eminent trials, such as that was of Paul's, God useth to seal up something to a man's soul of special grace to him. In the 28th of this 1st chapter of the Philippians, when Christians are called to bear witness for Christ, 'Be you in nothing,' says he, 'terrified by your adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition; but to you of salvation, and that of God.' God at such times, and upon such occasions, used to give (ordinarily to martyrs and confessors of him.) an evidence and token of their salvation; as unto the persecutors, a consternation of spirit, which is to them an evident token of perdition. Now therefore upon this occasion he gave unto Paul a double assurance at last, who had served him in so many trials: 1. He gave him an assurance of preserving him to his heavenly kingdom, which is common to other Christians. 2. He gives him an assurance, which was more special, of delivering him from every evil work, which he had so much desired. God said to him, As hitherto thou hast not, so thou shalt from henceforth never commit any evil work against thy light and principles.

I have been the larger in this, to set before you the examples, the possibility of attaining this kind of blamelessness, for which he therefore prays for these Philippians. I would provoke your spirits hereby to affect it, and endeavour it. It would seem attainable also by other instances, as that of Elizabeth and Zacharias, the parents of the Baptist. Luke 1:6, it is said they were 'both righteous before God, walking in the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.' You profess to live in obedience to commandments. I

beseech you, do the same with respect to ordinances, and all ordinances; for they are all of a like necessity, and the second commandment commands you this duty. From this doctrine, though the papists would fondly gather their perfection and possibility of keeping all the commandments without sin (however John and James contradict it, saying, 'in many things we offend all'), yet we may well allow them (their errors having usually a shadow of some truth, which they miss, speaking either over or under) a possibility to be blameless in respect of sinning against light, and so to have a conscience void of offence before God and man. And the reason for it is this, because if an holy man be, and is often kept from such sins a week, a month, a year, then it is also possible with this state of frailty to be kept all his lifetime; but for the papists' perfection, a man is not kept an hour, a moment, sin cleaving to all we do. The apostle Peter, though he had not so lived from the time of his conversion, yet from experience now perhaps he had learned the way how thus to be kept, and accordingly directs those primitive churches he wrote to, 2 Peter 1:10, where, exhorting them to all diligence, &c., he adds this motive, 'If ye do these things, ye shall never fall.' What! fall away? There is no danger to men, partakers of the divine nature, so to do; but as the word imports never, μήποτε, not at anytime. And that doxology of Jude seems more clearly and fully to hold forth such a meaning as I have put upon this petition of Paul for these Philippians, and so withal to argue the possibility of obtaining it, which he would have those primitive Christians to have in their eye to obtain at God's hand. Jude ver. 24, 'Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding great joy,' &c. I observe how the apostle had afore made mention of very great errors and miscarriages in doctrine and life, which some professors in those times had run into, and he had also spoken of the day of judgment; and to be kept faultless hath relation to those gross sins in judgment and practice, which would be of infinite moment to them at that day, for it would cause mighty exultation and a triumphant joy. And as Paul prays here, so he there sets out God to them as able to keep them, to the end they should have recourse to

him, and so to do with encouragement; that as he was able, so that he might do it for them. For to that end is God set forth to them as able to do this for them, and so he concludes his epistle.

Obs. The only observation or meditation I shall now make is, that the solemnity of the great day ought to be continually in our eyes, as that which should move us to be sincere and blameless. For therefore it is that the apostle chooseth to use the phrase, until, or in the day of Christ (for either serves a bottom for this meditation), rather than until the day of death. We should so walk and live and die as if we were immediately to go to judgment at the very hour of our deaths. And though both the one and the other import the same thing in the event, yet the consideration of this latter strikes a greater awe, and that is the true reason, which is a remaining part of the former objection, why Christ in his cautions to watch and be sober, under which he expresseth the highest care to be holy, and to be continually ready, still mentions this day. Mat. 24:42, 'Watch ye therefore' for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.' Mark 13:35, 36, 'Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning; lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping.' And ver. 37, 'What I say to you, I say to all in all ages.' And he speaks of the day of judgment, and preseeth this readiness and preparedness upon the uncertainty of the coming and approach thereof, both to them in that age who knew it not, and to us, and those after that did and do know, it could not be in their or our times; yet because judgment finds us as death leaves us, and as our behaviour in this world hath been, therefore it is that Christ gives forth the caution to all ages of watching for the day of judgment, thereby to make the greater impression. It always moves men, both as it contains a promise sealed with Christ's last prayer and blood, and as withal it carries the greatest warning for our care and study how to behave ourselves in this world. Thus Christ at last, when himself was to go to God out of this world, as having seen and passed through the temptations of it, as a signal instance of his love for us, prays that we should be kept whilst in this world. Thus in his last prayer,

wherein you may see wherein his solicitude ran out most: John 17:12, 'While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name; those that thou gavest me, I have kept, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled.' And ver. 15, 'I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil.' The time of their being in the world had all the danger in it, and he had a special memento and occasion at that time to put up his prayer; for Peter was to deny him, the disciples to leave him. I have been glad that Paul in saying, that neither death nor life shall separate us from Christ, did put in life, for I profess I fear life and the temptations of it, and how to go through this world comelily, more than death. Now then, as the time and concernment of danger is in this life, so the consideration of a judgment to come should have a great influence to keep us blameless in this world, and free from the evil of it; therefore here he mentions that day, as also Christ doth, Luke 21:36, 'Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.' To stand, namely, in judgment. (as Ps. 1, the phrase is), and thus Paul likewise aweth Timothy, and us in him, 1 Tim. 6:14, 'That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.' The force of this motive lies thus: as Christ appeared before Pilate (for that was God's day of judging Christ standing in our stead), so thou, says Paul, must appear before Christ; therefore I charge thee keep this commandment; and therefore the apostles turned the eyes of all the primitive Christians upon that day, or the coming of Christ. It was a great part of the religion of the primitive Christians to wait for the coming of Jesus Christ, and they are described to us to have been such as those that walked in view of it, as those that had that day in their eye, and should then be judged; and in this they are set forth as a pattern to us: 1 Cor. 1:7, 'So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.' He makes this an evidence of their excelling in all other gifts: 2 Tim. 4:8, 'Which he shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto them also that love his appearance.' This latter, you see, is a paraphrase, a

description of the saints in those times, and all ages; and as he describes them by it, so he sets it before them as his own principle, which did keep him steady in his walking: 2 Cor. 5:9, 10, 'Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.' There is a necessity of it, we must so appear, none can avoid it; and we shall not be present only as in a crowd, so as to hope to shrink aside and hide ourselves unseen, but we must be singled out, be presented (as Col. 1:28), and stand forth apart as at a bar. Men that are personally called to appear ought παραστῆναι σώματι, personally to answer, Rom. 4:10, ἔμπροσθεν, in conspicio, to be seen or all, 2 Cor. 5:10, to the end they may be made transparent, and be seen through and through, what they are or have been in their lives, Φανερωθῆναι; and this is then to be made apparent to men, as now unto God, 'We are now manifest to God, and we trust also in your consciences.'\* However, this place implies, that at that day we shall be made manifest one to another, even as now we are unto God.

It is a great scripture, and full of majesty, in 1 Thes. 3:12; he prayeth they may 'abound in love more and more (as here), to the end their hearts might be established unblameable in holiness before God, even the Father, at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.' He presenteth before them the solemnity of that day, by all such ways as might strike their hearts. 1. He tells them they must appear before God, the judge of all, as Heb. 12 he is set forth. 2. Before Jesus Christ, who, Heb. 4, is said to have a sword in his hand to rip up every man's heart and conscience, to divide between the marrow and the bones, and the intentions of the heart; and that description of him referreth to judgment, as the close of that discourse shews: Πρὸς ὃν ὁ λόγος, to whom we must give an account, as speaking of judgment, though it is otherwise translated. 3. He tells them that the saints will be all present there, and the general assembly of angels and first-born; and these as witnesses, yea, judges, when all of a man shall be ripped up, And to this place

add that of Jude 14, 15, 'Lo, he comes with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.' Now therefore, when Paul considered what a judicatory, a presence there will be, and how that all secrets shall be ripped open and laid together, he falls a-praying that their hearts might be established in holiness; for, as I will shew you, God will make out every man's state by his works, and the casting or men's conditions shall, according to an evangelical rule, depend thereon. Now observe it, that this prayer is plainly and directly for this, that then at that day their hearts might be established in holiness. Now it would seem strange, that for men who are to be in heaven a long time before that day, there should be supposed a need to pray that their hearts should be then thoroughly established in holiness, which they should have here in this life, to the end they might then be without wavering or fear established. Yet to me the reason is clear, for they are not then to be judged, nor is their condition to be sentenced by that holiness they have had in heaven, but barely by that which men have had here on earth, whilst in the body, as you heard. All is put upon this, whether such holiness accompanied here their faith, as puts a manifest difference between them and hypocrites, and by that evidence it must and shall be made forth to others. Thus Jude, because he had said Christ comes with ten thousand of his saints, prays, ver. 24, 'Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,' &c. And thus I understand Peter, 2 Peter 3:14, 'Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.' In peace, that is, in their spirits; and therefore John still makes a great matter of it, to have boldness at that day: 1 John 2:28, 'And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.' And again, chap. 4:17, 'Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.' And there will be a



confidence and a quietness in the soul when heaven and earth shall shake.

## CHAPTER V

What it is to be filled with the fruits of righteousness in our course of obedience.

I would turn Paul's prayer, Philip. 1:11, here for these Philippians, into exhortations unto you. His prayer is for, and the bent of my exhortation is unto, holiness, in all the eminent parts and principles of it: in heart, ver. 9, 10; in life, in this 11th verse, where I am now arrived, which holds forth the positive part of an holy conversation, 'being filled,' &c., as being blameless did the negative. There are three things to be spoken unto, for the opening of these words:

1. What it is to be filled with the fruits of righteousness.
  2. The kind of these fruits, such as are by Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God. He prays for such, because he knew no other would be accepted.
  3. The third is, of what concernment it is, at or against that day of Christ, that saints be filled with such fruits. For those words, 'in that day,' coming in between the former word blameless and this ver. 11, do indifferently refer to both; and so to the words of ver. 11 in this sense, that look what fruits any man hath brought forth, he shall appear laden with at that day, as a tree in autumn with all its fruits.
1. To explain what is meant by fruits of righteousness, three particulars might be handled: (1.) the metaphor there used, 'fruits;' (2.) the generical nature, substance, or matter of them, 'fruits of righteousness;' (3.) what it is to be 'filled' with them, which is the main thing that his petition is directed to.

(1.) For that similitude of fruits, I will forbear to gather it from all the branches of that metaphor, though it might afford good store to be laid up. It is a metaphor the Holy Ghost doth frequently delight to set forth abounding in holiness by; yet in such a variety of allusion, it is difficult to define what more specially he aimed at. Instead of a large prosecution or drawing out the allegory in any one, I shall content myself to present rather the severals, which this allusion may have respect unto. There are three sorts of fruit which the Holy Ghost is pleased to compare the good works of holy men unto: [1.] the fruits of trees; [2.] the fruits of the earth; [3.] the fruit of the body and womb, children. I shall give you express scriptures for each.

[1.] As for the fruits of trees, you find man thus growing up and down the Scriptures; as whilst David, Ps. 1:3, compares him to 'a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth his fruits in due season;' 'planted in the house of God, that brings forth fruit in old age,' Ps. 92:12, 13. And Christ compares himself and his members to a vine when he says, 'Every branch in me that beareth fruit,' John 15:2.

[2.] As to fruits that grow promiscuously out of the earth, holy speeches and thanksgivings are called the fruit of the lips, Heb. 13:15, in allusion to the first-fruits of the earth, all sorts of which were consecrated to God, as well as the first-fruits of trees. And the apostle, Heb. 6:7, compares (as Christ afore him in the parable of the sower) a good heart fruitful of goodness unto 'that earth, which brings forth herbs meet for the dresser;' or as Christ says, Luke 8:15, 'that brings forth fruit with patience.'

[3.] As to the fruits of the womb, of the body, or children, fruitfulness in gospel obedience by Christ is under that metaphor presented: Rom. 7:4, 'Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.' He compares Christ to a second husband

we are anew married unto, as the law to a former husband to whom we are dead, to the end that being married to him, we should bring forth all sorts of acts of new obedience, as children begotten in us by his body; which fruits of Christ's body, and of our hearts the wombs of them, he calls fruit to God, as to whom they are born, the grandfather of them all, even as children are called the fruit of the body and of the womb. Now, whether unto all these, or unto which more particularly this metaphor is directed, is hard to determine; there is none of them but may put in for it, else I would not have so distinctly mentioned them. Of the allusion to that of children, that place last quoted seems parallel; for as there we are said to bring forth fruit to God by Christ, so here it is expressed, 'which are by Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.' And so at the latter day, as Christ shall say of all his members, 'Lo, here am I, and the children that thou hast given me,' so a Christian, being encompassed about with all his good works that follow him, shall have it said by Christ, Lo, here is such a one, and the children have been brought forth by him, and begotten by me; and blessed is the man that then hath his quiver full of them, he shall not be ashamed in the gate, Ps. 127:5. But then this makes it not so clear; for children (when many) in the Scripture (when spoken of together in a cluster) are not called fruits, but fruit; but the word here in Philip. 1:11 is in the plural, fruits; and the term fruit, as given to children, being itself a metaphor in derivation from the fruits of the earth, it must be one metaphor borrowed from another metaphor to call good works 'fruits of righteousness,' in allusion unto children being called fruits. And if we should carry the allusion to the earth, where it is true there are plenty and variety of fruits, yet that metaphor here, Philip. 1:11, taking in Christ as the root from whom they spring—which are by Jesus Christ—that similitude of the heart to the earth, will not so pertinently afford a room or meet ground for it. But these words of Christ, John 15, 'I am that vine, and every branch in me that brings forth good fruit,' are genuine, and proper, and agreeable to that expression here, Philip. 1:11, 'fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ.' This suits also with the apostolical exhortations in their epistles, 'Be fruitful in every good

work,' &c. I will not here (for it would be fruit out of season) enlarge upon the similitude of Christ the root, the heart of man the tree, every faculty the branch, the Holy Ghost the sap, opportunity of doing good the seasons, God the husbandman, union with Christ the engrafture, and many the like. But having thus fixed the metaphor to its right foundation, I come to that which is proper to my text and scope, to explain what it is to be filled with these fruits of righteousness.

Therefore, secondly, to shew what it is to be filled with these fruits. I will suppose that by fruits of righteousness are meant all sorts of holy actions both towards God and man, springing from a heart made righteous, and conformable to, and brought forth according to the righteous law of God; no other are fruits of righteousness. But now the inquiry is, what it is to be filled with them? It is an Hebrew phrase, to express abounding in them; as 'full of children,' Ps. 17:14; 'a land full of silver,' Isa. 2:7. I shall, in explaining it, keep to the allusion, to a tree full of fruits, as that which will guide me.

(1.) A tree is said to be filled with fruit when all its branches are downladen with them, so as there is not a twig empty or thin-set therewith. Now, as the heart of man is the bulk and body of this tree, so every power of the soul, member of the body, is a branch, and is so to be understood in this allusion. When the Holy Ghost would set forth the abounding wickedness in ungodly men's hearts and lives, he reads an anatomy lecture on every part and member, and shews how every member (which are the branches of these trees) is full of that wickedness that it is proper to grow upon: 'their mouth is full of cursing and deceit' (it is the expression Ps. 10:7), full of that foam and filth to flowing over. There is a superfluity of naughtiness continually issues thence. And so in James 3:8, 'Their tongue is an unruly member, full of deadly poison.' Thus also in 2 Pet. 2:14, 'eyes full of adultery;' and Isa. 1:15, 'hands fall of blood,' that is, of all sorts of oppression. In a word, the heart is said to be 'full of all readiness to evil,' Acts 13:10; the whole man to be 'filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness,

maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity,' Rom. 1:29. So, on the contrary, a good man should have all members and faculties filled with all righteousness proper to them; the mind, the understanding, and meditative part 'filled with all knowledge,' Rom. 15:14; with a full stock and treasury of gracious thoughts and instructions, which might enable him to do spiritual good to others upon occasion; so it follows, Rom. 15:14, 'Able also to admonish one another.' In the first psalm, the psalmist compares a godly man to a tree; among other fruit, he instanceth in the continual buddings of thoughts: 'He meditates on the law of God day and night;' he is a man whose 'mind deviseth good,' Prov. 14:22. He contrives with himself how most acceptably to serve and please God; for such as the man is, such are his devices, Isa. 32:8. And thus the memory is stored with the word, promises, commands, directions, laid up to guide and comfort a man in his way: Psa. 63:6, 'When I remember thee on my bed,' &c. And thus, when the will and affections are full of all goodness, Rom. 15:14, there will be fresh love to God every day, as his mercies are renewed every morning. He will 'keep himself in the love of God,' as the phrase is, Jude 21. He will keep the heart steeped in it, and will put fresh liquor to keep it quick and sweet every day. He will 'dwell in love,' 1 John 4:16. He is full of mercy to the souls and miseries of others, James 3:17. And if so, he is then full of good fruits, as these will follow, and he is full of joy and hope, Rom. 15:13, 'Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.' As thus the inward, so the outward man, and every member of it, will be so many 'weapons of righteousness' (which is an allusion to our Christian warfare, Rom. 6:13), and 'trees of righteousness' too, Isa. 61:3. The tongue, to instance in that one member, will be a 'tree of life:' Prov. 15:4, 'A sound tongue is a tree of life.' He compares that one member to a whole tree, and of all trees to that which was in the midst of the paradise of God, the tree of life, to which Isaiah alludes, when he calls them 'the planting of the Lord,' for so those trees were in a special manner, Gen. 2:8, 9, whereas other trees were left to grow wild. And when this holy tree bears such communicative fruit, that may minister grace to others

(as the apostle speaks, Eph. 4:29), then it is fruitful indeed. Solomon tells us that 'the fruit of the righteous is a tree of life,' Prov. 11:30, because the fruit of his lips, the fruit of his actions, do become trees, from whence do often other trees arise, and souls are won and converted to God; for so it follows, 'He that winneth souls is wise.' If any of us should gather all the fruit that grows but in one day on this member, the tongue, and, as the prophet saw in his vision, put it into two baskets, the one of good, the other of bad, how little good should we find in the one, how much that is rotten and naught in the other! If the story of all the outward actions were written on each member, and appeared at once, as at the latter day they shall, what a world of evil would be found in each, when the tongue is a world of evil, as St James speaks!

(2.) A Christian is then filled with fruit, when good works of all sorts do, and have grown there. Col. 1:10, 'Unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.' 'In all pleasing,' that is, all the ways whereby God is pleased; in all that is the will of God concerning us, to be done by us. And we must be fruitful in every good work, that is, of all kinds and sorts, not to be wanting or barren in any. What says the apostle? 2 Cor. 8:7, 'As you abound in everything (else), in faith, utterance, knowledge, all diligence, love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also.' They had been more empty in the bringing forth of this grace. So then a Christian should look back, and think with himself, What duty, what grace, what part, or course, or practice of godliness is there, which I have been hitherto deficient or scanty in? I have abounded in such and such, but not in fruitfulness of speech, or the like: Oh I will set myself to abound in this also, that I may be found filled with all sorts at that day. And herein indeed a Christian differs from other trees, unless, as was said out of Solomon, we consider every member of him as a tree of life, and the whole man a paradise to God. Take any one natural tree, and though every branch may be filled with fruit, yet but with fruit of one kind—said God, 'Let every one bring forth according to its kind'—for the seed by nature limits it to one. But here the Holy Ghost is the seed and sap, and

seminally, yea, eminently, containeth all that is holy in himself, and so doth the spirit of regeneration begotten by him: Eph. 5:9, 'The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth.' And accordingly, you find a variety of them named as fruits of the Spirit: Gal. 5:22, 23, 'But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.' And let me add this as a reason and incentive: God loves a variety of good works, though some be of an inferior kind and sort, rather than that we should abound in any one sort that is more excellent. Though God would have us lay out our strength most in what is most excellent, and we are most fitted for, yet we must fulfil, as Christ did, 'all righteousness,' one part as well as another; and this God delighteth in. It is better to perform duties of every kind, though we do the less of some others. 2 Pet. 1:5, the apostle exhorts to this variety, which he calls, adding grace to grace: 'Add to your faith, virtue; to virtue, knowledge; to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly-kindness; and to brotherly-kindness, charity.' And he is exceeding vehement in this exhortation, to set it home: καὶ αὐτὸ τοῦτο δὲ, περὶ or πρὸς is to be understood; and then his meaning is, Bend your minds unto this, this very thing, mainly and eminently; give your diligence and study, and all diligence unto it. Παρεισενέγκαντες: the Jesuits, observing a double composition, παρα and εἰς, take advantage of the addition of this particle παρα, besides, to prove that, besides the grace of God, man's will must co-operate, παρα, sub, or præter, &c. But as I take it, there is another emphasis of it, suitable to the apostle's scope, which being to exhort to add one grace to another, his meaning is, they should still apply their study to some things besides; that though they had exercised this, and that, and the other grace, yet still they were to reckon that there was something besides to be done by them. Our translators have taken the particle off from its own place, the verb it stands on, and have put and joined it to the pronoun, 'besides this,' and so made the emphasis less. But Peter's scope is, as Paul's, to exhort to forget what is behind, and to press to what is before; never to think they had done all, but that they had

something besides still to do. And, says he, if you will bend your minds, πρὸς αὐτὸ τοῦτο δὲ, if you have this rule in your eye, 'you will never be barren or unfruitful.' So then, you see, it is proper to what I am upon, namely, to exhort you to add grace to grace; and still some grace besides, and over and above what you have had hitherto. Add to this the force of that phrase, 'add grace to grace,' and it will be evident that this is one way to be filled with fruit. As men heap up land to land, buy whole towns to lay one to another, so do you add grace to grace. This should be the ambition of a Christian. And go to God to enable you to it; for he is, as Paul says, a God that is 'able to make all grace to abound towards you,' 2 Cor. 9:8.

(3.) To be filled with fruits of righteousness, is to be filled with them at all times, to have, if possible, no time of our lives barren, always filling up our time with some fruit or other. Other trees, when young, bear no fruit; but a Christian, from his first conversion, doth. Col. 1:6, the gospel is said to have 'brought forth fruit among them, since the first day they heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth.' They fell instantly on acting holily, and for God, and stayed not a day, a moment after their conversion, Rev. 22:2, and Ezek. 47:12. And these trees of the Lord's planting are not only said to be such whose leaves fade not, whose fruit withers not, but to bring forth 'fruit every month,' 'twelve sorts of fruit,' says the Revelation (there is that variety afore spoken of), 'new fruit according to their months,' says Ezekiel, that is, all sorts in their seasons. In nature, some fruits are in season one month, others in another; but no time is barren in a holy heart, it bears the whole twelve months, the whole of the year, which is the epitome of time. They bear fruit all their lives continually; and if so, then they will be found filled with fruit.

Now, when I say 'at all times,' it may be enlarged to three particulars:



[1.] That our whole time be filled up with some good fruit or other. Now there are these things our time is to be filled up withal, our callings, recreations, holy duties; and we are to subordinate the one to the other, and then we are holy in all. A man brings forth fruit in recreations as well as in holy duties, if his end be to have spirits to perform holy duties with. Blossoms, that fall off and wither, yet prepare for fruit. Now it is impossible to give certain rules what time is to be allotted for each of these, the conditions, tempers, constitutions of men do so vary. Poor men, that live by their daily labour, are necessitated to spend more time in their calling, than in recreations and duties. Men that are of weak and fiery spirits, and have callings that are exhausters of them, are as much necessitated to spend more time in recreations, than in their callings or holy duties, though perhaps if such men had grace enough, even the most serious duties might be a recreation to them. Rich men that are strong and vigorous, and want employments, they may and ought to spend the more time in holy duties; their strength and leisure will afford it. But if a man proportions wisely and conscientiously forth his time, according to his conditions, between all these, and puts holy ends on all, he will be found for the circumstance he stood in, and the ground he was planted in, filled with fruits of righteousness. This the apostle gives us as a rule, to be holy in all manner of conversation, be it whatsoever. The mower that hath occasion often to whet his scythe, and cease his work with many interruptions, shall be paid for his time therein (if he otherwise loiter not), as, well as for doing the work itself. This rule is certain, a man is to spend that time in duties as may serve to keep his heart up with God, and not to spend that time in recreations as may dull and flat the heart unto holiness. My brethren, the Holy Ghost sets a price, a value upon time and every moment of it, when he says, 'Redeem the time.' Now, time hath its preciousness from the things to be done and acted in it. And because the fruits we bring forth are said to be precious (as James calls the fruit of the earth precious fruit, James 5:7, as also Paul the fruits of the Spirit; for, Philip. 4:17, they are termed 'fruit that abounds to our account,' namely, at that day, that is, with infinite profit and advantage), we

should therefore improve every moment. There are twelve hours in the day, saith Christ (John 11:9), to work in, but night comes, and no man works. Christ, you see, reckons every hour as to be employed in working, and why are you idle in the market-place? Mat. 26:6. Buy thy time out, let the time past suffice for lusts, says Peter, 1 Peter 4:3, and the time remaining is short, 1 Cor. 7:29, and we have much ground to ride, much work to do. Peter therefore, 2 Peter 3:11, 12, exhorts, 'What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness; hasting unto the coming of the day of God.' He doth not say only that the day of the Lord hastens, to affright them to turn to God; he supposeth that work done; but do you, says he, hasten against that day. He speaks to them as to men that were to do work against that day, which will require the utmost intention and improvement of time, making account they had done already so little towards it; and that therefore the rest of their lives should be a continual hurry towards it, as men that are making a great removing at such a day, how full of business and haste are they!

[2.] In the time of a man's life, there are special opportunities; and to bring forth that fruit in that special opportunity God calls for it, that makes it doubly acceptable. Ps. 1:3, a good man is compared to a tree, and is said to 'bring forth his fruit in due season.' 'New fruits according to their months,' as you heard out of Ezekiel. There is a 'time of fruit,' as Christ speaks, Mat. 21:34. Many men lose not time, that yet lose special opportunities; and though they be found doing of good, yet not that good at that time God calls for. 'Do with all thy might,' says Solomon, 'what thy hand finds to do,' not what thou thyself hast rather a mind to do. And says the apostle, Heb. 12:1, 'Let us run the race set before us.' God chalks out our works, our journal every day, and we should heedfully attend it; to omit doing of work at such a season God calls for, is to be in a great measure unfruitful. I have judged it the more special meaning of that passage, Titus 3:14, 'Let ours also' (that is, those of our profession) 'learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.' Besides a general scope which the words have, in reference to all

goods works, he had a particular aspect, by comparing the words immediately afore, upon that duty of bringing two evangelists, Zenas and Apollos, on their journey, that nothing might be wanting to them; and then subjoins as the reason of it, 'And let ours also learn,' &c., as well as heathens, who perform such duties of humanity. And let Christians, says he, look upon all such occasions as opportunities of expressing a grace, which if they omit when put into their hands, they are rendered so far, and as to that special season, unfruitful. Parallel to which is that text, Gal. 6:10, 'Whilst we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to the household of faith.' That which puts a value upon fruit is their season; and this is a great part of that duty, so often inculcated, 'watch,' as merchants for a bargain; ἐξαγοραζόμενοι τὸν καιρὸν, buying out our time, Eph. 5:16, it is a metaphor from merchants that watch for bargains, and their chiefest skill lies in taking seasons to buy commodities in. Of Christ it is said, Acts 10:38, that 'he went up and down doing good;' that is, he sought out opportunities.

[3.] To be fruitful, is in all ages and conditions to bring forth fruit more proper to that age; as young men to fly youthful lusts (2 Tim. 2:22), the lusts proper to that age; old widows (1 Tim. 5:5) to give themselves up to prayer, as their very callings proper to that age do require; the younger women to guide the house, 1 Tim. 5:14; rich men to be rich in good works, 1 Tim. 6:18; poor men to be humble, content with their wages, as John said to the soldiers.

Lastly, Let men endeavour to be filled with fruits toward their end (Ps. 92:14), to 'bring forth fruit in their old age;' there is a special blessedness put upon it. 'Blessed is the man whom his Master, when he comes, shall find so doing,' Luke 12:43. Else we shall be in danger to 'lose what we have wrought,' 2 John 8, and not to have 'a full reward.' Of Christ it is said, John 4:14, that it was his 'meat and drink as to do his Father's will,' so to finish his work. And in the last week of his life, when he saw he should die, he did nothing else but spend himself, he went out in the nights to pray, and in the morning taught the people, knowing it was his last; he took his fill, insomuch

as he was so spent, that he could not carry his cross alone, but for fear he should faint and die, they called in another to help him. The fruit of old trees is most concocted and pleasantest.

## CHAPTER VI

Of what kind those fruits of righteousness are, with which our obedience should abound; what is requisite to make them true and genuine.

Having thus shewed what it is to be filled with the fruits of righteousness, I come now to explain of what sort or kind these fruits are.

1. The man who performs them must be a righteous man; he must have an inward frame of righteousness in his heart, whence these grow; 'Make the tree good' (saith Christ, Mat. 7:17, 18, &c.), 'and the fruit will be good; for can an evil tree bring forth good fruit? Can you gather figs of thorns?' So that, unless the heart be made holy and righteous, it cannot bring forth the fruits of righteousness; and they are therefore said to be fruits of righteousness, because they spring from a righteous frame of heart, a workmanship created unto good works, Eph. 2:10. And that which is said in Isa. 37:31, of the kingdom of Judah, expressing its continuance, 'it shall take root downward, and bear fruit upward,' that I say of the fruits of righteousness, that as there should be fruits growing upward, so there shall be a root growing downward, which is the root of those fruits. And as a man doth grow and hold forth profession outwardly, so he should grow inwardly holy and righteous, having the image of God, which is created in holiness and righteousness, renewed in his heart; and works proceeding from thence are righteous works.

2. They are called righteous fruits, which are agreeable to the law of God, and which have the word of God for the rule. The commandments of God (Deut. 12:9\*) are called our righteousness (so it is in the original), and answerably every work which a man hath a rule and a warrant for, which a man doth in obedience to a law and a word, it is a fruit of righteousness, The apostle John doth

answerably exhort us to such holy obedience, 1 John 3:3–10. That good old apostle, who writes about communion with God, and knew best what it was, and what was the fruit of such communion, doth not take men off from the righteous law of God as the rule of obedience; though there were those that went about, even in his time, to take men off from attending to the law as a perfect rule, and that because God dwelt in them, and they had communion with him. No, saith he; ver. 7, 'Let no man deceive you: he that doth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.' And ver. 4, 'Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law, for sin is the transgression of the law.' Answerably therefore, the righteousness which he intended is a conformity to that law. And, saith he, besides the motive that you have from Christ (for mark it, so the context clearly runs, 'he was manifested to take away our sin,' and 'he that hath this hope in him,' that hath any assurance to be saved, and hath any communion with God, 'he purifieth himself'), but besides that (saith he), 'whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law.' The righteousness therefore of a holy man that is truly righteous, is that which is a conformity to the law; and the law as a rule of righteousness standeth to that man, and ought to stand, and he ought to act according to that law, and then it is a fruit of righteousness.

3. These fruits must be such as are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God. The Scripture insisteth much upon the kind of our actions, as well as upon the actions themselves. It is not enough for them to be conformed unto the law outwardly, yea (if it might be), inwardly too: 2 Tim. 2:5, 'If a man strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned except he strive lawfully.' The meaning is this, it is an allusion to those games usual amongst the Greeks, which were for crowns, where there were certain rules set for the manner of doing them; and if a man did not keep to the manner as well as to the matter or thing to be done, he had not the laurel given him. It is not therefore striving only, but doing of it lawfully. The same apostle discourseth to the same purpose, Rom. 7:4: 'We are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another,

even unto him that is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God;' and saith he, ver. 6, 'Ye are delivered from the law, that we should serve in newness of the spirit, and not in oldness of the letter.' It is not the having a conformity to that old letter of Moses's law, which will make a fruit of righteousness, but it is (saith he) serving in the newness of the spirit, that is, of the gospel; for clearly there spirit is opposed to letter, and to perform such obedience and bring forth such fruits of righteousness as the gospel doth suggest and require, this, saith he, is to bring forth fruit according to the newness of the spirit; and no other fruit is accepted of God. And therefore whereas before the law brought forth fruits of righteousness in us, we are now dead to the motions of it, though it is a rule still; yet for begetting fruits of righteousness upon us, so we are dead to it, and we are married on purpose unto Jesus Christ, that by him we might have fruit; that is, children unto God, for he useth a marriage phrase here. Before, when we were in the flesh, 'the motions of sin which were by the law did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death; but now, being married unto Jesus Christ, we serve in the newness of the spirit, and by him bring forth fruit unto God.' And he calls it fruit, because good works are children begotten upon the heart by Jesus Christ; for fruit, you know, is not only taken for the fruit of a tree, but there is the fruit of the womb and the fruit of the loins. So that the fruit which is accepted of God must be such as is by Jesus Christ. And agreeably to what hath been said, the apostle speaks (2 Tim. 3:12) of our 'living godly in Christ Jesus.' And in the same chapter he speaks of a mere form of godliness as insignificant. Godliness therefore in Christ Jesus is that alone which is the distinguishing character from the form of godliness, which is a conformity to the old letter.

Now then, for the kind of the fruits of righteousness, he says two things:

1. They must be by Jesus Christ.

2. They must be performed by the heart, so as to be directed to the glory and praise of God.

1. They must be by Jesus Christ. Now fruits are by Jesus Christ in all these respects.

(1.) Because they are from a workmanship created in Christ Jesus. And certainly the image of holiness, which is created in Christ Jesus, is of an higher strain than that image of holiness, which the law could stamp upon the heart of a man. It is of another kind, for it is suited and fitted to gospel-motives and considerations, unto which holiness in Adam was not suited, Eph. 2:10.

(2.) Because they are such fruits as do arise from the Spirit of Jesus Christ, received from him, and dwelling in the heart. 'Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, temperance,' &c., all those excellent virtues are called, in Gal. 5:22, the fruit of the Spirit; and 'against such' (saith the apostle) 'there is no law,' there needeth no threatening of condemnation to such men as are led by the Spirit, as you have it, ver. 18, 'If ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.' There was temperance, and meekness, and gentleness, and long-suffering in divers of the heathen, but they were not fruits of the Spirit of Christ, and therefore they were not fruits of righteousness by Jesus Christ, and from his Spirit dwelling in their hearts; neither were those men led into them by the Holy Ghost, and acted by the Holy Ghost as dwelling in them, and united to them, and becoming one spirit with them.

(3.) Fruits of righteousness are by Jesus Christ, because they are the fruits that follow upon a man's apprehending the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ for his righteousness. And indeed so some do interpret this place; say they, they are fruits of righteousness, that is, of the righteousness of Christ imputed to us by faith; they being both joined here in the text, of righteousness, and that by Jesus Christ. It is evident and clear by the Scripture, that the great spring of holiness and obedience is faith in the righteousness of the Lord



Jesus; I will give you one scripture for it, it is in Tit. 3:8, where the apostle having spoken in the former part of the chapter, how that we are saved not by works, and that we are justified freely by grace, and made heirs according to the hope of eternal life, he saith, 'These things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God may be careful to maintain good works.' so that to believe upon Jesus Christ for righteousness, and to be effectually convinced that all our own works will stand us in no stead, and to go to Christ for his righteousness, is the greatest spring of good works, and the best stock to maintain them.

(4.) Fruits of righteousness are by Christ, because they are so by motives drawn from Christ. When a man feels the 'virtue of his resurrection' (as Paul saith, Philip. 3:10), that is, when he considereth that Jesus Christ is risen as a common person, and that he arose for him as he died for him, or he believeth on him that his death and the fruit of it may be his; when a man feels a virtue coming to his soul from the consideration hereof, which quickeneth him to holiness and obedience, to die unto sin and to live to righteousness; when the love of Christ thus constrains, when these are the motives of the fruits of righteousness, these fruits are likewise by Jesus Christ. When 'the grace of Christ teacheth us to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly' to a man's self, and 'righteously' to others, 'and godly' in this present world, in all the duties that concern God, a man's self, and others, as knowing that Christ hath 'redeemed us to be a peculiar people, zealous of good works;' when the redemption of Christ makes a man zealous of good works; when these are the motives (which are the gospel motives) whereby a man is acted, and the peace of God ruleth in his heart, and the love of God ruleth in his spirit, and the love of Christ constraineth him, then his holy actions are fruits of righteousness by Jesus Christ.

(5.) Fruits of righteousness are by Christ, because they flow from our union with the person of the Lord Jesus; and therefore the apostle speaks of our 'growing up Into Christ in all, things' (Eph.

4:15), and of our 'increasing with the increase of God,' Col. 2:19. The way to grow up in all things is to grow up in him, into nearer union and communion with him and his person, and fellowship with him; and when from such a union and communion with Jesus Christ, and growing up herein, a man grows more holy—'Abide in me (saith Christ, John 15:4, 5), and I in you, that you may bring forth much fruit'—when, I say, from this union there flow works of righteousness, these are fruits of righteousness by Jesus Christ.

(6.) They are fruits of righteousness by Jesus Christ, when the example of Christ is before me to move me to the like righteousness. 'He that professeth he abideth in him' (saith the apostle, 1 John 2:6), 'ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.'

(7.) Then my actions are fruits of righteousness, whenas I look for all my acceptation of all my fruits of righteousness in Jesus Christ, or when I expect that they should all be accepted of God in and through Jesus Christ, and not as they come from me. Thus our services are expressed (1 Pet. 2:5) to be 'sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ,' as they are found in him, and as God relisheth Christ in them. I say, when the heart is thus carried out to bring forth fruits of righteousness, though the law be the rule that guideth me for the matter, what fruits of righteousness to bring forth; yet I say, when they are thus brought forth (for the kind\* of them) by Jesus Christ, then they are accepted by God, for God accepted nothing out of the Lord Jesus.

Thus I have shewed you that those actions are the fruits of righteousness, which are done in and by Christ Jesus. But,

2. Then our actions are the fruits of righteousness, when they are directed by the heart to the glory and praise of God. This the apostle plainly intimates, 1 Pet. 4:11, where, speaking only of giving alms (which is one fruit of righteousness), he saith, 'If any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth, that God in all

things may be glorified through Jesus Christ.' He must do it to that end, that God may be glorified through Jesus Christ; for Christ himself is ordained to the glory of God, and all the fruits of righteousness are to be presented to God in and through Jesus Christ, and God is to be glorified through Jesus Christ. He speaks it, you see, of an action, a deed of charity; that in all things (saith he) God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. But it may be asked, why he doth not only say, 'to the glory of God,' but 'to the glory and praise of God?' Is there any difference between these two? To resolve the question, we must consider that those things are done to the glory of God (as you will have it in a way of distinction from the praise of God), whenas a man, personally between God and himself, endeavours to glorify him; and those things are done to the praise of God, which are done by a man before others. That is properly praise, which is the shine of glory, for praise is the manifestation of glory; therefore that which is done in the heart, or personally between God and a man's self, that is properly to his glory; what cometh forth in the outward conversation of a man before others, that is properly to the praise of God. But it is usual in the Scripture to double things thus, to put the more emphasis upon them; to shew that all we do ought to be to the praise and glory of God, that our eye should be sure to be upon that; and therefore the apostle useth two phrases, not unto glory only, but unto praise also. To shew the abundance of a thing, it is doubled often in Scripture. I will give you but one instance, which is pertinent to the thing in hand; it is in 1 Pet. 1:7, where he speaks of the great glory which our faith shall have in that day, as here he speaks of the glory our works give to God in this day of ours; he saith, it shall be 'found unto praise, and honour, and glory.' He heaps up those words to shew the abundance of glory which God will give our faith at the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. And let me add this, that the greatest glorifying of God, that is done by the creature, none knows but God himself and the soul of a man. I say none knows, nor is privy to it; and therefore those works are the most acceptable works unto God which are in a man's own spirit, whereof the outward works are but the fruit. Why? Because therein a man so glorifieth God, as no creature can see it,

and that is glory indeed; and all secret glorifyings of God in a man's own heart, and also between God and a man's self, whereof God alone is the witness, they are those that God especially accepteth; 'he seeth in secret' (saith Christ, Mat. 6:4), 'and shall reward thee openly.' And indeed therein lies the glory of God, that he is so respected by his creature, that a man doth glorify him so, as God himself only is the witness of that glory; and that is properly by what is done between God and a man's self, and in a man's heart. Therefore the greatest glory God hath from the saints and angels, is that which no creature can give a witness of. Now then, to do a thing to the glory of God, is to do it so as to please God, aiming at him, moved by his glory, referring it to his glory, and intending it so; and this is necessary to every good work that is a fruit of righteousness. I shall give you but a place or two: Col. 1:10, he prays that they might 'walk worthy of the Lord unto all well-pleasing, being fruitful in every good work.' A man never walketh worthy of the Lord, that is, as becomes one that hath communion with God, unless he aims at him in all things to please him. The like scripture you have in 2 Tim. 2:5, 6, compared (for I still choose out such scriptures as near as I can that have the metaphor of fruit in them), 'The husbandman that labours,' saith he, 'must be first partaker of the fruits'; so must God. And, saith he, verse 4, 'No man that warreth entangleth himself in the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.' It was the law of the militia of Rome, and of that empire, that they should do nothing else but give themselves up to the commands of their general, and unto matters of war; they were not to be sent of an errand by their captains, nor employed by them in any private business; and all was that they might please him that had chosen them, that they might please their general, to whom, and unto whose service they were assigned. Thus now to give a man's self up wholly unto God, to aim to please him in all things, and to act all to the glory of God, to make that the chiefest guide and rule of all my actions, this is to do all to the praise and glory of God.

## CHAPTER VII

That our obedience ought to be continued; that a man shall in the day of Christ appear with all those fruits of righteousness which he hath brought forth in Christ to the glory of God.

There is only a third thing to be explained, and that is, what is meant by the words of the text, Philip. 1:10, 'till the day of Christ.'

Now, as in relation to that reference, I do observe from thence,

1. All the good acts and fruits of righteousness, inward and outward, that any man hath done by Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God, though in never so weak a measure, he shall appear with them all at the day of Christ. It shall not be with him as with other trees that have long borne fruit, and at the last have none appearing on them; but all the fruit that a man hath borne successively in his whole life, he shall appear withal at the latter day. Wicked men shall appear with all their bad works, and godly men shall appear with all their good works; and therefore the end of the world (Matt. 13:39) is called a harvest; and it is called a reaping. Gal. 6:5–7, where the apostle alludeth to the day of judgment, though he speaks of our liberality—'what a man soweth that shall he reap;' and at the harvest the crop comes in all at once: whatsoever a man soweth, though he sow barley at one time, and wheat at another, and rye at another, yet at the harvest all the crop comes in. 'He goeth forth,' saith the psalmist, 'carrying precious seed with him;' but when the harvest is, he shall come again, 'bringing all his sheaves with him,' Ps. 126:6. All the works that he hath done, he brings them with him at the day of judgment. Now, then, that which the apostle prays for in the behalf of these Philippians is, that at that day they might appear filled with all the fruits of righteousness, and fruits of that kind, which are by Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God. And the reason is this, because a man's fruit remaineth, John 15:14, 16, and remaining for ever, they meet him there at the day of judgment.

'Charge them that are rich' (saith the apostle, in 1 Tim. 6:17–19), 'that they be rich in good works, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come.' It will be a store and a treasury, which a man shall meet withal at that day.

2. As a man shall appear thus with all his fruits of righteousness, so to appear at that day filled with the fruits of righteousness which he brought forth in the whole course of his life, shall be of exceeding great moment and concernment. It will be of concernment every way then, besides all the uses of it now. For,

(1.) As all these fruits were by Jesus Christ, so there will be a great deal of honour arise to Jesus Christ, 'who shall then come to be glorified in his saints' (as you have it in 2 Thes. 1:10), 'and to be made wonderful in them that believe.' For Jesus Christ shall present us to the Father at the latter day, Col. 1:22, and our fruit will be found on him: 'All thy fruit is found in me,' saith he in Hos. 14:8. All our fruit, I say, will be found on him, and he will have the glory of all; therefore to have brought forth fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, will be infinitely to the glory of Jesus Christ. As he will say, 'Here are the children which thou hast given me,' so here are the fruits these children have brought forth. We are married unto Christ, saith the apostle, that we may bring forth fruit unto God. I am the husband, will Christ say, and these are the children of those unto whom I am married; and therefore a saint is called the glory of Christ, 2 Cor. 8:19.

(2.) And this will be for the glory of Christ, so for the glory of God the Father, to whom all this was done. Therefore the apostle Peter, 1 Pet. 2, exhorts them to hold forth the virtues and graces of Jesus Christ, to have their conversation honest amongst the Gentiles; that whereas they speak against them as evil doers, they may by their good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation, that at that great and general muster, as I may so call it, when every man shall shew his arms, God may then be glorified. So that in respect of the glory that shall arise to God the Father at that

day, and that even before others also, it is of great use to be filled with fruits of righteousness; not only that God may be glorified here in this world (as you have it, Mat. 5:16, 'That they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven'), but that there may also a great deal of glory arise unto God, and confusion of face unto wicked men, even in that day of visitation.

(3.) It is of infinite use likewise unto us; for I do believe it to be a great truth in the word of God, if I had time to open it, that there are degrees of glory, and especially at that great day of judgment, which will be according as a man hath been filled with fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the glory of God, here in this world. The prophet (in Jer. 17:8, 10, verses compared) compares a man that trusts in the Lord, and so out of faith worketh and bringeth forth fruit, to 'a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her root by the river; that hath her leaf green, and is not careful in the year of drought, neither doth cease from yielding fruit.' And ver. 10 saith he, 'The Lord shall reward every man according to his doings;' that is, by an Hebraism, according to their doings, which were their fruits. Compare the two verses together, and you shall find them pertinent to the thing in hand; and answerably in Gal. 6:8, 10, saith the apostle, 'as a man soweth so shall he reap.' Now a man soweth either to the flesh, to his lusts, or to the Spirit; all his thoughts and affections are laid out either upon things spiritual, or else upon things carnal, or else, as others interpret it, either on things of the soul and the eternal glory thereof, or on things of the body. Now, saith the apostle, whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap, both according to the kind and according to the measure; look what a man sows to his lusts, to the flesh, he shall of the flesh reap corruption; even to a godly man, whatsoever he sows to the flesh will be all lost. But what is sown to the Spirit it will rise up to eternal life; 'He that soweth to the Spirit,' saith he, 'shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.' He compares every action that a man doth to a seed; every action hath a seed (let us look to it, my brethren), a man sows a seed in every thought, in every affection, in every word, in every action that he doth in any

kind; and there will either come up corruption if it be bad seed, or it will come up to eternal life if it be good. 'Be not deceived,' saith he, 'God is not mocked,' for he seeth and observeth every seed that is sown, and it is he that makes the harvest (for so I take those words in Gal. 6 to refer to that coherence): 'Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, he shall also reap.' He will look to that; he seeth every seed you sow, every thought, and every affection, and every action, and he will be sure to make the harvest accordingly. James speaketh in the same language too; chap. 5, he exhorteth them there to patience in well-doing, and he doth it under this very metaphor I have now spoken of. 'Be patient,' saith he ver. 7, 'till the coming of our Lord,' do but stay till then. Whence hath he his similitude? What shall we expect at the coming of our Lord? 'Behold,' saith he, 'the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.' He compares the coming of the Lord to the harvest, and the time of this life to sowing of seed. 'The husbandman waiteth,' saith he, 'for the precious fruit of the earth.' It is called precious fruit, because, indeed, the fruit of the earth is more precious than gold, for a man cannot eat gold; gold, and silver, and pearl, are not so precious as corn. And sometimes it is precious seed which is sown, because it cost him a great deal of money, and he saves it out of his own belly to sow it in the earth; and when he hath done, he endureth all weathers, and still waiteth and hath long patience for the harvest. 'Do you also,' saith he, 'wait for the coming of the Lord, because then is the harvest, and he will reward every man according to the fruit of his doings.' And hence therefore you shall find (still that I may speak in the language of the metaphor) in this epistle to the Philippians, chap. 4 ver. 17, whenas they had sent him a benevolence, saith he, 'It is not that I desire a gift,' or that I rejoice in what you have done, 'but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.' He compares it to merchandising; there is, saith he, so much set upon your account in heaven for it, it is a fruit of righteousness, and a seed sown, which you will have an account of at the latter day. Certainly, my brethren, God, as he will reward



every man according to the kind of his works, that is, those that have done good shall go into eternal life, as the expression is; and he will make it out by the kind of the works that this man is a good man and the other not; so he will reward according to the proportion, the proportionality. But why should I call it proportion, since it holds no proportion with degrees of glory? You have a place very considerable, Rev. 22:11, it is Christ's last speech from heaven, his last sermon that he makes: 'He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still.' The reason why he speaks thus of wicked men, 'he that is unjust, let him be unjust still,' is because, that notwithstanding all that he had said in this book, and in the whole book of God, they would go on in their wickedness; and because the day of judgment is deferred, they would be more wicked (as Daniel also had foretold in his prophecy, chap. 12:10); but be not offended at it, 'But he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still;' let him continue and increase in holiness. And why? 'Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me;' that is, I have it ready, for so in 1 Peter 4:5 he is said to be 'ready to judge the quick and the dead.' I have every man's account in my head, and I have the reward he shall have, for I have summed up all the holiness that is in the heart and life of a godly man, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be, not only for the kind but for the degree. Why? Clearly because he that is righteous let him be more righteous; he that is holy, let him be more holy; for my reward is with me, and I will give every man according as his work shall be found at that day. Therefore doth the apostle here (Philip. 1:10) pray that they may be filled with fruits of righteousness; for the more they are filled with such fruits, the more will there be fruit come in then to their account. Truly they hold no proportion with what shall be then, that is certain, none at all; yet as a man that is casting up of what is due to him may do it with counters, when the money that is paid holds no proportion with the counters, and yet may truly say the money that is paid him is according to that account made up with the counters; so here, though all the fruit we

bring forth here, all the works we do here, are not worthy of that glory that shall be revealed, they have nothing in them proportionable to it, yet notwithstanding it shall be according to that account. How this stands with free grace, and is not of works, I have shewed in my sermons on Eph. 2.

How should these thoughts make us for ever grow up in holiness, and to endeavour to be filled with the fruits of righteousness! 'Every man,' saith the apostle, 1 Cor. 3:8, 'shall receive his proper reward.' It is a reward proper to his work, to his labour. And to the same purpose is what the apostle says, 2 Cor. 5:10, 'For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.' 'In the body,' that is, proper to the body, as some read it; or as it followeth, as he hath behaved himself in the body. And he speaks suitable, 1 Cor. 3:8, 'Now he that planteth, and he that watereth, are one, and every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour.' It is meant of heaven, for saith he, ver. 15, 'He shall be saved, yet by fire;' he shall suffer so much loss, for the Spirit of God will reveal all. Consider also another place of the apostle, Eph. 6:8, 9, he speaks upon occasion of ordinary duties, of the duties of servants that do service in their callings; but you may apply it to anything else that is good, that hath any ingenuity\* in it, that is done through Christ to the glory of God. 'Servants,' saith he, 'be obedient, &c., not with eye-service;' he speaks not only of holy duties, but of all that a man doth, of servants serving their masters, 'knowing that whatsoever good thing a man doth, the same shall he receive of the Lord.' A man doth such a one a good turn, and he doth it out of a principle of grace and holiness; whatsoever good thing any man doth, whatsoever ingenuity any man sheweth of any kind, the same he shall receive of the Lord. He would never condescend to particulars else, to a cup of cold water, as he doth in Mark 9. All yield, even those that are against degrees of glory, that at the last day there shall more approbation be given to one man than to another; but why not for ever, seeing a man's righteousness remaineth for ever?

And therefore, my brethren, how should all these things make us endeavour after holiness, as Peter saith (suffer the words of exhortation, for these things the holy apostles pressed upon the hearts and spirits of men): 2 Pet. 3:14, 'Seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless,' which is the first part; 'And seeing that these things must be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be, in all holy and godly conversation!' so it is in the original. The apostle Peter, who doth in his epistles sparkle forth so much holiness, yet he hath so great and so vast a sight of holiness, which yet he would attain to, that he knows not bow to express it. 'What manner of men,' saith he, 'ought we to be!' It is a word of admiration, as when Christ did still the sea in Mat. 8:27, 'What manner of man is this!' say they; so here, what manner of holiness should we use, 'looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of the Lord;' that is, despatching and doing all we can for our lives against that day; and if we have neglected our time, let us begin now to hasten, and to be holy in all manner of conversations. It is expressed in the plural number, to instruct us that in all ways, towards a man's self and towards others, and in all duties towards God, we should be holy. Our lives should, as it were, be in a hurry after the day of judgment; as those that are to remove at the quarter-day, they hasten to do all against the time. Let a man think with himself, I must have all my time filled up, with every grace I must abound, and hold forth Christ in everything, in every condition, and in every relation; and the more fruitful I have been, I shall appear so at the latter day, and it shall all redound to my account. Let a man consider this; it will make him to be like one in a continual haste, despatching as much business as he can for his life.

## **BOOK II**

The demeanour of a Christian, as it is expressed under the notion of friendship with God.—The example of Abraham's being the friend of God.—How, in the sense of the apostle James, he was justified by works.—How great, excellent, and kind a friend God is to us.—How this consideration should engage us in a sincere friendship to him.—What are the duties and offices to be performed by us, as proper and owing to such a friendship?—Of the behaviour of a Christian, as it is named service to God.

Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.—JAMES 2:21–23.

## CHAPTER I

The obedience of a Christian expressed under the notion of friendship to God.—The title of being 'God's friend' is given to Abraham—The meaning of the apostle James, when he says, Abraham was justified by works.

MY present subject is the obedience of a man already regenerated; and this the notion of friendship with God will in a large manner serve to illustrate unto us. Friendship is the strength of love, and the highest improvement of it. 'Thy friend,' says Moses, 'that is as thy own soul,' Deut. 13:6. Friendship is common to, and included in, all relations of love. A brother is (or ought to be) a friend; it is but friendship natural. Husband and wife are friends; that knot is but friendship conjugal. See one instance for both, Cant. 5: Christ had first called his church sister, and then spouse; and as not contented with both, though put together, he adds another compellation as the top of all, 'Oh my friends!' This friendship to God will therefore most perfectly and completely serve to express the love and

obedience of the saints to God, which is here set forth in the text, in the example of Abraham, the state of whose person and temper of heart is herein made the common standard of all believers.

This phrase of being friends to God is not only expressive of the first work of God upon us, but it is sufficient to instruct and direct us, and (as the Holy Ghost speaks upon another occasion) 'to make the man of God perfect.' The whole of that charge given to Abraham, who is here made our pattern, Gen. 17:1, 'Walk before me, and be thou perfect,' is summarily comprehended in this testimony of his carriage, whereby he made good the character of a friend, and so was called the friend of God. Other titles given us do more express our privileges, as to be called a son, an heir; but this of being a friend to God (the essential constitution and essence of which regeneration first gives us) expresseth more of duty and of the inward disposition of a Christian towards God, though it also be as high a title for dignity as any other. God writ upon the palms of his hands, and as a signet and a memorial on his right hand, the name of 'Abraham his friend;' he remembers him and his seed by it again and again, as if all were spoken in that one word. Our privilege by it I will not insist on, but the duty, the dispositions of it, I cannot omit, having gone so far in it, which Christ also insinuates, John 15:14. 'Ye are my friends, if ye do whatever I command you.'

That I may arrive at this portion of Scripture (my text), as it stands in coherence with the foregoing words, I must necessarily open the aim and intent of James therein, which hath had so much controversy upon it. The point which he pursues in this chapter and this epistle was to convince loose professors, who, building themselves upon Paul's doctrine (which if it had not been current in those times there had been no colour for their mistake), that faith alone being that which saved us, and justified us without works, they thereupon had taken up a looseness of profession in practice, not judging inward holiness in their hearts, or an outward strictness in their lives necessary, seeing it was faith alone that saveth. Now,

in this chapter, there are two mediums by which he evinceth the vanity of that deceit.

1. That even under the gospel, universal respect to all the commandments, one as well as another, is required, and upon the same ground to all as unto any one; yea, and that at the latter day, God will judge every man according to this rule, which he terms the 'law of liberty,' ver. 12. The gospel requires a sincere respect unto all commandments; this you have from ver. 8 to the 14th, 'If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: but if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now, if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. For he shall have judgment without mercy that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment. What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?'

The second part of this discourse, and which he prosecutes to the end of the chapter is, 1. That true saving faith hath always works of holiness, or such a respect unto all the commandments, accompanying it both in the heart and life. And 2. On the contrary, that faith which hath not these fruits is but a dead faith, and not the true genuine faith, such as all believers have that are saved. Yea, and 3. That every man's faith (and so together therewith every man that professeth himself to have true faith) must one day be put to an open trial, to justify the truth of itself, and of his profession, and this afore all the world. And the believer also will be put upon the justification of his having had such a faith as God (ex consequenti, or in the sequel) professeth only to justify man upon; for at the latter day it is faith is the grace that must be tried and found unto honour and glory, 1 Peter 1:7. And the man that shall plead

justification by faith alone (which James contradicts not), and that he had a saving faith, must undergo this examination, whether his faith produced such works, yea or no, as the nature of true faith, with difference from false and unfeigned faith (which James disputes against), doth note.

These three assertions he intermingledly lays down. The first, ver. 14, 'What doth it profit a man, though he say he hath faith, and have not works?' 'Can ἡ πίστις, that faith, save him?' The second is in ver. 17, 'Even so faith, which hath not works, is dead, being alone,' and but such a faith as the devils have, ver. 19. The third is in verses 21 and 24, 'A man is justified by works, and not by faith only.' The issue of all which comes to this, that true sanctification and holiness of heart and life is required by God unto the possession and the enjoyment of salvation as well as faith, and serves to justify the truth of the faith, by which he hath alone the right to it.

Now, for the confirmation of all this, he allegeth the instance of Abraham as an undeniable conviction and sufficient evidence, as his preface to it shews: 'Wilt thou know, O vain man?' says he, ver. 20. He gives such possessors the title of vain men, because they are vain in their imaginations, Rom. 1, and deceived in what they build on, and their religion will prove vain (as in chap. 1:26 he speaks); such a man 'deceives his own heart, and his religion is vain.'

Now wilt thou know, that is, shall I give thee an invincible demonstration for all these things? Both that that faith which is without works is a dead faith, a counterfeit faith, and so of another kind from saving faith. And 2dly, that whoever pleads he hath faith, must have a justification (in a right and true sense) by works, &c. For this, take that instance of our father Abraham: James 2:21, 'Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered up his son Isaac upon the altar?' We must understand him here closely to prosecute those assertions he had begun, whereof one was, that it was not enough for a man that would be saved to say that he had faith, but he must make this good, and shew it forth in his works.

And accordingly, as to this sense, the apostle must be understood to speak this of Abraham (for he speaks pertinently to his own conclusions laid), that if Abraham our father were now alive, or to appear at the day of judgment, and would say or plead that he had faith, upon which God had imputed righteousness unto him, that yet even he, as well as any other, must shew that he had such a faith by his works, or he had not approved himself to have been a true believer. And so to be justified by works is but to approve himself a true believer in difference to a false faith (which is the main point which James his scope was to disprove); and accordingly, there is recorded (to which James his words do refer) a justification of him that followed upon that work of his: ver. 22–24, 'Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? 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. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.'

## CHAPTER II

How the apostle Paul and the apostle James are consistent in the account which they give of Abraham's justification.

If you ask how this is to be reconciled to what Paul says, Rom. 3d and 4th chapters, where he says the clean contrary, that Abraham was justified by faith without works? the answer (besides what hath been now said) is clear out of the scope of both places compared. There is a double justification by God: the one authoritative, the other declarative or demonstrative. Though this is also before God, yet it is that which is to be made before all the world by God; and in order thereunto, the one is the justification of men's persons coram Deo, before God, as they appear before him nakedly, and have to do with him alone for the right to salvation; and so they are justified by faith without works, either as looked at by God or by themselves. God therein passeth an act of Christ's righteousness, out of his pure



prerogative; as a king, when he pardons, or creates a nobleman, and the like. And this part of the distinction Paul himself puts, in stating it under the example of Abraham; that coram Deo, before God, nor Abraham, nor any flesh shall be justified by works: Rom. 4:2–5, 'For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory, but not before God. For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.' Observe it, he saith, 'not before God;' that is, not in that justification, which is an act passed between God and a man's own soul, and in respect of the private transactions between both.

But God, at the latter day, is to proceed as the judge of all the world (as Abraham calls him), and as such, to put a difference between man and man, and that upon this account, that the one were true believers when he justified them; the other were unsound, even in their very acts of faith which they did put forth. And so he is to shew forth a difference between those whom he hath justified thus out of his prerogative, and those whom he hath left under wrath. He is to own the one with a 'Come, ye blessed,' and reject the other with a 'Go, ye cursed.'

Now God hath ordered it so, that he will not put the possession of salvation upon that private act of his own, without having anything else to shew for it. He shews grace and favour to a man without works, but yet he will go demonstratively to work, and difference believing Abraham from unbelieving Ishmael and Laban; and this by such works as the other had not to shew for themselves. He will justify his own acts of justification, of this man and not of that; and he will justify the faith of him he had justified (which is James's main scope), or, if you will, the person himself, as he professed himself to have had faith. And this is as evidently James's scope, as the other is Paul's. In a word, Abraham's person, considered singly and alone, yea, as ungodly, is the object of Paul's justification

without works, Rom. 4:3–5. But Abraham, as professing himself to have such a true justifying faith, and to have been justified thereupon, and claiming right to salvation by it, Abraham, as such, is to be justified by works. Now, that this is James's scope is evident, for—

1. It agrees with the language he useth, which imports his meaning to intend but an outward demonstration in this his justification which he intended, ver. 18, 'Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.' And ver. 22, 'Seest thou how faith wrought with his works?' So, then, he speaks of a visible, demonstrative justification, as the words seeing and shewing import.

2. This instance of Abraham's justification, he saith, was after he had offered up his son. Now what was that justification, but that famous testimony of God himself, given him thereupon? 'Now know I,' says God, Gen. 22:12, 'that thou fearest God,' which is no more but this: I have now a visible evidence and demonstration of it; so that whereas before I, upon a private act of my own, justified thee upon believing, I can now own thee to all the world, and have an evidence to give upon certain knowledge. And this testimony was Abraham's justification.

3. The 23d verse also tells us, that he had that character or title of honour given him thereupon: 1. That he was called the friend of God, which is spoken in relation unto that act; 2. He is spoken of, also, as one whom God was not ashamed of to be called his God, nor to own him as a friend, for he had had it upon an experience what would justify his doing so.

4. And yet further, he herein prosecutes what he had said, ver. 12, that we should be judged by our works, and so speaks this in relation thereunto. And look in what sense a man may be said to be judged by his works at the latter day, in the same sense, and that sense only, he intends this his justification by works, and in no

other; for all judging and passing of sentence must have either a justification or a condemnation, as the sentence of it in the close. So as there is no more danger to say, a man at the latter day shall be justified by his works, as evidences of his state and faith, than to say he shall be judged according thereto; and the one is to be taken in a similar or like sense unto the other. Now, to be judged 'according to works' (when it is spoken of a good man), is meant demonstratively, as they are evidence of his estate. The apostle's scope being also to shew, by God's approbation given Abraham, upon the story of his offering up his son in his lifetime, what like approbation or justification Christ will declare and hold forth concerning true believers, when the story of their lives and all the good they have done, or was wrought in them, shall be ripped up: 'I was naked, and ye clothed me;' and so gives them the testimony of his knowing that they had done so. As, on the contrary, to them that regarded not good works, he says, 'I know you not,' Mat. 7:23. And David, speaking of standing in judgment, useth the same phrase, Ps. 1:5, 6, 'The Lord knows the way of the righteous,' that is, justifies and approves; as in that speech God did Abraham, 'Now I know thou fearest me,' &c.

And in relation to this outward judgment at the latter day, our sentence of salvation is termed expressly a justification; and this very thing is asserted by Christ himself: Mat. 12:36, 37, '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 thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.' Neither is it anywhere said, that God will judge men according to their faith only; nor will it be a sufficient plea at the latter day to say, Lord, thou knowest I believed, and cast myself at thy grace. God will say, I am to judge thee so as every one shall be able to judge my sentence righteous together with me: 1 Cor. 4:5, 'Therefore, shew me thy faith by thy works;' let me know by them thou fearest me; for as I did judge Abraham, and gave thereupon a testimony of him, so I must proceed towards thee. And this God will do, to the end that all the

sons of Israel, yea, the whole world, may know that he justified one that had true faith indeed.

So then, Paul's judging according to works, and James his justification by works, are all one, and are alike consistent with Paul's justification by faith only. For in the same epistle where he argues so strongly for justification by faith without works, as Rom. 3, 4, he in chap. 2 also declares, that 'he will judge every man according to his works.' He doth so to the good: ver. 7, 'To them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life.' As well as to the bad he pronounceth a contrary judgment: vers. 8, 9, 'But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.'

Now then, to proceed in the exposition of James: 'Thou seest how faith wrought with Abraham's works.' Which imports, first, that his faith was a working faith, which is the principal point that James drives at. And secondly, that his works did proceed out of faith, and so were accepted. Thus in Heb. 11:17, 'By faith Abraham offered up Isaac,' says the apostle there. 'And by works faith was made perfect;' that is, declared and manifested to be true and perfect faith. Thus we are said to bless God, when we shew his blessedness. And thus, in 2 Cor. 12:9, 'God's power' is said to be 'perfected in weakness;' not that it receives any perfection from us, but because it is manifested in its divineness and perfection. And this the reason of the thing also enforceth, for the cause is not perfected by the effect, but is declared perfected. Fruits perfect not, or make not the tree good, but shew the goodness of it. Now faith is the cause of works; and so his faith was perfected by works, by being manifested, upon trial (as, Heb. 11:17, the apostle speaks), to be perfect faith, that is, true and genuine faith (for so perfect is taken by James, chap. 1:17, 'every perfect gift'), in distinction from faith that proves itself hypocritical in the issue. Thus you say of a true dye, it is a perfect colour.

Again, then, a thing is said to be perfected, when it hath attained the end which it was ordained for, or which was aimed at. Thus in 1 John 2:5, 'Whoso keepeth his words, in him the love of God is perfected.' Understand it either of the grace of love in us, it is perfected when it brings forth the actions and fruits of obedience it was ordained to bring forth; or take it in respect of God's love towards us, holiness is the end and aim thereof. It receives its intended end and accomplishment in a man that keeps the commandments, for we were 'chosen to be holy before him in love.'

But let us proceed in the exposition of James's words. James 2:23, 'And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness;' that is, upon this his offering up his son there was a fulfilling of that thing which aforehand had been spoken of Abraham, whereof the Scripture is the record. 1. First, let us consider the thing. 2. The phrase fulfilled.

1. Let us consider the thing in other passages of the New Testament, where it is said a scripture is fulfilled, when it is first done or accomplished, with reference to some scripture or prophecy recorded and written long afore the thing was accomplished. Now that cannot be James his meaning here, for Moses his books (and so this Book of Genesis) were written after, both this imputation of righteousness by God, and that offering up of Isaac by Abraham. The intent of this saying then must rest upon this, that what is recorded in Scripture, as said long before of Abraham's faith, was afterward fulfilled and demonstrated, though both passages were at one and the same time written by the same hand of Moses long after both. And so it refers to the priority of matter, that one passage fell out afore the other, not to the writing itself. Now it is evident by the story, that about thirty years before Abraham offered up his son, God had (as the Scripture records it) imputed righteousness to him upon believing, Gen. 15:6. Yea, and upon a bare and naked act of believing was it that God did impute righteousness to him. But then, as hath been said, God that justified Abraham as his elect gave him such a faith; and such an act of faith was then put forth by

Abraham, as God, to use the words said of Christ, knowing by intuition and foresight the kind of it (he also out of election having given him such a faith) to be true and genuine, justified him upon it; it being such a faith as he meant to follow with all these good works, that which Abraham afterward out of faith wrought; and indeed Abraham's faith after so many years brought forth those many acts of obedience, Heb. 11:17. There was an evident demonstration of making good, a fulfilling or justifying of what God had done, and of that faith he had justified him then upon, clearly shewing that God in justifying him upon that, though a single act of faith, yet had kept to that eternal rule of his in justifying any, that such a faith should be operative and working of holiness. This Abraham in the sequel fulfilled and made good, and God foresaw he would. And it is observable, that in the 15th of Genesis God gave forth the promise absolutely unto Abraham first, and then he put forth that act of faith towards it. The promise was a declaration of God's immediate counsel towards him, not founded on any work precedent, so, nor faith, but uttered for him by faith to receive: ver. 1, 'I am thy shield and exceeding great reward.' And ver. 6, 'As the stars shall thy seed be' (in which Abraham spied out Christ). 'And he believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness.' Therefore Paul argues that God justified him, as considering him as ungodly person, neither therein respecting his works nor his faith, as that for which he justified him. Now then, upon that eminent act of obedience, the offering up his son (which is recorded Gen. 22), doth God renew the same promise, confirming it with an oath; I say, he renews the very same promise for substance given afore: ver. 16, 17, 'By myself have I sworn, that because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies.' Now the fulfilling here is in part interpreted by the word the apostle useth of this very speech Heb. 6:17, that it was a 'confirmation of a promise formerly given by an oath,' referring to the declaration of himself, Gen 22, as by the 13th and 14th verses appears, 'For when God made promise to

Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.' So then, as this renewing the promise was but a further confirmation of what was sure afore on God's part there, so here in James this fulfilling was but a making for, or open verification, or demonstration, or shewing forth on Abraham's part, that his faith God had justified him upon was true and real, perfect faith, such as God only professed to justify men upon. And as the first promise given, Gen. 15, was sufficient alone to have assured us, and the addition of that oath made it not more true or full in real verity than it was afore, only *ex abundantia* was added for confirmation, so Abraham's justification upon that bare act. of believing was as full and complete in the thing itself, as it was now upon the offering up of his son; only hereupon a new ratification was made to his faith thereof. And so the saying was but fulfilled, and Abraham's faith (upon which it was first uttered) justified and declared true, namely, by that testimony of God's then given, 'Now I know thou fearest me.'

2. And, secondly, the phrase well bears it; for in this sense a thing is said to be fulfilled in Scripture when declared and ratified by some eminent signal of it. Acts 13:32, 33, when Peter brought the Jews tidings that they should have God's own Son for their Messiah (for which he quotes Ps. 2, 'Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee'), says he, 'God hath fulfilled the same unto us, in that he hath raised up Christ from the dead.' Now Jesus Christ was not made any whit more God's Son by his resurrection than he was before; how is it then said by his resurrection to be fulfilled? Paul hath resolved us: Rom. 1:4, 'He was declared to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead.' It is he that was the Son of God by eternal generation, and there was no other such a son of God, and of whom it was accordingly said in Scripture, 'This day have I begotten thee.' This scripture is said to be fulfilled, when this is manifestly made forth and demonstrated. And this is but the same which God doth every day, when upon occasion of some eminent act of self-

denial or suffering he renews assurance of his love, and of the justification of them that have afore believed, as John 14:21.

Now then, that justification, which in reality, and for the thing itself, was as complete upon a bare act of believing as ever it shall be to all eternity (and the very words import it, in that thirty years before Abraham's offering up his son, righteousness was imputed to him by believing), yet is said to be fulfilled, when demonstratively and signally held forth. And as the resurrection of the Son of God added nothing to his Sonship that was essential thereunto, so neither did this justification of Abraham by works, James 2:21, add anything to God's real imputing of Christ's righteousness, but was the signal of it.

So then, let us conceive aright of God's proceedings herein. Says God of a man that now but begins to put forth a naked act of faith, I do here justify this man, and I do justify him for ever, and I will never recall it. But a carnal heart might object, Will God beforehand thus rashly give forth an eternal justification of man? Will he not stay until he sees works to spring from it? No, says God, I will adventure to do it now; for when I mean to justify according to my decree of election, I give him faith, the faith of my elect; and I see (for he sees all our thoughts and wants afar off) this faith I justify this man now upon, this sole act of believing for justification, to be so genuine, so true and unfeigned faith, and of the true and right breed, that I will adventure it, or rather undertake for it, that in the future course of this man's life it shall bring forth in his heart and life acts and dispositions suitable, which shall justify this my justifying of this man; which when it shall do, then is God's sentence of justifying him said to be fulfilled.

When a man first believes upon a bare word of God, God in like manner justifies upon that bare act of believing; and as he trusts God, so God trusts his faith, or rather undertakes for it, and pronounceth such a sentence upon him of justification as he hath sworn (as he did to Abraham) never to recall. And yet the case is



such, as if in the future course of his life that man did not walk so as, by works and dispositions of holiness accompanying that faith, to give demonstration of himself to be a true believer, God at the latter day must recall that sentence, as pronounced upon a dead and empty act of faith. When therefore in his future course he walks suitably, he is said to fulfill or make good that first act of God; for he gives sufficient proof and demonstration that he had, and hath that kind of faith upon which God alone will be sure to justify a man, even a working faith that is lively. And in this sense is that saying of James here to be understood: 'And the scripture was fulfilled which says, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness.'

### CHAPTER III

Abraham called the friend of God, upon the performance of that act of obedience in offering up his son.—That what is said of Abraham is spoken of him as the father and pattern of all believers.—The true faith works in the heart friendly dispositions towards God.

The apostle James withal adds, 'And he was called the Friend of God.'

1. Some do there is where in the Old Testament to find this saying. Some think it not anywhere uttered in words, and must therefore be fetched from such passages recorded betwixt Abraham and God, as argued he owned him for his friend, as that promise Gen. 12:4, 'I will bless them that bless thee, and I will curse them that curse thee.' And to be a friend to one's friend, and an enemy to all one's enemies, is the strictest league of friendship that can be. Also those familiar conferences and colloquies vouchsafed to Abraham do argue it. God in reality used him as a friend, and so did in effect call him so. But over and above there are two evident testimonies of God in express terms giving this title to Abraham by God. 2 Chron. 20:7, Isa. 41:8, 'The seed of Abraham my friend.' And this

honourable mention of him, compared with those real transactions of friendship, does put all out of question as to the authenticity of this quotation.

2. For the scope and pertinency of James in this quotation to the purpose he had in hand, it must be considered,

(1.) That he joins and couples, you see, two several testimonies, fetched out of several scriptures, concerning one and the same person, Abraham, whose instance he had before him to make forth his assertions out of it—one in his story in Genesis, the other in the Chronicles and prophet. And thereby he would prove and shew that which he intended, that in him justification, or justifying faith, and sanctification, or works answerable, did meet; yea, and that from his faith by which he was justified, did flow true holiness and love to God. So as that from his instance, who is our pattern, he argues that where God imputes righteousness by believing, the person is made such in heart and life, as God may approve of him as a true and real friend. 'Abraham believed, and it was imputed to him for righteousness.' There is the one. And (says James) take this in too, 'He was called the friend of God,' that is, approved by God as such; and he really was such, for God calls things as they are. Now a friend to God, in James his interpretation of it, imports such inward dispositions of heart, and such a behaviour and deportment in life towards God, as a true friend beareth to a friend; and so is set to express sanctification in its distinction from faith, and as inseparable from faith.

(2.) He pertinently mentions this title of Abraham's being God's friend, as given him more especially upon that act of offering up his son. A friend, we know, is known in trial. Now God tried him in the dearest thing he had, in requiring that he himself should sacrifice his own son, which God took so kindly at his hands, as he ever after upon mention of him termed him friend, this having been so high an act of pure friendship toward him.

(3.) The apostle pertinently allegeth it upon this discourse of true faith, to shew what a powerful working thing it is, where it is. You see how it wrought in Abraham's heart; it framed and changed his heart into friendship with God. Abraham believed God, and he was called the friend of God. You see then what a faith his was.

(4.) And lastly, it indeed interprets what James meant by Abraham's being justified by works; not the imputing of righteousness, but the calling and owning a man as God's friend. And in the same sense that God called Abraham friend, upon that act of offering up his son, in the same sense he is said to be justified by works in the verse before. You use to say, such an one is an approved friend; such did Abraham demonstrate himself to be; and God owned him, and entitled him such for ever, which is a clear distinct thing from either Paul's or James's interpretation of righteousness, and justifying the ungodly.

I have but this to add in the close, which I began with in opening this difficult scripture, that all this is spoken of Abraham, not as a person extraordinary, but as a pattern and father unto all believers. For, 1, else James's alleging his instance had not come home to his scope, to shew that all professors must have that faith and sanctification that Abraham had. And therefore, 2, in ver. 21, when he begins to allege it, he says, 'Was not Abraham our father' thus and thus? And therefore we that profess ourselves sons and children of Abraham, must be herein like and conform to him. Yea, 3, it is observable that in the places to which he refers us, that Abraham was called the friend of God, it is still spoken of him in relation to us his seed and children. You have it in two places, Isa. 41:8, 2 Chron. 20:7, and in both it runs thus, 'The seed of Abraham my friend.' It is given him when his seed is mentioned, and the entail to them is from him, because they all are to be friends to God as well as he.

So then to conclude; look as that glory, that heaven which we all expect, and which is the common receptacle of all believers, is

termed in this very respect 'the bosom of Abraham,' Luke 15—and we are said to sit down with Abraham, &c., because both he and we go to one and the same common place—so that same kind of faith, the same effect and fruit of faith, sanctification and friendship to God, is to be wrought in us here, if we be saved with Abraham. Now friendship being put here to express Abraham's suitable carriage towards God, in the actings of his heart and life after believing, the deductions from hence are two, and they are proper to his scope.

1. That true faith, wherever it is, worketh and frameth the heart to friendlike dispositions unto God, and brings forth friendlike carriage in the life towards God. This the 23d verse holds forth, 'And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.' This the stream of his text fully carries along with it. James his scope is not only chiefly to shew that whom God justifies, he doth reconcile them to himself, or works in their hearts friendlike dispositions toward him; but that a friendlike deportment, that is, sincere obedience, is thereby signified, and doth flow from thence, and accompanies it in their hearts and lives. And to this very end and scope it is that this is cited out of the Old Testament, and again and again repeated; so that, however reconciliation elsewhere mainly imports the work of God upon us at first in the alteration of our states, yet Abraham's being a friend properly and mainly relates to obedience, and a behaviour suitable to friendship, as witnessing and testifying that work and alteration.

2. Another inference is, that every man's faith, whether it be true or feigned, shall and must have this trial, whether it hath brought forth holiness in heart and life; and every man is thereby to be declaratively justified, and differenced from all men that shall be damned.

I shall insist now on the first of these inferences, to shew how true justifying faith works this friendly temper to God, which is the apostle's scope here. I shall give you a reason or two for it.

(1.) From the ingenuity\* of faith, if it be true and genuine, that is, suitable and answerable unto the object it apprehends; for in a suitability there unto the truth, the genuineness of faith consists. For what is indeed the aim of faith? When it comes to God and Christ, believing on him what would it have? What is the thing it looks for from God? And what would it have at his hands? The mind and intent and scope of my faith, when I come to believe, is to have God out of an infinite love (the same out of which he gave his Son to die, and which would yet move him to give him if he had not done it), out of such a love to pardon me all my sins, and to justify me, and to become an everlasting Father and friend unto me, and to love me with that love he loves his Son with, and out of that love to bestow all things on me. If you ask your hearts, and your faith could but tell you what the meaning of it is (as the scripture, Rom. 8, speaks of the Spirit in prayer), what is its errand, what its business is with God, when it casts itself upon God in Christ for salvation, you will find the very bottom-reach of it to have been spoken in what hath been said; and that this it would have of God, or it is never quiet. Now then, if this faith be but genuine and true, honest and unfeigned (as Christ in the parable, and the apostle speaks of it), and so is answerable to its own aim, if it have any truth, honesty, justice, equity, or reality in it, how is it possible it should come to God for such a great love from him, such a large fruit and effect of such an entire friendship on God's part; but it must work the heart to a correspondent, an answerable frame in some sincerity towards God again on our parts?

The faith that justifies us is called a 'working faith' (ver. 22), and surely if it work anything, it must needs work a suitable disposition to God, such as it expects from God towards itself. So it is evident from the example of Abraham here; look what his faith expected to have from God, it wrought in a way of ingenuity the like in his heart unto God. Abraham when he believed unto righteousness, it was founded upon the promise God had made him of his own Son, his only Son, 'in whom' God told Abraham, 'he and all nations would be blessed.' Now doth Abraham believe to have God's Son given to him

and for him? (For 'Abraham saw his day and rejoiced,' Abraham being a prophet, Gen. 20:7, and the father of the faithful, to whom the first promise of Christ, the blessed seed, was made.) He must then be understood to have had the same temper which David had, of whom it is said, Acts 2:30, 'That being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn that of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ: he, seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ.' So Abraham, I say, must necessarily be understood, upon the same account, to know and apprehend Christ and his offering up, and resurrection represented in that of his son's, which is expressly affirmed: Rom. 4 and Heb. 11:17–19, 'By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.' And Abraham, considering these things, said with himself, Why then God shall have my son, now he calls for him, my only son, or whatever else is dear to me. 'Seest thou not then how faith wrought with his works, when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar?' If his faith would have God be be great a friend to him, as God in that promise had declared himself to be, then faith frames his heart to be a friend to God. 'He believed,' this, namely, which hath been now discoursed, 'and it was imputed to him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God;' that is, this effect the faith that justified him did work in him.

And if faith be but equal, if faith be but faithful, if it be but honest (as Christ himself speaks, he calling the heart, by which the promise is savingly received, 'an honest heart,' in the parable of the sower), if it be but a principle of humanity, and deal with God but according to the principles of men, as a man, a sinful man, deals with man, it must needs work this frame. For this is made by Christ (Mat. 5:46) a common principle of humanity, 'to love those again that love us.' And Solomon speaks the same, that 'he that hath friends must shew himself friendly,' Prov. 18:24. Now faith is an higher principle than humanity; it is a divine principle of the operation of God (Col. 2:12),

and therefore must needs, by the same power of God, which from first to last accompanies it, frame the heart it is seated in unto this ingenuity of friendship unto God. And it is seated in the whole heart, as the Scripture tells us, Rom. 10. And that faith works in this manner to return to God what it receives from God, that place likewise holds forth, 2 Cor. 5:14, 15, 'The love of Christ constrains us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, and that when all were dead, to the end that they might live; that then they should not live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them, and rose again.' This the law of common equity requires, to live to him that should have given his life unto us, especially by his own death; and this (if you observe it) is put upon this reason, 'because we thus judge,' which judgment is the product of this principle and act of faith, which both believes these things as of and from God towards us, and withal hath in it an equity, an ingenuity to make the like returns to God; and therefore it must needs constrain us, when we thus in earnest judge.

And this holds true of the faith of dependence, as well as of faith of assurance (if it be genuine), for even faith of dependence expects this great friendship at God's hands, desires it, waits for it, and is not quiet without it. Surely because it so judgeth, and waiteth for and desireth this, it must needs frame the heart to the like again. And this is the first reason.

(2.) The second reason is from what hath been noticed, that to be sure God accepts of no other faith, but such as in the kind of it is such as will bring forth holiness and works by love; neither doth he justify upon any other, this being the faith of God's elect. Where his election bestows justification, there and then, and in them, he works that kind of faith. That there is such a distinction of faith, James holds forth; and God, to whom all his works are known from the beginning, knoweth where he worketh such genuine acts of faith, and where there is such a root as will bring forth according to its kind holiness in heart and life, and that works by love. God foreknows whom he justifies, and knows things in their causes' and

the properties of causes. Souls of all sorts come with their faith unto him, and do alike cast themselves upon him and his grace. And he knows what is in man, even their thoughts afar off; and as a skilful herbalist knows the differing roots of herbs and fruits ere they have brought forth, so doth God know of what kind that faith is wherewith men come unto him, and so never errs in bestowing his justification upon an unsound faith, that hath not love to accompany it. God doth not justify any man rashly, or inconsiderately, so as if afterwards he sees a soul to withdraw, and not answer his faith in works and obedience, he should then call back his grant. No; he makes sure work, and whom he foreknew or chose unto faith, in them he works true faith, and in them alone; and them he justifies upon their believing. The just is said to have his faith, which is proper to him, in distinction from that faith which those that withdraw have, Heb. 10 compared with that of the prophet, Hab. 2:4, 'The just shall live by his faith, but he that makes haste' (though he seems to believe), 'his soul is not upright in him;' that is, his faith is not sound, and of the right breed. 'We are not of those that withdraw, but that believe to the saving of the soul;' that is, we are of the number of those that so believe, as to be infallibly saved; it is spoken by way of distinction of their faith, for the other believe too, as the opposition implies. So as though many come to God, and put forth acts of faith, yet their faith being not spiritual, nor genuine, God justifies not upon it; for he hath not given them a faith to the saving of the soul. He knowing what manner of faith it is, bestows not that grace of justification upon it. I may say of it, as of Christ it is said, John 2:24, upon his like discerning beforehand, the ineffectualness and unsoundness of their faith, 'Many believed on him, but Jesus committed not himself into their hands, because he knew them all.' So God doth in this case.

(3.) A third reason is, God's end in saving us by faith, was not to lose by us a whit of that love and holiness he expects from us; but rather he chose faith, because whilst it gave all to free grace, and his infinite love, it might withal reflect and carry all that love down unto the heart again, and shed it abroad in the soul, and so cause



love to God to spring up with a redoubled increase and advance. He did not choose love immediately, not because he regarded it not, but because if it had not sprung from faith, as first apprehending his love, it would have boasted itself, for it had returned something of itself unto God. But whilst faith is made the receiver of all from God, and thereupon the worker of love in us, upon that account God's free love is at once exalted and magnified, and our hearts quickened and inflamed with love to him again.

## CHAPTER IV

An exhortation unto friendship with God, from the considerations how great, excellent, and kind a friend he from eternity hath been, and perpetually, and for ever is to us.

My exhortation now shall be unto those that are reconciled, and become (in respect to their states) friends to God already. You see your high calling, brethren; you have the honour to be called, as Abraham was, the friends of God. You are entered into a covenant of friendship with God, make something of it; and indeed it is the scope even of that place also, 2 Cor. 5, 'Be ye reconciled to God.' For he speaks unto the Corinthians who already believed, and were converted and reconciled: but be you, even you, reconciled more, for even you have need of it, and at the best your friendship is but imperfect; and as you 'know but in part,' so you love but in part. As Christ says to his disciples, 'Except ye be converted,' Mat. 18:3, so say I, 'Except ye be reconciled,' that is, except you more and more renew your covenants with God, 'ye cannot be saved': And besides, you make many breaches with God; and though the covenant through his grace and goodness notwithstanding holds, yet you had need to make those breaches up again. *Amantium ira amoris redintegratio est*, and reconciliation is but the renewing of love.

Consider that those who are perfect enemies and rebels to God, whilst they are in that estate, do but their kind; but you know what

it is to offend God, and how it grieves him, his Spirit hath at times set it upon your hearts, how unkindly he takes any sin from you. You have felt in part what it cost him to reconcile you, and have tasted how good the Lord is, and you have a principle of love in you which needs but stirring up. Consider what Solomon says, Prov. 18:24, 'A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly; and there is a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother.' It is the law of friendship, you see, to answer it with friendship again, *mutuis officiis vivitur*.

And besides, the sweetness that is found in reciprocal friendship, loyally and sacredly maintained and kept up, it should move you. God will find a sweet savour in you, and you again will have pleasure in communion with him. Friendship is the sweetest, and of all comforts the greatest; therefore Solomon, though he were a king, and had the sum of all delights, yet he would have one in an especial manner be his friend, 1 Kings 4:5. And God, though he need no comfort nor happiness to be added to him, yet he would have friends to delight himself in, and that should delight in him. It was this that moved him, and therefore that the comfort of his love and yours be not much of it lost or impaired, demean yourselves as friends. It is Christ's own argument in his last sermon to his disciples, in which he treats them, and admires them by his sacred name of friends, John 15:13–15; and amongst other arguments he useth this in exhorting them to obedience: 'So my joy shall be in you, and your joy shall be full,' verses 10, 11. There will be mutual and reciprocal joy and delights in the intercourses of it. You will add to Christ's joy, whose joy is yet full; and to be sure yours, which is imperfect, will be made full by it. As we use to say, if people do not mean to love, let them never marry; so if men do not set themselves to walk with God, let them renounce this sweet and obliging relation of being friends to him. Especially this is to be done, if a man find one who is a friend indeed; so says Solomon in that place, 'There is a Friend is nearer than a brother,' that will do more for thee than one that cometh out of the same loins. And therefore Moses, Deut. 13:6, seems to prefer the love of some friends to that of some wives. 'If

thy wife,' says he 'entice thee, yea, if thy friend who is as thine own soul.' Now, to such a friend, if you meet with him (says Solomon), 'shew yourself friendly.' And truly as faith, so friendship is rare on earth. It is hard to find a good piece of stuff indeed to make a friend of.

I have two things, therefore, which will make up the measure of this my exhortation full. 1. What a friend God is, and hath been, and will be unto you; and, 2. Wherein you are to express friendship again unto him. You find them both in that exhortation of Christ, what a friend he was, John 15:13, 'Greater love than this hath no man, to lay down his life for his friend.' And from thence he presseth this on them, 'If ye be my friends, do what I command you.'

(1.) Consider, first, that God hath been your ancient friend, even from everlasting. The older friends are, the more we ought to prize them. We esteem of an old servant, but especially of an old friend. Therefore, saith Solomon, 'thine own friend and thy father's friend, forsake not,' Prov. 27:10. That is, leave not one who hath been an old friend to thee, and thy family before thee. Now God hath been thy Friend and Father from everlasting, therefore forsake him not; he hath loved thee ever since he loved himself. Now if one had loved another ever since himself was, how would this endear him! God hath done this.

(2.) He is such a friend as never had his thoughts off from us. There is not a moment in which he hath not loved us, and had his thoughts upon us. Other friends sometimes think and speak of you, but not always; 'But God withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous,' Job 36:7; and Cant. 8:6. We are said to be 'set as a seal upon his hand,' so as he continually looks upon us. It is an allusion to that type, Exod. 28, wherein Israel is engraven, first, upon two stones placed upon the high priest (Christ's) shoulders and arms, ver. 11, 12, then on a breastplate, or (as it is there interpreted) upon his heart, ver. 29. Upon his arms, to shew his power is engaged; upon his heart, to shew that his love is; and placed visibly on both

for a memorial: Isa. 49:15, 16, 'Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands, thy walls are continually before me.' Jerusalem, the type of his elect, her walls are continually before him. And in the like type, Deut. 11:12, they are termed a land (for selection of people) 'which the Lord thy God careth for. The eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it.' Therefore David also saith, 'How many are thy thoughts to us-ward! They cannot be numbered.' If a king casteth but a glance upon a man, and thinks of his suit and business, he counts it a great favour. What is it then for the great God never to have had his eye off thee to do thee good? And think with yourselves, what, and how old are your thoughts towards him? They are but of yesterday. Your friendship began but the other day, but his hath been from everlasting.

(3.) As it is from everlasting, so to everlasting. The one is called 'choosing us from the beginning,' Eph. 1:4. The other is called loving us to the end: 'Whom he loved, he loved to the end,' John 13:1. For a couple to have been twenty years married, and to hold out in loving, how great a wonder is it amongst the sons of men, especially when many unkindnesses have passed!

(4.) The first moment he took up as much love as he hath ever since had, or can manifest to eternity. This is high, brethren, if ye consider it. God loves not as man, as he is not as man that repents of his loving; not as man that begins to love a little, that hath a velleity at first, an affection stirring, and having his heart inclined, is drawn on to do what at first he meant not to do. No; but all the grace and favour which in time is bestowed on us, was given us in one lump from eternity, and all to eternity is but the manifestation of it: 2 Tim. 1:9, 10, 'The grace which was given us before the world began; but now is made manifest in Christ, who hath brought immortality to light.' And so that immortality serves but to manifest, or bring to light the grace which was given at the first, or

(as it is 1 Cor. 2:9), 'which was then prepared for them that love him.' So as all that is done since, is but a show love hath prepared to entertain you with, and is set out with new inventions and studied ways to take your hearts. And therefore the very giving Christ is termed but the 'commending,' that is, the setting out his love, Rom. 5:8. And John in plainer terms says, 'In this was the love of God manifest,' 1 John 4:7, 8. The love in solido, in bullion, was all (the whole mass of it) in his heart before. And all he doth to eternity is but the coming of it, stamping this or that particular mercy, and so paying it forth unto us: Ps. 138:8, 'The mercy of the Lord is for ever. The Lord will perfect that which concerns me.' The connection of those words is this, that God having beforehand set down with himself what he would do for him, his mercy which was for ever was but a perfecting, a limning out that happiness love did conceive the idea of, and that perfect from everlasting. And because an eternity of time was required to this vast work, therefore it is he adds, 'Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever;' for so much time to perfect what concerns me (a poor atom placed in the eye, or because of thy love) will take thee up. And will not this affect your hearts, that have any love in you to him, or hopes, or pursuits after such a love?

(5.) Consider what his love hath caused him to do for thee. He first gave thee a paradise; but that was not good enough. He prepares heaven, not as that which thou wert worthy of from thine original, but which he thought meet to bestow, to shew how great a God he is: Heb. 2:11, 'He was not ashamed to be called their God, for he prepared for them a city.' Yea, he was not contented with the ordinary direct means of loving; but, as those that are vast and lavish in entertainments, he must have uncouth artificial ways to love such as are extraordinary. To love us only the plain direct and downright way, and to give us heaven the first day, as he did the angels that never sinned, this was too low, too mean. His love must have meanders, windings, difficulties, yea, much water to encounter it, and so endanger the quenching of it; all this to commend the greatness and transcendency of it. 'Love is as strong as death;' and

'much water cannot quench it,' Cant. 8:6. And Rom. 5:8, 'In this God commends his love, that whilst we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' So says St Paul. And Christ, that was to perform it, knew what he did lay down: 'Greater love than this hath no man, that he lays his life down for his friends,' John 15:13. And yet, O dear Redeemer, at how low a price dost thou set thy love, whilst thou enterest into comparative suppositions of one man (a mortal, sinful man) dying for another! 'Greater love than this hath no man;' and in that supposition art fain to put in this too, as the highest elevation of man's love in supposition, 'to lay down his life for his friends,' to be sure not for his enemies. But yet because there could be no higher supposition made, he is therefore fain to represent his love to us hereby. Paul makes the supposition thus: Rom. 5:7, 'For a righteous man will one die? yet peradventure for a good man,' that is, one eminently and publicly useful to such a proportion as his life, as it is said of David's, is worth ten thousand of other men, 'a man would even dare to die.' Well, let all these qualifications meet, and when they do, it is yet but a 'scarcely,' but a peradventure, that any would be found to die for such an one. It is but a supposition of one that is otherwise weary of life; and yet if he comes to the point, he will shrink at it; therefore it is added, 'to dare to die;' it is so great an evil. But to do it not for friends, but enemies; and to this end, to make them friends, when he could have created new ones cheaper, and enough of them; yet to die for ungodly sinners, enemies (as Paul exaggerates our case and condition there), and for him to die that had such a life to lay down, is an admirable instance of extraordinary love. For a mere man, a sinful man, to die (the case which both Christ and Paul do put), is but to give up a game that must be lost a little after, to restore a forfeiture, a debt that must be paid; but 'my life' (saith Christ with an emphasis), 'none can take from me,' John 10:18, 'I lay it down of myself.' Let me say it (which he hints there), his Father could not take it, but that himself consented to it; for 'his Father had given him to have life in himself,' John 5:26. And will ye know the value of that life he laid down? It is the dignity of the person gives the worth to the life. You have it, and you cannot have more said, 1 John 3:16, 'Hereby we perceive the

love of God, that he laid down his life.' Well, thus dear it cost Christ, who was God. And was this nothing to God the Father too, think ye? Was it nothing for God to see one that was God, of the same nature, and his fellow, so debased? As it moves man to see any of their nature despised, so it moved God to see God the Son, God equal with him, to lay down his life; it touched the Godhead in common, as in the three persons. But for a Father to give and offer up his Son, is a love above our thoughts to conceive, or our words to express. Your father Abraham, though he had too big an heart to weep for it (you see no tears in his eyes, nor mention of them when he was about to do it), yet he knew full well what it was to offer up a son, an only son. To be sure God knew it, and measured it by his own heart to his own Son, out of the sense of which God uttered those words to Abraham, 'Now I know thou fearest me, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me,' Gen. 22:12. And was not God's Son's life proportionably dear to him, inasmuch as he is his Father by a more substantial and transcendent generation? 'My God, my God' (says Christ, Mat. 27:46), why hast thou forsaken me?' thou who art in so special a respect my God and my Father (see Eph. 1:3). And he speaks thus, bowing it would strike and affect his soul. And yet he speaks but the half of what God did in it, and yet in that consider how he parted with, yea, forsook an old friend, a bosom friend; and how Christ also forsook father and mother for his wife, the church, Eph. 5:25. And do you think God to be so insensible, or impassible, or without natural affection to such a Son, as that all those speeches should be but rhetorical figures, and feignings of a sorrowful part? When, as you have it inculcated 1 John 4:9, 10, 'In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.' And you have the same also in Rom. 8:32, 'He that spared not his son, but delivered him up for us all.' Yea, further, think with yourselves, that his father was himself obliged to be the inflicter of his own justice, to bruise and break him, 'when he made his soul an offering for sin,' Isa. 53:10; for no creature could strike strokes hard

enough to satisfy for sin. He laid the wood of the sacrifice, viz., our sins, about his soul, for 'he laid upon him the iniquities of us all,' and he blew the fire too. All earthly bellows would themselves have been burnt, at least not been able to have made the furnace hot enough; yea, his wrath against sin was the fire. Think but with yourselves if his mother Mary must have been the crucifier of him, and must have knocked in every nail with her feeble trembling hands (whilst at every stroke a sword is said to have 'pierced through her soul'), what excess of sorrow would have oppressed her! But now, even what man did against him is said to be by God the Father's own hand and counsel. And yet to what end was all this grief and loss? I might say it, and could defend it, it might have been spared. God in his prerogative could have saved sinners without it. That outcry of Christ cries thus loud in mine ears, 'Let this cup pass; all things are possible to thee.' In which prayer we must suppose it entered not into Christ's heart to desire the elect might not be saved when he uttered it; and yet supposeth it consistent with that cup's passing from him. But love was set upon it to have our salvation thus, and no otherwise transacted. If justice might have permitted it, and have let that dismal cup pass and slip, yet love was engaged and resolved to manifest itself this way rather; and the more possible another way might have been, the more should love be commended in taking this, 'that when we were sinners, Christ died for us.' It was an extravagancy, a superabundancy of love, love's device, an invention of love, that knew not how to shew love enough. And, my brethren, these are not notions or ideas, these are the greatest realities and existences, which are only to be understood with our hearts, and not by our understandings; for 'the love of God' and Christ 'passeth understanding,' Eph. 3:19, and so is not taken in, but by the immediate impress of the Holy Ghost, who is the 'shedder of this love of God abroad into our hearts' (not so much into our understandings), as the apostle speaks.

(6.) I come next to God's dealings and dispensations towards us; and herein all the ways of God are ways of love and friendship; he is never but doing us good: Ps. 25, 'All his ways are mercy and truth.'



He is never out of the road of fulfilling one promise or truth, or of bestowing one mercy or other. In his very afflicting he fulfils a promise: 'In very faithfulness hast thou chastised me,' Ps. 119. And faithfulness is the performance of some trust or promise out of love.

(7.) All he doth he doth freely for us, and thinks not much at it. A man must hold pace with other friends, and do one kindness for another. But says God, Hos. 14:4, 'I will love thee freely, and heal thy backslidings.' And he will (says Zephaniah, chap. 3:17) 'rest in his love.' He is glad, and rejoiceth to do his people a kindness: Jer. 32:41, 'I will rejoice over them to do them good, with my whole heart and my whole soul.' In James 1:5 it is said, 'he giveth freely and upbraids not;' the word is ἀπλῶς, that is, simply or singly, that is, for no other end than to give, for who can recompense him? So true liberality, even in us, is termed ἀπλότης, 2 Cor. 8:2. He doth it merely to do good, rejoicing in so doing; and therefore when he hath done upbraids not, and doth not use to say, I have given thee thus and thus. Often in case of great provocations indeed thou mayest hear of him, as David did, but it was but to melt his heart (2 Sam. 12:8), but otherwise he is silent; whereas other friends will be ever and anon twitting you with kindnesses.

(8.) His inward valuation and real esteem of you is answerable to, and more than his outward kindnesses; and really to do so is the greatest attractive of friendship. He prizeth you above all the world: Isa. 43:3, 4. 'I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.' And he gave real testimony of this in giving his Son, which was more than a thousand worlds: Mat. 10:30 and Luke 12:7, 'Even your very hairs are all numbered'—the hair, which is the meanest, unvaluabest appurtenance of man, and which in a proverb the Latins express as a thing of no value, *ne pili æstimo*, as we say, I value it not a straw. Things of worth use only to be numbered, and things that are not are said to be *nullius numeri*. David made it a

great occasion of God's love to him, that 'all his members were written in God's book,' Ps. 139:16. But Christ descends to our very hairs; and not your hair in the comb, the bush of them, but every one, the smallest, all are numbered; how much more our persons.

(9.) Other friends will be ashamed of you when you fall into disgrace and poverty, though they knew you never so well before: Prov. 19:7, 'All the brethren of the poor do hate him; how much more his friends that go afar off from him?' But the great God is so far from being ashamed of us, that he takes his denomination from us, and takes us into his style; witness that expression, 'the God of Abraham,' &c. to which that of Heb. 11:16 refers.

(10.) In all afflictions he will stand thy friend. When thou art in greatest trials and distresses, then he will shew himself most to be a friend, which indeed is the time for the trial of a friend: Prov. 17:17, 'A friend loves at all times, but a brother is born for adversity.' That is the special season that a man hath use of a friend for. 'In time of adversity' (saith Job, chap. 6:14) 'a man would have pity from his friend.' But usually it falls out (as Solomon says, Prov. 19:7), 'A man follows them with words, and they are wanting to him.' But then will the Lord own thee most especially, if thou followest him with words, with prayers, and seekest earnestly unto him. Therefore David (Ps. 31:7) says, 'Thou hast known my soul in adversity.' And David speaks it out of the sense of his love, that he did it then most, when others would not know him nor regard him. And whereas other friends may be absent, and not able to help thee or advise thee, 'he is a present help in trouble,' Ps. 46:1. Yea, there are cases wherein all thy friends in the world, if present, could stand thee in no stead, but would be miserable comforters, as in case of scandal, &c., and then will God break in and own thee. Yea, further it is said, Ps. 41:3, that 'he makes our bed in our sickness.' It is put to express the highest tenderness in distress, a condescending to do the meanest office, a readiness to supply all wants and deficiencies; and in that he says, he will make all thy bed, it imports utmost and universal diligence and care in that which is committed to servants

of the lowest rank. He will as a friend sit by thy bedside, lay thy pillow for thee, make thy bed easy; that is, make a distressed condition comfortable, fetch thee anything, take care of everything, apply himself so to thee that thou shalt then say, thou art in ease in the midst of trouble.

(11.) God will not cast thee off when thou art old, and wantest strength to serve him; but (as it is in Jer. 3:14) he then remembers the kindness and pains taken in thy youth. David prays, Ps. 71:9, 'Cast me not off in time of old age, forsake me not when my strength faileth.' You know God's answer, long before he prayed it and since, is repeated with five negatives to assure us of it, 'I will never, at no band, upon no occasion, leave thee, or forsake thee.'

(12.) Other friends, for an ill turn, will forget all former good turns and kindnesses done, though never so many; but God on the contrary will forget all thy sins, and remember them no more (Isa. 43:25); but not one good deed or office of love, no, not one good thought from the first to the last, shall be forgotten, but it sticks in him, and takes deep impression. Those things thou hast forgotten, at the latter day he will remember them, and that to requite them. Every cup of cold water shall have a reward: 'God is not forgetful of your labour of love to his name,' Heb. 6:10.

(13.) Yea, when thou art dead he will remember thee and thine. Other friends bury their friendship in the graves of the deceased, but God not only will take care of thy very bones, Ps. 34:20, but remember thee in thy seed, as David did Jonathan's posterity. Thus he remembered Abraham's seed for their father's sake: 'The seed of Abraham my friend,' says he, Isa. 41:8; and so he remembered David's seed, 1 Kings 11:34; and Rom. 11, 'They are beloved' (and it is gospel) 'for their fathers' sake.'

(14.) Lastly, Whatsoever he hath thou shalt have part of it; nay, all he hath thou shalt inherit, Rev. 21:7. God himself can have but all things, and thou shalt have all that he hath, John 17:24 and John

12:24. Christ speaks with an heart, as if his own single personal glory would do him no good unless we should be with him and have part of it. All his attributes shall be for thy happiness as well as for his own glory; his power, wisdom, and mercy, shall be set on work for thy good; and though all these attributes serve for his own glory, yet they shall as truly and really serve for thy comfort as for his glory. All within him and without him shall be set on work for thy good. What canst thou have more of a friend?

Now if God hath been, is, and will be such a friend to us, what manner of persons should we be in returns again unto him! My brethren, this is your calling; you are called to be friends of God, see you walk worthily and answerably unto it, so as to fill up the measure of that relation, and observe as far as possibly the laws of friendship that ever were or can be feigned to have been between two friends, for God full well deserves it at thy hands. And it should move you that you were a long time before enemies, and had nothing but wars in your thoughts against him, and therefore you had need now endeavour to make him amends.

## **CHAPTER V**

What the conversation of a believer ought to be in performing the part of a friend towards God.—That we should keep up an entire and near communion with him.—What this communion is, explained in several particulars.

I come to that main and principally intended subject, which is, the conversation of a Christian towards God, in performing the part of a friend. I shall insist on some particulars wherein these returns of friendship do consist.

1. The first and primary head (which will contain divers particulars in it) is pursuing after, and preserving entire communion with, God. Mutual communion is the soul of all true friendship; and a familiar

converse with a friend hath the greatest sweetness in it. Sometimes Solomon compares it to honey, which as it is pleasant to the taste, so enlighteneth the eyes, Prov. 25:16, 17 compared, reading, as Cartwright\* doth, for 'neighbour' 'friend,' ver. 17. Sometimes it is compared to perfumes and odours, which refresh the brain and animal spirits: 'Prov. 27:9, 'Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart; so doth the sweetness of a man's friend.' And he calleth it sweetness in the abstract rather than sweet; for it is certain, where it is found close and entire, it is the most spiritual cordial of man's life. And indeed communion is that which distinguisheth this of friendship from the intercourses that are in other relations, unless it falls out that friendship be intermingled with them, as in conjugal it often doth. Parents take care for and love their children when young, and they again do honour their parents and obey them, when yet during their non-age there is not much communion nor acquaintance between them. Between masters and servants there is an intercourse by way of command and obedience. Masters maintain their servants, and servants render fear and service to their masters; but yet there is not a mutual communion and acquaintance between them. And by this doth Christ distinguish friends and servants, when he sets himself to heighten the privilege of this relation, and to endear it to them: John 15:15, 'Henceforth I call you not servants, but friends.' For I have unbosomed myself unto you; 'whatever I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you, but the servant knoweth not what his lord doth;' that is, there is no communion between them.

Now, although God beareth all these relations, of father, lord, master, &c., which his distance between him and us exacts, yet he also hath condescended to admit us to communion with himself. John seems to speak of it as with an holy boasting of the eminent privilege which himself and others, that lived up to their principles, enjoyed: 1 John 1:3, 'And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and the Son.' The rise of it lies thus, Christ was God's fellow, Zech. 13:7, which privilege he hath by being a Son equal with God. And God found this fellowship so sweet, as he calls us up to the participation

of it: 1 Cor. 1:9, 'God is faithful, by whom ye are called unto the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.' He speaks of it likewise as that which is the height and top of our calling as we are Christians. And this fellowship with the Lord Jesus doth not only consist in his and our sharing jointly in the same privileges, as in his graces, glory, &c., but it is the 'fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ;' and so also of his person, in all the sweetnesses of, and converses with, and relations to him. And yet, lest in too much familiarity we should forget our distance, he adds, 'our Lord!' as in the psalm fore-cited upon the like occasion, having called us his fellows, ver. 7, he adds, ver. 11, 'He is the Lord, and worship thou him.' Now, this communion, as on our part it is to be transacted, is summed up in these things:

1. Besides the common tribute of daily worship you owe to him, take occasion to come into his presence on purpose to have communion with him. This is truly friendly, for friendship is most maintained and kept up by visits; and these, the more free and the less occasioned by urgent business, or solemnity, or custom they are, the more friendly they are. It is made a diminution, though in his own people: 'Lord, in trouble have they visited thee; they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them,' Isa. 26:16. A stranger will visit one whom he hath a suit unto and business with; and we use to check our friends with this upbraiding, You still come when you have some business, but when will you come to see me? David, who hath this testimony from God, to be 'a man after God's own heart,' which is equivalent to this of God's concerning Abraham's being his friend, hath this disposition of spirit recorded of him, Ps. 63:1-3, 'O God, thou art my God;' he embraceth him at first word, as we use to do friends at first meeting. 'Early will I seek thee,' says he: 'my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh' (that is, myself) 'longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is.' Surely David had some extraordinary business now with God to be done for himself, which made him thus eager after him; no, truly, nothing but to see God himself; as it follows, ver. 2, 'To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in thy sanctuary,' where God had met him, and

manifested himself to him. 'To see thee,' hath the same emphasis here that those words, 'against thee I have sinned,' have elsewhere. And further, what was it in God that specially drew forth his heart, and was the object of his inquest? Ver. 3, 'Because thy loving-kindness is better than life;' and ver. 4, thus (if I have no other reason) 'will I bless thee whilst I live.' It is all along the pure language of friendship. The very sight of a friend rejoiceth a man: Prov. 27:17, 'As iron sharpeneth iron, so doth a man the face of his friend.' It alone whets up joy by a sympathy of spirits; and in answer hereunto it is characteristically to God's people called the seeking of God's face, that is, himself, for so his face is taken: 'Thou shalt have no other gods before my face,' that is, thou shalt have myself, or none but myself. Personal communion with God is the end of our graces; for as reason and the intercourse of it makes men sociable one with another, so the divine nature makes us sociable with God himself; and the faith we live by is but an engine, a glass to bring God down to us. And as for duties, the journey's end of them is fellowship with God; and our backwardness to them, if you resolve it into its original, is a backwardness to entire communion with God; the soul therefore saith it hath no pleasure in them. But this communion was the apostles' Eden and proper walk. John calls us all up unto it, as that which we are alike born to, 1 John 1:3. It was Moses his perfection as he was Christ's type: Exod. 33:11, 'And the Lord spake to Moses face to face, as a man useth to do to his friend.' You see the Scripture lodgeth this in the notion of friendship; therefore attempt, if thou hast not yet tried, this way of seeking God. I have known those who have come to God as for nothing else; so when they have been come, could mention nothing else, but scorned to blur or soil the noble and royal intention of their visit of him with any lower request than that of obtaining communion with him. And take my counsel, when the spirit at some by-time moves thee, and it is merely a motion of his, go and stand in the presence-chamber; that is, put thyself on duty with this aim and design mentioned, and see if he hold not out his golden sceptre to thee. This shall prevail with him more than the sacrifice of rams.

(2.) A second way of intercourse and expressing friendship to God is this: when thou comest into his presence, be telling him still how well thou lovest him; labour to abound in expressions of that kind, than which (when founded in a reality in the Spirit) there is nothing more taking with the bean of any friend. That famous pair of friends, David and Jonathan, When they met they spent the most of their time (they had got by stealth, and with hazard of their lives) in vying and revying, and therein seeking which of them should utter and declare most love and manifest most faithfulness. They weep over one another's necks, as overcome with the overflowings of each other's kindness. The story affords the pleasantness contention of love and friendship, and strivings for masteries; and accordingly, as to the passionate part, the victory is decided on David's side, 1 Sam. 20:41. They both wept one with another, 'until David exceeded,' says the text And yet again, for the real part and demonstration of friendship, Jonathan had the advantage to outvie David. Jonathan had a kingdom to lose for his sake, being heir-apparent by birth; yet he ventures his own life to save his, who he believed should be king in his room: 'And let me but live,' saith he, 'and not die,' ver. 14. 'And let me be the next in the kingdom,' chap. 23:17. But David had another and greater friend, even God; and how his affections overflowed the banks towards him, the Psalms do shew. How often have we him breaking forth, 'I love thee, Lord!' and 'Oh how do I love thy law!' And how eloquent is he in that his solemn and his almost last thanksgiving, 1 Chron. 29. Now, the truth is, the real part is God's; the fond, affectionate part of friendship, it should be ours. He had a Son to give away, and his Son a life, a kingdom; and both of them agreed to do it. We have little to lose, and can do lees for them: Oh yet let us love them, and love to tell them so! Hast thou ever yet lain in those everlasting arms? Or when thou at any time dost, and his banner of love is spread over thee, what hath thy heart meditated concerning God at such a time? As a liberal heart is said to devise liberal things, so a loving heart will devise loving things. I use to say, whatever ingenuity, wit, rhetoric any one hath (and I speak of those that excel therein), there are times wherein God hath the flower, the eminency of them, vented in strains of love to him in



prayer. He hath at one time or other every man's strength and prime. What affections or expressions thou hast to bestow on friend or wife, God will have them from thee to himself; and if thy spirit be narrow, and shut up to such a way, yet thou wilt and mayest be able to vent that love thou bearest him in blunt and downright expressions: 'Lord,' said Peter, 'thou knowest I love thee,' if I ever loved anything. Yea, I have known some bad and churlish natures to their other relations, in whose spirits, upon observation of them, you should scarce find any strains of pure ingenuity pass from them to any other; yet in their narrations of what hath been between God and them, they have been brought to the lowest submission, the highest resignations of themselves for him and his glory, and as great strains of ingenuity as any other. As physicians say of a child in the womb, if there be any good blood or spirits in the mother's body, the child will have it; the nutritive and formative virtue doth and will attract it. So if there be any good nature in thee, God will have it at one time or other. Yea, how often falls it out, that even souls that want assurance of God's love to themselves, yet can please themselves in blessing God, or at least admiring him for that goodness and blessedness which is in him, and which he enjoys for loving himself, and aiming at his own glory: for his so dearly loving his Son (whom also their souls love), and for his being good to others! And they find it real in their souls to do so. Yea, and sometimes when they come to pray, and are shut up for want of vent in other desires, they yet can fall a-telling God how well they love him, and what (if he would be pleased to enable them) they would do for him; and they can do these things when they can do nothing else. Yea, and because in real performances they find they can do little, and are not satisfied with the opportunities they have in view at present, the heart will be venting itself in suppositions and feignings with itself, what in case of God's condemning them at the latter day; so that, should they lose their labour, they would say, in way of ingenuity, what farewell they would then take of him; how they would demean themselves in hell, when their souls should be filled with the noise of others' blasphemies; how they would speak well of him, and rebuke their fellow-thieves, as that good thief did.

And because in suppositions higher strains of love may be vented than God will ever put us really to act, therefore the heart often seeks vent for its vast desires this way.

Thus Christ, to shew his love to his Father, in submitting to his will and love, made a supposition of the cup's passing from him, which yet he knew could not by God's decree. And thus Paul wished himself accursed from Christ for his brethren's sake. Or else the heart will go about to do it, by separating acts of obedience from self-respects; and this in a way of supposition of such things as will not fall out. But yet, suppose they should, yet, Lord, say they, I will trust thee. As Job, 'though he kill me, yet will I trust in him.' It was a supposition of the worst. Or else the heart will be chalking out within itself, what it would do for God if it were in such a power, in such a place of opportunity of service, as Herbert in his poems speaks. At these, and a thousand other ways, love will be creeping out when it cannot go, nor, alas, is ever able to perform. And these stirrings and ventings of love, God is infinitely taken with, and knows the mind of the spirit in them. These strains are pleasant: this is melody and music in his ears. Know this, that communion with God lies not only μετ' ἀλλήλων, as John speaks of it, 1 John 1:7 (as I understand the place), when it is mutual, he telling us his love, and so drawing forth ours, when there is an æstus, a reciprocation of love from him to us, and so from us again to him; but also, when he doth not shed abroad his in our hearts, to an overcoming assurance, and yet strongly draws forth ours to him, as hath been expressed; and that is true communion with him as on our parts, and affects the soul accordingly. For though it be true that we love him because he loves us, as to the reality of the thing, yet it is not always so in our apprehension, nor necessary to the drawing forth of our love to him.

(3.) Delight much in him. Friendship well placed affords the highest delight. Besides what I noted out of Solomon, of the sweetness of a friend, David, the father, also had experimented it, 2 Sam. 1:26, in his beloved Jonathan: 'Thou hast been very pleasant to me,' says he

there. And again of Jonathan it is said, he 'delighted much in David,' 1 Sam. 19:2. If, therefore, God and thou be friends, retire thyself into him, and make up thy delights in him. And thus both Christ and his church do mutually express themselves touching each other: 'Oh how fair and pleasant art thou, O love, for delights,' Cant. 7:6, says he of her; 'Behold, thou art fair, my beloved, yea, pleasant,' says she of him, Cant. 1:16. Ps. 37:4: 'Delight thyself also in the Lord.' Yea, and the psalmist prescribes it as the readiest, speediest way to get despatch of all our particular suits and requests: so it follows, 'And he shall give thee the desires of thy heart.' As it is said of God, that 'to the pure he will shew himself pure,' Ps. 18:26, so to the ingenuous he will shew himself ingenuous. A soul that hath many wants and requests to put up to him, and yet comes to him and really says, Lord, though I want these and these things in my outward condition, yet I am well pleased, for I have enough in thee alone; though I had nothing, and though thou hast made me these and these promises, besides the making over of thyself unto me, yet thou art my portion, mine inheritance, and my lot is fallen in a pleasant place is thee, Ps. 16:6; thou art my exceeding great reward. Whilst God sees that thou thus settest thyself to delight in him, he at once grants thee all else thou wouldst desire. This is the most compendious art of begging. 'Be acquainted with him,' saith Eliphaz to Job, Job 22:21, 'and thou shalt have thy delight in the Almighty,' ver. 26; 'and thou shalt have gold,' ver. 24; 'and thou shalt have silver,' ver. 25. Thou shalt have anything of him, take but that method. Art thou in any great distress? Go alone, think of his love, think of himself, what a God thou hast whom thou servest and lovest. His love, and himself apprehended, embraced and meditated on, affords the greatest delight: Ps. 104:34, 'My meditation of him shall be sweet, I will be glad in the Lord.' Life we say is sweet, and death is bitter (as Agag's speech implies, 'the bitterness of death is past'); but 'thy loving-kindness, O God, is better than life,' and hath the sweetness of all good in it, if the Holy Ghost gives thee but a taste of it. Christ's love was such as sweetened death itself to him, which we account so bitter: 'It Was stronger than death' (says Solomon), Cant. 8:6. How sweet then must that love in itself be, and

to the soul that tastes it? Therefore 'Rejoice in the Lord; and again I say, Rejoice.' Let God be your chiefest good in the most prosperous days, and he will be your only good in your worst days. A friend is for adversity; and therefore, 'though the fig-tree blossom not,' &c., 'and all things fail me, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation,' Heb. 3:17, 18. What is the reason men pray not often, nor much, and in the end perhaps do give it over? You have the reason: Job 27:10, 'They delight not in the Almighty.' But yet content not thyself with the performance of duties: Isa. 58:2, 'They take delight in approaching to God;' that is, in the outward performance of it; but let thy delight be in God himself. We rejoice in God, saith the apostle, Rom. 5:11. And let not delights derived from God only content thee; but let thy delight be in God, and the excellencies that are in him.

(4.) A fourth particular wherein the communion of friendship lies, is unfolding secrets. There is a kind of civil shrift between friends, saith Verulam; the style of friend is a 'man of my secret,' Job 19:19. That which is translated 'my inward friends,' is in the Hebrew, and varied in the margin, 'the men of my secret.' A friend is 'as a man's own soul,' Deut. 13:6. As in respect of love, so in respect of laying up all that is in a friend's soul, all that is one's own. And this use and advantage, or improvement, a man is to make of his friendship with God, to unburden his mind, and spread his heart before him. In Scripture, prayer is termed a pouring out one's soul to God. So it is spoken of Hannah's prayer, 1 Sam. 1:15, which is interpreted by that in Lam. 2:19, 'a pouring out the soul like water, before the face of the Lord.' She had, as it were, wept it out at her eyes, and poured it forth in tears. The same is eminent also in David: Ps. 142:2, 'I poured out my complaint before him;' that is, as it follows, 'I shewed before him my trouble.' And this is done in case of distress, when the 'heart is overwhelmed,' as in ver. 3. And in the very same words, the title of the 102d Psalm expresseth it, 'A prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the Lord.' If thou hast some great affliction or secret, which is not fit to trust man, no, not thy nearest friend with, and yet thy

heart is ready to break with it, the heart, in that case, is apt to tell it to man, that it may have some present ease. But take my counsel, try God alone first, and hereby shew how only a friend thou makest of him, by telling it alone to him, easing thy heart to him alone. He thinks himself honoured by it, and takes it well at thy hands; and if he encourageth thee, or necessitates thee to tell it to another (as in some cases, James 5:16), then do so. As for distresses thou art in, so for thy sin; the more communion there is betwixt God and us, the more secret sins will God discover to us, and the more will we again disclose to God. This is made an absolute consequence of holding fellowship with God; for the apostle having spoken of fellowship with God, 1 John 1:3, 6, 7, he adds, ver. 9, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive.' He speaks it, as without which none can preserve communion with God entire; for whilst we labour to walk in nearer, so closer communion with God, yet 'if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves,' ver. 8. Now then, here lies the coherence of the 9th verse with the former, confess your sin, if you say you have fellowship with him; for the law and nature of true and entire communion and fellowship between two as friends requires, that if the one sins against the other, he should disclose and confess it; this friendship cannot hold else, and it is well we can have pardon so. Now, says John, we do all sin; therefore, in order to hold communion with God, confess thy sins. And a further reason is, that one great part of God's friendship towards us is seen in pardoning sins. John hints it, he is faithful to forgive, as a friend is faithful to perform his promise. And if he should not, none could retain friendship a moment with him; but if he pardons, he will have the score acknowledged; even as though he promiseth, he yet will be sought to, as the prophet speaks. And the more the soul finds that God pardons, the more willing and free it is to confess, Ezek. 16:61–63, knowing it is to a friend that will not take advantage of the acknowledgment. Likewise lay open all thy jealousies thou hast of his love; another friend would never bear it; but, alas! God knows them all already, and is used to them, and will ease thee of them. Tell him all thy doubts, scruples, and objections thou hast about thy estate and of his love; spread even all, lay open thy case plainly,

without guile (as David speaks, Ps. 32), and he will answer them all, and discover to thee that sincerity of heart that is in thee towards him, and how well he loves thee notwithstanding; and this other friends will not do.

## CHAPTER VI

What our behaviour toward God, as his friends, ought to be, with respect unto his providential dispensations to us.—We should ask his advice and counsel on all occasions.—We should make use of and depend upon his favour and assistance in all affairs.—We should have an entire confidence in him, without any jealousy or distrust.

I shall now begin a new and second set of duties, which our relation of friendship with him brings upon us; such as do respect his providential outward dispensations towards us, as the former related to communion with his person. As much of God's friendship unto us is given forth in his ordering all things that fall out unto us for good, so much on our part lies in observing those his dealings, and applying ourselves to him therein. And for that I give these following directions:—

1. First, Ask his advice and counsel upon all occasions, and in all (especially great) turnings of thy life. This is in improvement of a friend whom we count wise and faithful. Thus David sets out a man who had been his friend: 'Thou, O man, my guide' (says he, Ps. 55:13); 'and we took sweet counsel together,' says he, ver. 14. Yea, when one that we have chosen for our friend, and is a friend indeed, is yet below us in parts and wisdom, yet we love to see how our thoughts look in the glass of his mind and apprehensions. You may see it in God himself, who is the most perfect pattern of friendship, as of all relations else. He, you well know, needs no advice; for who is his counsellor? Rom. 11:34. Yet when he was to do a great act, whereof the whole world would ring, and when he knew it would

certainly come to Abraham's ears, though it did not concern Abraham's particular at all, yet, says God with himself, I have singled forth this poor man to be my friend, and shall I do so great an act, that will make such a report, and not tell Abraham of it? Gen. 18:17, 'Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?' That ingenuity that works in the heart of a friend, wrought in the heart of God, insomuch as he could not do a great thing, but he must tell his friend of it. He speaks as one shackled and restrained by the laws of friendship; and upon that law he had an inward regret when he came to the execution of it. The ground and account thereof the text gives you, Abraham was the friend of God. And Abraham followed God in the same path, and upon the same principle, though *haud passibus æquis*, not with equal pace; he stirred not a foot without God's direction, Isa. 41:2, where it is said, 'God called him' (that is, Abraham\*) 'to his foot;' which the apostle, in Heb. 11:8, interprets thus: he went out, not knowing whither he went, but gave up himself and every step unto God's direction and appointment. And we have the like instance of friendship to God in David: Ps. 73:23, 24, 'Nevertheless I am continually with thee; thou hast holden me by thy right hand. Thou shalt guide me by thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory. That word nevertheless brings this as a lesson and experiment he had learned from the contrary. He had had the reins laid upon his own neck for a while, and was left to the counsel of his own heart, and so he had miscarried. 'So foolish was I,' says he, 'and as a beast before thee;' ver. 22, 'Nevertheless thou holdest me by my right hand;' that is, I have found by this experience, that when I, being left to myself, am gone out of the way, yet thou secretly and invisibly holdest me by the hand, to reduce and bring me back again. And what lesson learns he from it, and what conclusion issues thence? You have it in ver. 24, 'Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel,' and I will never more follow my own, but give myself up to thee (as Herbert well expresseth it in his poems), only give me thy hand, since both mine eyes are thine. Neither doth the psalmist mean his hand merely to guide, but to support and strengthen: 'Thou holdest me by my right hand'. And I also observe it, that God's guiding of us by his counsel serves us but

in this life; but afterwards he is said to receive us to glory; he pulls us up, by the same hand which here guided us, unto that glory above. You have seen an instance or example of this. See a promise also on God's part for this, which calls loud upon us for this duty: Isa. 30:21, 'And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee saying, This is the way, walk in it, when ye turn to the right hand, or when ye turn to the left.' God had promised in the words before to give them teachers, who doctrinally, or by the delivery of the right rules, should teach them the good and right way: 'Thy teachers shall not be removed from thee,' &c. Well, but we poor Christians are to put those rules and instructions our teachers give us into practice and execution; and when we are personally to act, we have not our teachers and tutors by us, and (God wot) we through ignorance (as the psalmist, Ps. 73) or forgetfulness are, when we come to act, at a loss, and know not which way to turn us. Hence therefore at the voice of thy cry, when he shall hear it, he will answer thee, ver. 19, and upon such outcries and occasions promiseth his Spirit, who can be and is always with us: 'Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee saying, This is the way,' &c. The psalmist had said, 'Thou holdest me by my right hand, unknown to me, and wilt guide me by thy counsel.' The prophet says, 'Thou shalt hear a word behind thee,' wherein he compares him to a friend or companion, that secretly watcheth aloof of another friend he takes care of, whom he lets go to see how he will order his steps of himself, yet in great straits and turnings, or (as the text expresseth it) when he turns to the right hand or the left, comes stealing behind thee; so the phrase is, comes behind thee, and whispers (for it is called a word), This is the way, walk in it. The prophet compares him to a bonus genius, who doth aurem vellicare, pull him by the ear, and brings things practicable 'to our remembrance,' as Christ hath it. The psalmist compares him to a companion that never leaves us, but gives strength as well as guidance: 'Thou art continually with me, and holdest me by the hand.' These things are evidently spoken of guiding us in practice, as these phrases, 'This is the way, walk in it,' as also 'turning to the right hand and the left,' do import. They declare the various occasions and affairs of man's life, his going hither and thither, as



elsewhere it is expressed. This for the promise of God. Now then, that God de facto effectually performs when he is sought to by thee, that other passage of the psalmist assures us: Ps. 37:23, 'The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord;' which is spoken in respect of that happy issue and success which good men's actions are through the blessing of God accompanied withal. But what if he falls into any disaster? It follows, ver. 24, 'Though he fall, he shall not utterly be cast down; for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.' Therefore in all thy ways take Solomon's counsel: Prov. 3:6, 'In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.' To acknowledge God in all thy ways doth in Solomon's sense import,

(1.) To come to God in a sensibleness of a man's own inability to guide himself in any of his ways, which the same Solomon pathetically utters, 'How can a man understand his ways?' And Jeremiah having by vision understood that great calamity that was in his time to come upon his nation, not knowing what might become of himself, nor which way to take to help himself, comes to God, and cries out concerning his own person: Jer. 10:23, 'I know that the way of a man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.' And therefore seeing I must be involved in a common calamity, I submit to thy correcting hand: 'Correct me' (if thou pleasest), 'but not with judgment; not in anger.' And God dealt with him accordingly, he had the best quarter from the king of Babel of all the Jews.

(2.) It imports that we should acknowledge him, by giving ourselves up to his direction, as is evident from what follows: 'He shall direct thy paths.' His meaning therefore is, so to acknowledge him as to give a man's self up to his direction; or if you will have it in the terms this aphorism was first expressed in, take his advice and counsel. And so the opposition both before and after carries it: 'Lean not to thine own understanding, and be not wise in thine own eyes.' Often, though man knows not his own way, yet having distrusted his own understanding, and coming in simplicity to God for counsel by prayer, either God in prayer leaves a biasing impression on his

heart, which is the voice behind him, or by providence casts him upon it. And truly when a soul hath thus come unto God, he may blindfold cast it on him. I end this direction with this great consolatory, that look as Jesus Christ is thy priest to obtain and accomplish thy salvation, so he is thy prophet; that is, his prophetic office is in its kind as much for thee and thy good, and for ordering thy ways, as his priestly office is for thy salvation hereafter. And he being the mighty counsellor, that knows all events and issues, will, if thou hast addressed unto him under that relation, put forth his abilities and power given him in that office for thee, to direct thee as effectually as to save thee, therefore present all to him.

2. When thou hast thus asked and sought his advice, be sure thou follow it. To that end, observe the impressions which God upon seeking him maketh upon thy spirit in prayer. Observe the most swaying weight that God casts into the balance, when otherwise the scales are even. Observe especially what spiritual motives, that are purely for God, are cast into thy heart (for they are from God which are most for God), and follow them fully, as Caleb is said to do. Our Lord and Saviour Christ is in this (as in all things else practicable by us) a pattern to us. He was (as you know) to die and offer up himself to God, and to enter into a conflict with his wrath for sin. He saw the black cloud and the storm coming, and some drops had been let fall upon his soul: John 12:27, 28, and nature (as you know) wrought in him, and you have heard the voice and cry of it, 'Lord, let this cup pass!' Now you read in Ps. 16:7, Christ blessing the Lord for giving him counsel: 'I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel; my reins also instruct me in the night-seasons. I have set the Lord always before me, &c. Therefore my flesh rests in hope: thou wilt not leave my soul in hell.' Concerning which passages in this Psalm Peter hath plainly instructed us, Acts 2:25, 29–37, that they were immediately intended of Christ, and not of David at all, as his type or shadow, as in other psalms and passages of prophecy. And they are (being thus applied unto Christ) the inward workings and discussions of his soul when he was to give up himself to that

great encounter and adventure, the greatest that ever creature was to undergo. You have the inward agitations of his spirit, and the considerations that heartened him to give himself up unto it, ver. 8–11. He mentions the night seasons, in which his reins instructed him. Now you read, Luke 21:37, that immediately before his passover, chap. 22:1, 2, he spent the mornings in preaching, but the nights in mount Olivet, to pray all night to God, according to his custom, Luke 6:12. And the context immediately before this, ver. 37 of Luke 21 shews it, 'Watch ye therefore and pray,' ver. 36, for which his example is propounded, ver. 37. Thus he spent the night before his passion; for Jesus knew beforehand all that should come upon him, John 18:4. But thus especially he spent that night in which he was betrayed and taken. You know how he spent the time in prayers and conflicts, with strong cries and tears, being heard in that he feared; Heb. 5:7, great fears and conflicts were upon him, he was at a stand: 'Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.' And when his soul was thus wrestling it out, God evidently came in with a new and peremptory declaration that he would have him go through with it, which that speech that immediately follows shews: 'Not my will, but thine, be done,' which, say I, was Christ's motto. Why, now that which I aim at to my purpose in hand is, that Christ blesseth his Father for giving him this counsel, and supporting him with this advice: 'I will bless the Lord who hath given me counsel.' To be sure we have cause to bless God that gave him that counsel; it was good counsel for us; and you hear of this conflicting no more; but after that, though he knew all that should come upon him, he went forth, and said unto them, 'Whom seek ye?' John 18:4. Peter had given him other counsel, 'Master, spare thyself;' but God, that was his ancient friend, gave him this counsel, and he thankfully receives it, follows it, and blesseth him for it that ever he gave it him. My brethren, such advices in great and difficult cases God gives us in prayer and by the word, and the flesh comes and gives the contrary. Solomon, Eccles. 7:16, brings in a man solicited by flesh and spirit, by contrary counsels. Says the flesh, 'Be not righteous over much,' not too strict; 'why shouldest thou destroy thyself,' waste thy spirits in duties, and bring miseries and hazards

of ruin to thy name, estate, and life, which attend ordinarily a living godly in Christ Jesus? On the contrary, replies the spirit, 'Be not over much wicked; why shouldest thou die before thy time?' Loose ways and courses will bring thee to thy grave sooner than the course of nature; 'A dart will strike though thy liver,' &c., and thou wilt go to hell when thou hast done. And Paul speaks similarly unto this, Rom. 8:12–14, 'Therefore, brethen, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.' The meaning whereof is, follow not the counsel of the flesh, it is the counsel of a flatterer, an enemy. It adviseth thee, as the young men did Rehoboam, for thy hurt; or its advice is like that of Job's wife, 'Curse God and die'; or like that of Peter to Christ, 'Master, spare thyself.' Where had our salvation been then? And where will thine be if thou followest it? But, on the contrary, Paul exhorts them to give themselves up to the Spirit, to be led by him as God's sons, ver. 14. His advice is the advice of a father, of a comforter; and though his advice for the present may lead thee into such a way and course, as for which thou mayest hazard life, yet consider, said he, ver. 11, that he that raised up Jesus from the dead, and, as you heard, gave him counsel to die, will raise up thy mortal body again; whereas, if you follow the flesh's advice, and mortify not the deeds thereof, ye shall die. Above all, take heed of rejecting his counsel when thou hast asked it; as the Pharisees are said to have done against themselves, Luke 7:30, and the people in the prophet Jeremiah did. The heathen, when they inquired of their oracles, durst not go and do contrary; nor would Socrates act against what his genius dictated; much less let us act against the counsel of God and his Spirit, for this breaks friendship with him. Yea, let me cast in this, take his very reproof kindly; Prov. 27:5, 6, 'Even the wounds of a friend are faithful.' He speaks it of rebukes: ver. 5, 'Let the righteous smite me,' says David, Ps. 141:5, 'it shall be a kindness; let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break, but cure my head.' If, therefore, the righteous God shall smite me, if the Holy Spirit, who is that holy anointing, rebukes thee in thy way,

it is to save thee, to heal thee, and to comfort thee in the end: 'He went on frowardly in the way of his heart, and I smote him,' says God, Isa. 57:17. But it was to heal him: 'I will heal him, and restore comforts to him.'

3. Make use of his favour and friendship in all businesses, and depend thereon alone. God would have all kindnesses run through his hands, for he would have all your thanks; as David said to Barzillai, 2 Sam. 19:38, 'Whatever thou requestest of me, that will I do for thee,' that doth God say to us. Great men in power that are friends take it ill, if it be a suit wherein they can stead us, if we use or trust to other friends beside them, for by doing so, we either question their power or their love.

There are two things which this direction holds forth: 1. To use God in small matters as well as great. And 2. To make use of his special favour and peculiar love in all.

1st. Let us make use of God in small things as well as great, even all. It is said, Isa. 26:12, he works all our works in us and for us. It is read both ways, for we have two sorts of works to be done: 1. Inward, in our own spirits; and 2. Outward, which are for us in the course of providence; and of the two, the inward is of the greater concernment, not to fear what we shall suffer, but what we shall do. We are to use God in small things, and herein God's friendship exceeds that of men's; for men are shy to use great friends about trifles, but reserve their interest for greater; for they are both loath to be troubled, and cannot mind us therein, and their stock of favour is soon spent; but God doth not deal so with us. I observe in the parable made on purpose (as one evangelist hath it) to encourage us and provoke us to pray, Christ represents the πρότασις, or story of it, thus: Luke 11:5, that a man having a friend, goes to him at midnight, and says to him, Lend me three loaves. What! trouble a friend for so small a matter as three loaves, and that at midnight; and those not for himself neither, it is for his friend's friend; ver. 6, 'For a friend of mine is come to me, and I

have nothing to set before him.' Christ shews the disposition of a man in this case: ver. 7, 'He from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee.' They are loath to be troubled in such a case, though they are neighbours and friends, and may themselves need the like at another time. And yet, ver. 8, for importunity's sake, though not for friendship, he will rise and give him them. Now the reddition or moral of this is, that much more God, that professeth himself a friend and father, ver. 13, will hear you in whatever you ask, even the smallest, if a man asks an egg, or asks a fish, as Christ insinuates, ver. 11, 12, or daily bread, as he had taught them, ver. 3. And he thinks it no trouble, at all seasons, upon all occasions, to be visited. Come to him at midnight, come to him for thy friend's friend, for what thou wilt; this is an honour to him, he is hereby acknowledged to be God that ruleth and governeth all things, even the least.

2dly. Make use of God's peculiar love in all. Outward providential mercies do come to the people of God out of peculiar love, as the connection of Rom. 8:28, 29, tells us. The love of friendship in God is the fountain and spring of all; out of that he bestows all, and therefore will have it acknowledged in all. If therefore, in thy outward affairs, thou seekest God for a mercy, and thou hast found a particular promise which mentions the very thing thou needest, yet let me advise thee to go to eternal love, and treat with it to bestow it on thee, and treat with it in all as well as for thy salvation. My brethren, the effectualness of this cause\* is not known enough; to be sure the thing is not enough practised by saints.

1. It is utterly a fault that either, even in great matters, they treat not with God, or walk rashly whilst they are in dependence on God for them; that is, they leave the issue and casting of such a matter to all adventures, and seek him not in it; which often provokes God to give a man a sound stroke, a shrewd blow, ere he is aware, in what is most near to him, as if he cared not where he did hit him. The

Israelites would have a king, but God gave him in his anger, and took him away in his wrath.

2. Or else they treat not his special favour, but leave it to bare ordinary providence; and things which accordingly come out of ordinary providence, are by the course of that providence turned into bitter crosses, even to God's own people; though when they are taught otherwise, and humbled, his love at last turns them again into blessings. But those wherein eternal love is sought, prove pure blessings, and God adds no sorrow with them. The Israelites did seek a king at the hands of God, and yet God complains: Hos. 8:4, 'They have set up kings, but not by me; they have made princes, but I knew it not.' And yet how could so great a matter be done without him by whom kings reign, and who knows all that is done in the world? But they carried it so as they sought not God in it, nor acquainted him with it. They did it ipso inconsulto, without advising with him, or interesting him in them; and without having recourse to, and dependence upon, his favour. If a man should see his son or his friend stand among the crowd of beggars that wait at his door for a common dole, and that he casts his lot for his meals with them, to be served as his turn comes, as they are, would not this provoke him? would he not say, What do you mean thus to stand there? are you not at home? Why do you not come to me for money for all necessaries? Or why do you not come in and sit down at table, and eat with me as becomes sons and friends to do? Thus doth God take it ill to see his own children carelessly stand at the common door of providence, when they should come in and seek what they want by prayer, and interest his fatherly love in the business. The truth is, that those blessings only prove pure, stable blessings, which are fetched ex isto dolio. As God gives, so he would have you receive; now he gives out of eternal love, and that therefore he will have us apply unto.

4. Yet I add, take some seeming denials of particular requests of thine kindly from him. Remember it is friendship with a superior, who is only wise, knows what is best for thee, hath many great and

vast ends in the government of this world; and some things thou hast earnestly desired for thy particular, may and do cross some other and greater designs for his glory. As kings that have large interests, multitude of persons and things to deal with, are forced to deny some things which their dearest favourites ask of them, as crossing some other engagement, or more general project. But if God denies the he will be sure to remember thee in some other thing.

The truth is, we shew ourselves unfriendly to God, and usurp upon the privileges and dues of friendship, if we expect everything should be as we would have it. 'Should it be as thou wilt?' as God said to Job. God denied Moses his request of entering into Canaan, and it was a great request of him; and yet he murmurs not, but quietly goes up and dies, as God bade him.

5. Trust God especially in great exigents, and take heed of being jealous of him. Mutual confidence is a great part of friendship; therefore David, speaking of his friend, saith, 'Yea mine own familiar friend whom I trusted,' Ps. 41:9. If a man were to procure the friendship of another, he would deal with him in his kind: as if you were to deal with a covetous man, ye would bring him gold; if with a vain-glorious man, you would flatter him. But now the way to deal with God, and to procure friendship with him, is to trust him; and the reason is, because he doth all his kindnesses freely; and one that doth all freely desires to be trusted before he doth the benefit, and to be thanked after. Since I knew what love and friendship was, I have the less wondered why God chose our faith rather than our love to save us by, and that he calls so much for it. The reason is plain, that one that loves much desires rather (and prefers it far) to have the party he freely loves to believe much that he loves him, than that he should love him, for he desires to magnify his own love to them. Now that is God's distinction, for it is his main end, in loving us, to commend his love. The Holy Ghost exhorts, Ps. 37:3, 'Trust in the Lord, and cast all thy care upon him.' Friends are *participes curarum*, they are partners in our cares. There are two



eminent places for this: 1 Pet. 5:7, 'Cast all your care upon God, for he careth for you.' and Phil. 4:6, 'Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your request be made known unto God.' Be careful or solicitous in nothing; he doth not say, God leaves small things unto us, or that we should not be anxious, but avoid τὰς μερίμνας, those cares that divide and distract the soul. Great momentous care is God's work, not ours. 'Cast all your care upon him,' says Peter, 'for he careth for you' He speaks it of the sorest trials under God's mighty hand, ver. 6. He quotes Ps. 55 ver. 22, 'Cast thy burden on the Lord.' So much care as is a burden on thy thoughts, lay it on God. What a friendly part is this, that God loves us so well as he would have no burden lie on our spirits, but is willing to take that burden on himself! Let me have all the load, says he, like a friend that travels with another, and for his friend's ease carries and takes off all the baggage. God is not only willing to bear it with us, but to take it wholly off from us on himself. He doth not only offer to take one end of it, and so ease us (as the word is, Rom. 8:26, συναντιλαμβάνεται), to help us only by taking it together with us at the other end of our burden, but he takes it wholly off; 'Cast thy burden on him, for he careth for you.' The truth is, says he, whether you trust him or no, he careth for you: or it is spoken thus, his is the great care; as if we should say to a wife that hath a good husband to her consort, he takes all the care, and is so wise as you need take none, but may sleep quietly and take your ease; so doth God say to us. Qui habuit tui curam antequam esses, quomodo non habebit cum jam es? says Augustine. He took care how to redeem thee from sin, and he will for all things else. Yea, he takes such care for every one, as if he took care of none else. Only, indeed, this Paul requires, Philip. 4, 'that in every thing our requests should be made known to God.' He would not have us so much as troubled; only, says he, come and tell me; that is enough, and it is but what a man would do to friend when burdened, if it were but to ease his mind; not that God needs that we should make known our requests to him, for he knows, says Christ, 'you have need of these things;' but that there may be a recourse to him, that he may be acknowledged to be the carer for you, and also your

dependence on him may be owned: Prov. 3:5, 6, 'Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.' He speaks it as a friend, that would have his friends but come and tell him when they want. It is as if he said, Come, and but communicate your wants and your necessities to me, and I will supply them. Thus our Abraham in the text did trust in God as a friend, when he went to offer up Isaac. O father, says Isaac, 'but where is the sacrifice?' 'Take no care, son,' says he; 'God will provide,' Gen. 22:8, 9, 13, 14. Hence that proverb went amongst the Jews, when any one was afflicted, that 'in the mount the Lord would be seen,' and provide, as he did for Abraham and Isaac in their straits. Let your heart, therefore, in all occurrences be quiet, and repose itself safely in him; 'trust him at all times,' Ps. 62:8, and trust him in all things, and in small things as well as great; make use of him, and come to him for every thing, for he thinks you account him not your friend else, and he thinks it no trouble but an honour to him.

I add to this an appendix of it: be not jealous of him. There cannot be a greater wrong done to friendship. Trust hath made many a friend; and so, on the contrary, suspicion hath broke many fast and entire friendships. Hence charity, or love to men, binds us to interpret all thing well. 1 Cor. 13:5, 'Charity thinketh no evil, believing all things for the present, hopeth all things for the future.' And if this rule hold of men, who are a lie, as the scripture speaks, and of whom a suspicion may be that they are false, and a lie is in their ways, then much more is this true in love, and much more ought we to act thus to God, who is truth itself, Rom. 3:4, and love is itself, 1 John 4:16. And accordingly, as his nature is love and truth, so all his ways are mercy and truth, Ps. 25:10. They are mercy in respect of aiming at our good, and truth in respect of fulfilling his promises and faithful carriage to us; therefore whatsoever befalls thee, though it be clean contrary to thy expectation, interpret it in love. Many actions of men are such so a good interpretation cannot be put upon them, nor a good construction made of them; therefore interpreters restrain those sayings of love, that it believes all, &c.;

that is, credibilia, all thing believable, otherwise to put all upon charity, will eat out charity. But none of God's ways are such, but love and faith may pick a good meaning out of them. A bono Deo nil nisi bonum, from a good God there comes nothing but what is good; and therefore say Job, 'Though he kill me, I will trust in him.' Endeavour to spy out some end of his for good at the present, and if none ariseth to thy conjecture, resolve it into faith, and make the best of it. To be jealous provoketh God exceedingly, for no faithful friend can endure to be suspected. It breaks amity between man and wife when they live never so entirely; and the reason is because one that loves and makes a business of it to shew himself a friend, and counts it one of his greatest excellencies, as God doth (for all his attributes seem but to set out his love), cannot therefore bear to have it questioned. Take a man that is both wise and loving, and he had rather be thought unwise by his friend, than unloving or false to him. It provoked God much, well nigh so much so anything, that the people of Israel said that he brought them into the wilderness to destroy them, which sin moved him to destroy many of them. And yet thus, and worse, do many wrong God, who though God hath humbled them, and given them many evident tokens of his love and everlasting good will, yet still they suspect it to be but a common work, that God hath enlightened them, to make their damnation greater. He hath brought as out of Egypt indeed, say they, the gross sins that others lie in, but it is but to destroy us: Jer. 29:11, 'I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord: thoughts of peace, not of evil, to give an expected end.' It was when the people were carried away captive into Babylon, they thought God carried them thither to destroy them, these were their thoughts; and therefore, in opposition unto their thoughts, saith God, it is no matter what you think, I know the thoughts I think, even to give an expected end; that is, as good an end as you could wish. God speaks like one suspected, and is fain to comfort himself, as it were, with the consciousness of his own thoughts toward them, against the hard thoughts and speeches they had of him. Well, but I know mine own heart, says God. His eyes were as much and more upon the end of their deliverance and peace after seventy years, than upon the

captivity itself, as appears by the verse going before; for the end is first ordained, and chiefly in an agent's eye. Let but God alone. See the end he made with Job; says James, chap. 5:11, whilst God was a-pulling down Job's estate and house piece after piece, Job nor no stander by could have known what to have made of God's purpose in it; but the issue was such as was evident to the eye of all beholders, that all this was in love. Therefore he useth this phrase, 'Ye have seen the end of the Lord in it.' He did but put down the old house to set up a new one; some interpret it of Christ's passion, you have seen the end of the Lord Jesus. Whilst the apostles and believers beheld him on the cross, yea, the angels themselves, they might wonder what God meant to do with him, what should be in his thoughts to hang his Son there; but ye have seen the end of the Lord, saith he. 'For we have seen Jesus, through the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour,' Heb. 2:9. This was fresh news in those days, for it was new done, so as they saw it. When thou art in affliction, thou art apt to think that he is a-destroying thee, but thou knowest not his thoughts. If a man be poor and down in the world, then he is apt to say, If God did love me, he would not suffer me to be so low; if rich, he is apt to say that God puts him off as Abraham did his younger sons, and reserves his inheritance for others. So likewise young Christians are often jealous that God will one day take advantage against them for their offending him and backslidings, and take his favour from them and cast them off; but do not suspect him, for he is a constant friend. It is a slander papists and Arminians have raised on him, that he should cast away those are entered into friendship with him, and discard his old friends; and therefore, Isa. 55:3, God's mercies are called 'the sure mercies of David.' If others have comfort, joy, and peace, which such an one wants, the poor man begins to be jealous of God, as if God did not love him; as when the Gentiles were called, Zion was jealous, and took it amiss, Isa. 49:14, and says, 'God hath forgotten me.'

6. Study his favours, how to find out his loving-kindness in them. God would not willingly lose his kindness in what he doth. As a wise man would not his notions on one that is not apprehensive or

capable of them, and a man's love is dearer to him than his notions; this is the least reciprocation of friendship that can be expected. God doth study how to contrive all the circumstances of his mercies, so as to make them mercies, and to shew his love in them, and accordingly orders them. He thinks how to bring them in best to make them take, when and where they will be best placed and bestowed, and most seen and taken notice of. He waits to be gracious, Isaiah tells us, even as a curious orator orders all his matters, brings in this after this, and sets out all with metaphors and elegancies, and all to make it take and please his hearers; so doth God strew mercies through thy whole life, and you should study them and the circumstances of them, as you would study and delight to read a curious speech, and observe all the art that love hath bestowed upon the whole. As you shall have a world of wit and matter couched in a word, a short sentence, so God casts out sometimes a sea of love in a drop of providence, in a small by-passage that a man would scarce take notice of. Ps. 139, when David considered but that part of it, of his outward and ordinary providence only, he wonders: 'Marvellous are thy works,' says he; 'and that my soul knows right well,' ver. 14. David had studied them, he was versed and skilful in them. 'How precious,' saith he, 'are thy thoughts, or the thoughts of thee unto me? O Lord, how great are the number of them!' And Ps. 111:2-4, 'The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein. His work is honourable and glorious; and his righteousness endureth for ever. He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: the Lord is gracious, and full of compassion.' His goodness and compassion he would have observed by us; more especially, 'the Lord is gracious, and full of compassion,' so it is in the close of all, and therein lies the glory that is the conclusion of all. And as in searching into any experiments in nature, there is an infinite pleasure that accompanies such a study to them that are addicted thereunto; so to him that hath pleasure in such works of God, and is addicted to spy out his kindness in them, there is nothing so pleasant as the discovery of such or such a new circumstance of mercy, that renders it glorious and honourable. Get therefore skill in his dealings with

thee, and study thy friend's carriage to thee. It is the end why he raised thee up, and admitted thee into friendship with him, to shew his art of love and friendship to thee, how well he could love thee.

## CHAPTER VII

What obedience and duty we owe unto God, as we are his friends.— We should be fearful of doing anything to displease him, observe his commands, and do all from the principles of love and gratitude.

The next thing to be treated of concerneth what in obedience we owe unto him, what correspondencies, what returns, observances, and compliances are due to him in our walkings with him, upon the account of friendship. Now the general consideration I would premise to all that follows is, that this friendship being contracted between an infinite God, and creatures subjected perfectly to his sovereign power, he might exact all from us, as simple obedience due from absolute servants and vassals. But he hath been pleased to quit (as it were) that consideration: John. 15:15, 'Henceforth I call you not servants, but friends;' as if he were content on his part to forget the relation of servants, and take up all from us as from friends, provided he hath the same that as servants we owe to him, which must needs so sweeten all obedience to him, as not to make the commandments grievous; and it also puts the stricter obligation unto obedience, due as servants, and superadds some strains and dispositions thereunto, upon the pure account of friendship. So respectful is he of us, that he is content to veil and cover this hard and severe tax, and to take it up from us under the notion of gratitude and thankfulness. And this notion will run along, and accompany us through the whole. Now of such compliances and returns of obedience, there are two branches, which are a known and common trodden place by every tongue and pen.

1st. There is a fearfulness to displease or offend him as our friend.

2dly. All possible care to please and render ourselves friendly and respectful to him. I must not instance in particular duties, nor be

large in anything, only hint such considerations as not the notion only, but the power of friendship, doth bind us to.

1. There is fearfulness to displease him, as a man is fearful to displease a friend. This is to 'fear the Lord and his goodness,' as the prophet speaks. Every sin, by reason of friendship to him, comes under the crime and guilt of falsehood and petit treason. When thou sinnest, then think with thyself that God's Spirit looks back, and says to thee as Absalom to Hushai, 2 Sam. 16:17, 'Is this thy kindness to thy friend?' Or as God himself, Deut. 32:6, 'Do ye thus requite the Lord, ye foolish and unwise? is not he thy father that hath bought thee? hath he not made and established thee?' 'If it had been mine enemy, I could have born it, but it was thou my friend,' Ps. 55:12, said David of his friend. And says God again of David (who had felt the smart of wounds received in the behalf of his friends, and therefore every word pierced him), 2 Sam. 12:7–9, I anointed thee king over Israel, delivered thee from Saul, gave thee thy master's wives, yea, gave thee the whole house of Israel and Judah to be thy subjects and to reign over; and if this (which for this world might well content the largest heart) would not have contented thee, I love thee so well, that I would have given thee such and such things. And you know how the sense of this ingratitude brake his heart. Now translate this word for word into the style and language of the New Testament. I have loved thee (may God say), and chosen thee my friend in Christ Jesus afore the world began. I have delivered my Son unto death for thee, and with him how shall I not give thee all things? Heaven, and glory, and an everlasting kingdom I have prepared for thee, not to tell thee how many sins I have pardoned, when thou first camest to me, and since; and wilt thou serve me thus? Is this thy kindness to thy friend? This grieves God. Against his enemies he hath a relief, he can ease himself: Isa. 1:24, 'I will ease myself on mine adversaries;' but on his friends he hath no remedy, no other, but having seen their ways, to heal them; for he cannot, must not, ease himself by revenge. Such things as these should move us. Oh, when thou art about to sin next, and hast the cup of pleasure at thy mouth and



lips, think with thyself at the instant, that it is the price of thy friend's blood, and pour it upon the ground: you know I allude to the story and passage in 1 Chron. 11:19. Think what was in that cup which he trembled at. Let this cup pass, cried he. Dost thou begin at any time to sip of pleasure's cup? Oh cry out then likewise, Let this cup pass from me; my Saviour drank all these as turned to gall and vinegar, and shall I make that my pleasure, which was such horror and bitterness to him! And of sins, take heed of presumptuous sins, which is a making bold with his friendship, and the continuance of his love still notwithstanding. These strike directly at the root, the soul, at the marrow of friendship; this is a strain higher than treason. David, a king, might have aggravated Ahithophel's fault, in that he was his prince, his sovereign; but it was 'Thou my friend' which he upbraids him with, and lays to his charge his treason against friendship. And Ahithophel was therein the type of Judas, whose sin to this day is branded with the name of treason—treason the highest that ever was, that he who eats my bread (says Christ) should betray me. 'Oh keep me from presumptuous sins!' (saith David, Ps. 19:13) for they are the next step to the great offence; 'so shall I be free from the great transgression,' than which nothing is higher, or nearer than the sin of presuming on God's love. The oppression of good nature in any good and sweet soul we stand in relation unto, is the greatest oppression in the world; and what oppresseth good nature more than under presumption of friendship to abuse it? So also upon the same account take heed of sins that wound the name of God in thee. How doth one cast shame upon all his friends, when he runs into an enormity! *Noscitur ex socio, &c.*, they account all his friends and companions such. David's sin is aggravated by this, that he made the enemies of God to blaspheme; and nothing puts God more into a strait, how to acquit himself toward you, and save his own honour, than in such a case either to lose the service you may yet do, or to dishonour himself by using you any longer therein.

2. The second branch of obedience is (as you know), keeping his commandments: 'Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command

you,' says Christ John 15:14: Thus also says Jonathan to David his friend: 1 Sam. 20:4, 'Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee.' Yea, friendship will turn that sovereign word of commands into that more easy style, 'whatsoever will please him,' Isa. 56:4. And yet 'yours to command' is *stylus amicitiae*, the style of friendship. A man can requite a friend but two ways, either by profiting him, or by pleasing him. Now profit God we cannot: 'What is it to him that thou art righteous?' (says Job). Christ himself could not profit God; witness that speech spoken of him, 'My goodness extends not to thee,' Ps. 16. But yet please him he did in all things, John 8:39.

(1.) Let us study with ourselves what in our way, and in his will concerning us, will most please him, and let us make it the pleasure of our souls to do it. Let us think with ourselves, as David did: Ps. 69:31, 'This also shall please the Lord better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs.' Let us do what is done by as out of a free spirit, and not only or barely as commanded. Let us think, that of Paul's looks fully this way: 1 Cor. 9:16, 17, 'Though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!' ver. 17, 'For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if unwillingly, a dispensation is committed to me.' The plain result of which place is this, 1, that to do the best work for God that can be done in this world, is to preach the gospel; therefore, by way of supposition, he heightens and greatens it, 'Though I preach the gospel,' than which the angels themselves have not a better work committed to them; yea, 2, if I outwardly do this work (says he) with all the pains and diligence that flesh and blood can perform it with, even to the utmost of the dispensation and commission enjoined me, as ver. 17 implies; yet, 3, to do this, having this only in my eye, that I am commanded by God to do it, is not enough. That this was his scope is clearly acknowledged out of these his words, 'for necessity is laid upon me.' This necessity was not of any outward restraint; no man could have compelled him, no more than they could Demas, who left his preaching, embraced the present world, and fell a merchandising,

taking the advantage of growing rich at Thessalonica, 2 Tim. 4:10. It was not for maintenance and livelihood, for it was that he was speaking of, that he refused it for preaching. Yea, the necessity he in these words intends, is severed from that other necessity of being damned if he did it not, for so it is emphatically expressed by our translators. Yea (*tanquam aliquid amplius*), Woe is me if I preach not the gospel. He adds it as some farther thing, so that the single necessity of the command was at first considered by him; which therefore, ver. 17, he thus expresseth, 'A dispensation is committed to me.' But to have preached the gospel out of such a necessity only, had not been matter of glory or acceptation with God; yea, to have preached it upon these or such grounds only, had been to preach it ἄκων, unwillingly—the unwillingness being to be interpreted by what he opposeth to it, namely, willingness out of choice, heartily and freely to choose the work out of love to God chiefly, and the souls of men. As one well observes, unwilling is not *invitus* but *jussus*;\* and our translators have shot that bolt too far to translate it against my will. So then, to conclude this, to do a thing merely upon the necessity of the obligation of the command, though of God, and only because such a dispensation is committed and laid upon one, although in itself the greatest service in the world, is not with God acceptable alone, in the terms which we stand in with him, which are of friendship and not of mere servants. And therefore, over and above, there must be a freeness and willingness, out of ingenuity to God, which is to do it for him as to a friend; which that Paul might manifest, he did preach the gospel freely, to which yet others (he says) were not obliged, but it had been his profession so to do. And in doing this out of this principle, and in this manner, the work had a glory, that is, a grace, an acceptableness in it, which else it would have lost. Peter thus expresseth it: 1 Pet. 2:19, 20, that it is thankworthy, and that from God, τοῦτο χάρις παρὰ Θεῶ, which in the same verse he also terms glory; what glory is it? He speaks it upon the like occasion of doing noble, free, and heroical acts of obedience unto God. To be patient and quiet, to be buffeted for what is truly faulty, this is good (says he); but this comes merely under the notion of justice, and duty, and command, and so what glory is

in it? 'But if, when you do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is thankworthy before God.' The style and language imports that such actions God takes not only well, as a master that commands things as a duty, but also as a friend doth from the hands of a friend; not only with an acknowledgment, 'Well done, good and faithful servant,' but with thanks, which we use not to give to servants, but to friends, as having done us free courtesies. So that, although there are not works of supererogation (as in respect of what God doth and may command: Luke 17:19, 'Doth he thank that servant, because he did those things that were commanded him? I trow not,' says Christ), yet there is such a performing of things commanded for the manner of it, as is over and above the force of the command, even out of freeness and ingenuity as friends. And there are some such noble and heroical acts of obedience, as carry in their very appearance a principle above that of service, which respect the necessity of the command, that God thanks them for them, as a man doth his friend for a matter of courtesy; and they come to have a glory, a special grace in them, which simple obedience hath not. And they also have thanks, which not the intercourse of servant and master, but between friend and friend requires, and which chiefly respect the freeness and nobleness of the mind we do it with. Now that Christ should use the same word that Peter doth, χάρις, thanks; and that Peter should say, that to such and such actions thanks, and those thanks from God, were due or suitable; and that Christ should, on the contrary, say, Will that master thank his servant? I know not how otherwise to reconcile than thus, that when we shall lift up our obedience out of the crowd and common rank of services (which God might stand upon, since he, as lord and master, could so command, and we must be forced to say, We are unprofitable servants when we have done, as having done nothing but what was commanded us), and shall perform it to God upon terms and grounds of gratitude and thankfulness, yea, as friends, then God condescends also to accept it as it is given, not as duty only, but as free, and gives thanks for it: so gracious is he if we be thus noble. And all these places shew, that otherwise (suppose

we be saved) yet we lose that glory, splendour, and lustre which might be found in our obedience, if we thus performed it.

(2.) We should study and search out works so excellent for the manner of performance, or seek a heart so noble, as should render such common actions extraordinary. God hath studied how to commend and set out his kindness (witness the death of his Son), and prevent us with his loving-kindness, as the psalmist speaks. And we should (if possible) study out some free-born acts of obedience, and prevent him with them. Thus David, unspoken to by God, out of his vast desires to glorify him, thinks of building a temple for him; and, says God, I never spake a word of it, 2 Sam. 7:7. Yet because what was in God's heart rose up so nobly in David's (it was an ingenuous thought occasioned it, 'I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in curtains,' ver. 2), God took this kindly: 'Tell him' (says God to Nathan), 'I will build him an house for it,' ver. 11. In services we do let us study to put an emphasis of love upon them, as Paul, who (when he might have done otherwise) preached the gospel for nothing.

(3.) I shall mention some special seasons (instead of other particulars) which thou mayest take the advantage of, to render a quick and diligent obedience exceeding acceptable to him as a friend, and thankworthy as from a friend, *παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ*, even by God himself.

[1.] One season is, when after great falls you are anew reconciled to him, and he hath pardoned you great sins. You know what vows David made after his falls, Ps. 51:13: he vowed to convert others, to celebrate his praise, and to offer the choicest of sacrifices, a broken heart. This made Peter bestir himself, but upon two words spoken by Christ after his fall, Lovest thou me? Politic friendship bids you take heed of a reconciled friend that hath been treacherous, and done you a mischief; but God delights in such to choose. He therefore chose forth his entirest friends (and he knew what he did in doing it) out of the sons of men that had offended him, rather

than make new ones, for he knew they would love him better. A friend that is in his radical disposition of a good and ingenuous nature, and hath wronged you, such a one when reconciled, and you have pardoned him, is the best and fastest friend in the world. And God will in the end be sure to make those good-natured, and true-hearted to him, whom he pardons: Ps. 32:1, 'Blessed is the man whose sins are forgiven, in whose heart is no guile.' He couples these two for ever together: Hast thou sinned, and hath God pardoned and loved thee freely? This is a new conversion to thee, a redintegration of a new love between you; love much, and obey much, as Mary and Peter did.

[2.] Labour then most, when in view thou art in least dependence on him for outward mercies, and thinkest thy mountain most strong. In some times of a man's life he is set in an enlarged and free state, so as he looks over the present horizon of his condition, and sees not one cloud that anyway threatens rain. He is hedged about (as Job), and see not whence a breach should come. At such a time meditate (if ever) to act in a more extraordinary manner for God's interest and honour. When was it that David meditated that fore-mentioned high and generous act of testifying his love in building God an house? It is prefaced thereunto, 2 Sam. 7:2, 'that it came to pass, when David sat in his house, and the Lord had given him rest round about from all his enemies.' The coast was clear (as we use to say), and then the king said, ver. 2, 'He would build God an house.' He took this special season to express his love towards God in, and God took thereupon that special advantage to confirm his house to him. Hezekiah, on the contrary, whilst Sennacherib lay with his army before the city, and the ten tribes were carried captive before his face, walked with a perfect heart; but when his kingdom was settled, and a lease of his life freely sealed for fifteen years, you know then how he forgot God, and how God took it at his hands. Joshua (who was a man God honoured to bring his people into rest, having that testimony given him, that he followed God fully), you see, a long time after (Josh. 23:1) that God had given rest unto Israel from all their enemies round about, how he engaged afresh

all the people to serve God, chap. 24, and himself especially, ver. 15, 'I and my household will serve the Lord.' This was friendly, and God took it accordingly, and recorded it for ever.

[3.] On the contrary, when God afflicts and crosseth thee in thy desires, and hath denied for the present the request thou hast made, apply thyself most unto him. These, though contrary seasons, are yet times alike of winning upon God by obedience: Eccles. 7:15, 'In the day of good, or prosperity, be in good;' that is, as our critics explain it, be conversant, and exercise thyself wholly in what is good; 'and in the day of evil, see to thy ways and consider.' Thus he calls for holiness alike in both. That was also true ingenuity which they expressed, Ps. 44:17, 18, &c., 'All this is come upon us; yet we have not forgotten thee, nor our steps declined from thy ways.' Paul glories more in the obedience he did in his infirmities than in all his revelations.

[4.] Though thou hast served him long, and waited, and perhaps he hath done little for thee in comparison of what for others, yet take occasion still to serve him, and that the more diligently, and be far from thinking much. *Amicitia non est revocanda ad calculos*, friends are not as partners that keep accounts of their receipts and expenses from each other. God 'gives mercies,' 'and upbraids not,' James 1:5. And we should return obedience, and not repine. Paul served God many years, did more than all the apostles, as himself says, and yet (says he), 'I forget what is past and behind,' Philip. 3, 'and reach and roam after still what is before.' And though many years were past already, yet he thought not much at it, that his condition was not bettered, nor his ways mended: 1 Cor. 4:11, 'Even to this present hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted and have not certain dwelling place; and labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and as the off-scouring of all things unto this day.' You see he puts it into the account, that to that hour (ver. 11), to that very day (ver. 13), he and his fellow-apostles (the greatest saints that ever the world had,

or was to have) had done such high and so great works of service for God as the world did then, yea, doth to this day, and shall to the end of the world, owe their salvation and Christian religion to them; and yet though they had run out so many years, they were not a whit amended as to their outward condition. They had neither meat to put in their mouths, nor houses of abode to dwell in; yea, and which still heightens all this, other Christians that were saved as well as they, that had less grace, and done far less service, yea, for whose sakes they had been employed to do all this, were gratified by God with these kind of accommodations. The apostle on purpose sets the instance of such by this other, vers. 8 and 10, 'Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us; and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you. We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ: we are weak, but ye are strong: ye are honourable, but we are despised.' Yea, and ver. 9, 'I think that God hath set forth us apostles last, as it were appointed unto death.' You that are scholars know what he alludes to: it is to the Roman spectacles, either those in which men were thrown to beasts, as the last and lowest sort of men, to make sport unto the common sort of people (which is Tertullian's interpretation); or rather to those gladiators or sword-players, who came up last, of which there were two sorts: 1. of such as fenced to shew skill, as now-a-days; 2. of those that fought but to wounding, and then were fetched off; but the 3d and last sort was of slaves, or men condemned to die, who were to fight till they had killed their fellows, or were killed. And thus God had pre-ordained to his dearest friends and servants, his apostles, whilst they lived, to run through all these difficulties and wants, and at last to be killed; and all this too to make them spectacles to the world, yea, both worlds, angels, and men, and set them all aghast at them. God had provided a greater stage and theatre than that at Rome, and he sets and brings these poor men forth to play their prize for his glory, that he might only say to them all (as he said to Satan of Job) 'See you not my servants' Paul and Peter? But what! doth God deal with his best friends, that do most for him, thus? Then who will serve him? That will I, says Paul. 'I know whom I trusted; and I have fought a good



fight, and will die in the quarrel.' They thought not much at this, they knew whom they served. And let that consideration at first specified cheer thy spirit in this case, which surely was it that carried on the apostles themselves. They knew and considered that their radical and original subjection by the law of creation to God was such, that God might command all this, and exact it of them as pure servants to him, and give them no wages; that (as it is in verse 7 of that chapter) 'whatever they had they had received;' and they owed all they could do for him upon that account, as David says: 1 Chron. 29:16, 'Of thine own we have given thee.' Our Saviour had laid in this consideration in the hearts of his apostles, whom afterwards he meant thus to use. He spends one parable on purpose to let them know their native condition as they were creatures, and what subjection they stood in to God as mere and perfect servants, yea, and unprofitable too, when they should have done never so much. He made them know this, that being humbled and prepared hereby, they might see the infinite grace and favour in God towards them, when afterwards he should adopt, own, and admit them to be his friends (John 15:15, 'Henceforth I call you not servants, but friends'), and how upon that account he would accept of all they should do, the utmost of which they owed, as unprofitable servants. The parable you have, Luke 17, from the 7th verse to the 11th, 'But which of you, having a servant ploughing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? and will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have only done that which was our duty to do.' He lays before them the common condition of servants unto men, and what was expected from them after the customs of men. A servant that hath been doing hard and laborious work, as ploughing or keeping cattle abroad in the fields, in all weathers, winds, and storms, and this all day, when he hath done these long and tedious works, might

seem to expect, when he comes home, to have his supper prepared and ready dressed for him, that he might eat and go to rest after so tedious a travel. No, says Christ, none deals thus with his servants; but he must yet stay, though weary and an-hungry.—'To this hour,' says Paul, 'we hunger and thirst: nay, have not so much as an house in this world to come to.'—He must yet do another work, and dress his Master's supper; but yet then he might expect to sit down or eat at the lower end of the table. No; but after he had dressed it, and served it up, he must stand and wait at table, run hither and thither, see his master eat the meat which himself dressed before his face, and perfectly stay till he had eaten and drunken, and afterwards he shall eat and drink, so as he must not do one, but all sorts of services. And what when all this is done? Doth his master thank him? 'I trow not,' says Christ. Nay, he teacheth him to say he is an unprofitable servant, and hath but done his duty. How then should this move us? That God should take us up out of this servile condition, which not our sins, but our creation, hath condemned us to, and constitute us friends to himself, and profess, if performed with such an heart by us, to own and accept all these our services as acts of friendship, for which he will thank us and reward us in the highest measure. Who would not be content to serve so great, and withal so good a God, as this?

I shall go on to mention other genuine properties of right and true friendship, in the point of their obedience to him.

(4.) Manage all with all simplicity and plain-heartedness towards him, in all thy walkings, which is the truest and rarest jewel in friendship. A reserved, cunning politician never makes a good friend, who is 'an Israelite indeed,' (as Christ says of Nathanael, John 1:48), 'in whom is no guile.' Our Saviour not only puts a value, but a rarity upon him; therefore points him out with an ἰδέ, 'Behold, an Israelite indeed,' such as you should not find amongst a million of men. And he entitleth him an Israelite in this respect, because this is that which made Jacob's or Israel's commendation,' Gen. 25:27, that he was a plain man, ἀπλοῦς, of a sincere heart, without

false or cunning ends and reaches in his way; whereas Esau was a cunning hunter, a cunning gamester, as you say, in his. Now, let a man naturally have what guile or cunning he will, real converse and acquaintance with God will put him out of it, with respect to God himself, whatever God alloweth him to exercise towards enemies that seek advantage. For a man knows he hath to do with a God that cuts up to the marrow, and to the joints, the socket bones and the heart, and all the wheels it turns upon. He wriggles his anatomising knife through them, Heb. 4:12. David had carried the business of Uriah cunningly, as to men; but when his heart was set in God's sun, in the light of God, that light discovered this work to be a deceitful close-spun web of wickedness, a plotted and continued villany, which made him, upon that occasion, cry out, Ps. 51:6, 'Behold, thou requirest truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.' The inwards of a man are the seat of guile, as well as of truth and plainness; and upon the discovery of this his sin to him, he entitleth grace by the name of truth, or plainness, in the inward parts, and acknowledgeth such a plain spirit to be the only wise spirit. David thought himself to be very wise, in ridding his hands so handsomely of Uriah, but he must not think to carry it thus, and escape God so; he now saw it to have been the greatest folly in the world, and that it should teach him wisdom for hereafter: 'In the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.' And again you have him at it, Ps. 32:3; when he hid his sin and kept silence, he had distinctions to fence with, and endeavoured to distinguish himself out from being a murderer, and day and night lay roaring; but in the end he confesseth it, and then God pardoned it: ver. 5, 'I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid; I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.' And from thence he ever learnt this lesson, that whom God pardons, and receives to grace and favour with himself, from them he takes out that venomous vein or sting, that runs through the backbone of guile and deceit towards himself. Therefore, at the second verse, he couples these two for ever together, 'Blessed is the man whom thou pardonest, and in whose spirit there is no guile.' It is observable that

the apostle makes these two equivalent, to do a thing heartily, and to do it as to the Lord: Col. 3:23, 'Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.' And in the words before, he says, 'Not as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God.' That which I observe out of it is this, that nothing will fix the nature of man, and make it void of ends, but this knowing God, this fear of him, and conversing with him. If a servant would propound to please his master, yet his own purpose will not make him constant in what is his duty, both absent as well as present; it will be an uncertain rule, he will be a weathercock in his actions, observing the wind, and turning uncertainly with it. Now, you walk not plainheartedly, when you seek out excuses to put off duties, and are glad of them; and when you labour to find out distinctions, to make good those sins you are loath to leave; and when you walk unevenly in several companies, as Peter did: Gal. 2:14, 'He walked not with an even foot;' when, also, you use your wisdom to hold correspondence with God and the world, as they in Gal. 6:12; when ye have ends of the flesh in all, and yet would make as if ye did much for God, as Jehu did: 'See what zeal I have for the Lord of hosts.' To magnify kindnesses, when we design only our own ends, and to make them seem greater, is guile in friendship. Friends often lay aside some things they would else do, merely to avoid the suspicion of by-ends to their friends. Paul walked in simplicity, or with a spirit without folds or doubtings, as the word signifies, 2 Cor. 1:12.

(5.) Be faithful to him, in whatever is committed to thy trust by him, and let thy friendship move thee. This is the special epithet of a friend, that he is a 'faithful friend,' Exod. 33:11. God treateth Moses, at the first entry into his office, as a friend: 'The Lord spake to Moses face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend.' And this obliged and endeared Moses to that faithfulness he shewed in all and every particular about his house. Compare with this Num. 12:7, 8, 'My servant Moses, who is faithful in all my house, with him will I speak mouth to mouth,' that is, face to face, as a man with his friend; which manifestly refers to what God had before done and said of him, Exod. 33:11, to which also the margin doth refer us. There is

none of us but God hath entrusted with something: with pupils, who are precious ware, and their souls, as well as their outward state, are committed to their governors; with riches: 'Be faithful, then, in the unrighteous mammon;' with his name: keep it unspotted in thee; with gifts and talents: improve them to his advantage; with power: let it be used and turned for God; with thy voice in election: let God dispose of it, and let those that are God's friends, and godly, have it rather than any other. If God hath entrusted thee with the truth, 'keep that good thing committed to thee,' as Paul speaks to Timothy; 'be faithful unto death, and he will give thee a crown of life.' Let not God be a loser in what is committed to thee, whatever thou mayest be. Thou mayest, in the management of what is for God, perhaps lose a friend, disgust this or that person. It is no matter; be in all things faithful to God, as Jacob was to Laban, and served him fourteen, yea, twenty years, day and night; and if there were any loss, he bare it, Gen. 31:39, 41.

(6.) Deny him nothing, and yet take his denials kindly. Friends that are critical in friendship, if they think they shall be denied, will not so much as ask, for it will trouble them. Abraham spared not his son when God called for him, and he was called the friend of God. God, to endear thy friendship to him, sometimes will seem to stand in need of something thou hast. When Christ was on earth, he was poor, and good souls ministered unto him. Another time he sends to a poor man for his ass, with this message, which was a strange one, Luke 19:31, 'The Lord hath need of him,' though the cattle on a thousand hills are his. It was but to fulfil a prophecy; else we never read he rode, but went afoot many a wearisome step, from Galilee to Jerasalem, to and fro unto the feasts. God hath business in this world that concerns his glory, needs thy help against the mighty, needs thy good word in a good cause, and thou perhaps art sluggish, or loath to appear in it. Think nothing thou hast too dear for him, when he calls for it: 'I count not my life dear to me,' says Paul, 'to fulfil my ministration with joy,' Acts 20:24. And take this for a rule to guide thee to know what he calls for from thee. When either thou canst not hold that which thou hast without sinning against him, or

when the laying of it down tends to promote his glory, then God calls for it, and deny him not, he is a special friend. Remark that speech of Christ, 'He that forsakes not father, mother, &c., for my sake and the gospel's, is not worthy of me,' Mat. 10:37, that is, 'of my friendship;' he is not worthy to be held in correspondency withal by me.

(7.) Stick close to him in the time of trial. A friend, though he loves at all times, yet is specially 'born for a time of adversity,' Prov. 17:17, as in a great case of distress it is said of Esther, she 'came to the kingdom for such a time as that;' it was the greatest thing God had in his eye, when and for which he advanced her. There are special times in our lives in which God hath ordained to try us, and bring us to offer up our Isaacs, as he required of Abraham. Think with thyself, I was converted, born again for such a time as this; shall I fail God now, and bid farewell to his friendship, when there are such obligations between God and me? Ah, no! they are as bills of exchange, and you break all future correspondency if you pay them not.

(8.) Suffer for him, if there be occasion, gladly, and be greedy of such opportunities when brought upon thee by others. As the wounds of a friend are faithful, as Solomon says, so for a friend they are honourable; and Paul calls them Christ's marks and scars. The apostles thought they had a kindness done them when they suffered for him, and the primitive saints loved not their lives to the death, Rev. 12:11. Do thou stand for him among his enemies, and take his part. This we expect of those that profess an eminency of friendship; and in what company soever they be, if they are silent at such a time, when they hear their friend reviled, they strengthen his enemies in their evil speeches of him. See how Jonathan shewed the part of a friend for David, 1 Sam. 19:4; how he pleads for him to Saul when his life was in danger at every word, for he threw javelins at him. And do thou vindicate God and his ways the rather because thou shalt have opportunity to do this for him only in this life; at the latter day he will appear to defend himself, as Jude says. You

glorify God amongst his enemies only here. 'He that confesseth me before men,' that is, here, 'him,' says Christ, 'will I acknowledge,' namely then, at that day.

(9.) Be afflicted at all things done to his dishonour, as if it were thine own, nay, more than thou wouldst at thine own. Thus Jonathan did for David: 1 Sam. 20:34 it is said, 'he grieved for David, because his father had done him shame.' Friends are like lute strings tuned to each, which will stir and tremble if one of them be struck. Was God displeased at the sins of the Israelites? It is added, Num. 11:10, that 'Moses was displeased also.' And in another place it is said that he stood weeping in the tent door, and knew not how to help it, when God was so openly dishonoured by Zimri leading Cosbi. Paul's 'spirit was stirred,' Acts 17, 'when he saw their idolatry.' And as thou art to moan on occasion of sorrow, so to rejoice on occasion of joy. When souls are converted, and the lost sheep and lost goat are found, he calls his friends to rejoice with him, says the parable, Luke 15:5, 6. John being a friend of the bridegroom, rejoiced that 'he should decrease, and Christ increase,' John 3:29.

## CHAPTER VIII

Obedience to God described, as it is a service performed to him. The character and properties of those who are his sincere and faithful servants.

But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin; but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.—ROM. 6:17, 18.

In these words (as of old in the types of Isaac, Ishmael, the one the son of a bondwoman, the other of a free, Gal. 4:24) you have set forth unto your view the twofold condition of those two contrary estates, the one of nature, the other of grace; and that in the example and pattern of these lately converted Romans, to whom the apostle wrote, that had experience of both, who first, while in their estate of nature, had been servants to sin, but now their condition being altered by grace, they were made free from sin, and became the servants of righteousness; where by righteousness is meant that universal spiritual strictness and exactness which the word of God requires. For it is here opposed to sin, and therefore to be taken as largely as that is. And it hath reference unto the word 'doctrine' in the former words, as being the whole entire matter and substance which that doctrine commands, and which Christ gave in charge to his apostles, 'to teach all that believe in him to do whatsoever he commanded,' Mat. 28:20. And the apostles coming among these Romans, and teaching them that righteousness which is required of them, God so wrought by their preachings, that their hearts were framed and fashioned to the obedience of it, like as a piece of clay or metal cast into a mould is fashioned to the likeness of the prints in that mould, and made serviceable to some use. Thus it was with their hearts; for God, that hath the hearts of all men in his hands, like a skilful artificer, used their doctrine, the words of weak men, as a mould of righteousness, as I may call it, whereinto casting and delivering thereinto, casting and fashioning their hearts, they had the same image and prints of righteousness stamped on them, and were made as serviceable and fit instruments to be employed therein. They became servants of righteousness, shewing and manifesting this in their lives, obeying that word of righteousness to the utmost of their endeavours, and this from the heart, being thus changed and framed thereunto. This is the meaning of the words, as both the words in the original, the scope of the apostle, and the best interpreters do manifestly shew.

Obs. The condition of God's children is to be servants of righteousness, or, which is all one, servants to God in



righteousness, or according to that strictness which he requires in his will. For what he calls here serving of righteousness, he calls ver. 22 serving of God; please but God's law, and you please him. It is true, indeed, that the estate of God's children is an estate of liberty, inasmuch as they are made free from sin in regard of bondage to it; but there are two masters, which, as we cannot serve both, so we must serve one of them; and if we are free from the one, we become servants to the other, Mat. 6:24. And also, although it be true, that, as Christ saith, 'henceforth I call you not servants, but friends,' John 15:15, yea, brethren and sons also in other places, yet Christ speaks not as exempting them from the obedience of servants to his command; for he tells them they are not his friends, in the 14th verse, unless they do what he commands. And he speaks that to shew his love to them, in that he would deal with them more graciously than the lords of the world do with their servants, though they be men like themselves, and he is God blessed for ever; for he would reveal all his secrets to them, make them his bosom friends, as it follows there; for the servants know not their master's will, that is, are not of their counsel, as you are, my favourites, my friends, my privy councillors. 'For all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known to you.' God indeed hath other servants, that are the servants of his secret will and righteous judgments; and so the devil is, and all wicked men, Isa. 44:28; but such servants the saints are not, but of his revealed will, they are servants of his righteousness. They are indeed rather sons than servants, he useth them so kindly. God serves himself of wicked men, but the saints do serve God in righteousness and true holiness.

For the proof of this, why should I heap up Scripture, which is so plentiful? To be the servants of the Lord, was the title that all the old patriarchs delighted in so much, boasting to wear God's livery; so David. Ps. 116:16. And it is the title that the apostles prefix in all their epistles, as esteeming it most honourable; yea, the angels themselves do make it to be the top of their honour: Rev. 19:10, 'I am thy fellow-servant to Jesus Christ.' I will omit also the reasons which may be drawn from our creation and regeneration. By the

first creation, every creature is bound to be the servant of its Maker. By virtue of our regeneration, and being created again, as also of our election, we are to be the servants of righteousness. 'For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.' Eph. 2:10. In which words observe, first, that God's giving us a new frame of heart at our regeneration, is to that end, it is to the obedience of righteousness to good works. Every creature is created to an end, and tied, by virtue of its creation, to that work and service it was created unto, and therefore never rests till it hath attained that end. So all the creatures serve, yea, and rejoice to serve God in that employment he hath created them in. And then, secondly, observe, that by virtue of our election we are bound unto these works, we were ordained to walk in them, and we are indeed chosen servants. But I shall insist more particularly on these following reasons.

1. We are obliged to God's service, because it is the end and fruit of our redemption by Christ. Titus 2:14, Christ is said to have 'given himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purge us to be a peculiar people to himself, zealous of good works.' I pray mark the scope of the words.

- (1.) It is said that Christ gave himself for us; that is, resigned up himself, devoted himself in all that ever he did here upon the earth for us. It was not for himself, since himself was given for us; he became our servant: Philip. 2:6, 7, 'He took upon him the form of a servant, and was obedient to death;' and in his death, submitting himself to obey all righteousness, he was righteousness's servant, and in that our servant. And why was this? It was to make us a peculiar people to himself, and to be peculiarly laid up for himself; to be set apart, devoted, and given up wholly unto him. And therefore in that place of the Philippians, the apostle exhorts in the 5th verse, that 'the same mind should be in us,' that we should become servants of righteousness for him, as he hath been for us.

(2.) Observe in that place of Titus, that Christ giving himself for us, redeemed us; that is, bought us, purchased us out of our enemies' hands. We are redeemed ones to God, by the blood of Christ. Now the law of nations gives it, that the redeemed should be servants to the laws of the Redeemer. 'You are not your own' (says the apostle, 1 Cor. 6:20); 'for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your bodies, and in your spirits, for you are God's' by the right of redemption. But yet because it might be thought, that though God's children are thus redeemed and bought, all the question is, whether they will or do become servants, yea or no; for many out of unthankfulness deny the Lord that bought them, 2 Peter 2:1. But do any of his redeemed ones do so? No; they are made willing to serve him.

(3.) And therefore, thirdly, observe out of that place of Titus 2:14, that they are said to be redeemed, that they might be zealous of good works; not only willing, but earnest, forward, zealously and hotly pursuing after good works of righteousness; and were it not so, he would lose his end in redeeming us. And therefore God brings home this redemption of Christ to their hearts, how he became a servant to righteousness, yea, to death for them, and so frames the same disposition in them to Christ that was in him to us, Philip. 2:5. And therefore the apostle Peter (1 Peter 1:14–18), exhorting them to be as obedient children to God, and to walk in holiness and righteousness, useth this as an argument in the 18th verse, 'Knowing that you were redeemed, not with corruptible things, but with the blood of Christ;' as if he had said, If you did but truly know and believe that Christ did this for you, and that you have a part in this redemption, it would frame your spirits to the like willingness of obedience unto him; yea, if men's hearts did but seriously make account to have salvation by Christ, and did seek after it truly, they would be willing to obey him in anything.

But though they are made willing, yet still the question will be, whether they are made able thereunto, yea or no, and so do really become his servants, and obey him? Therefore,

(4.) Fourthly, Know that those whom God calls to be his servants, he doth in some measure enable them thereunto. Every ordinary tradesman, when he takes an apprentice, binds himself to teach him his trade, and therefore how much more God! And therefore old Zacharias, Luke 1:74, speaking of the fruit of Christ's redemption in his redeemed, says, that it is not only to deliver them out of the hands of their enemies, but 'to grant them to serve him in holiness and true righteousness all their days.' To grant them, that is, to vouchsafe and give strength and ability thereunto; and to that end we are called by the apostle, Eph. 2:10, 'a new workmanship, created to good works, which he had ordained that we should walk in them.' Here I pray observe three things.

1st. That God creates a new frame of heart which was not before.

2dly. Observe the end to which he created it, 'unto good works.' The phrase implies a giving a power and ability in some measure to do them. For as when God is said to create the heavens to move, what is meant by it, but that he gives a power to do it, abilities and endowments tending to that end! When an artificer makes a clock to strike, what is meant by it, but that he so frames it as it shall do so! When God created anything, he bade it to be, and in that gave powers to act.

3dly. Observe that God had ordained that we should walk in them; his decree was for it long since, and he cannot be frustrated of his end.

These things being thus clear, what use shall we make of them?

Use 1. The first use shall be for trial, whether we be in the estate of grace or no, namely, by this, whether we are the servants of righteousness or no? Are we the redeemed ones, as we all profess ourselves to be, when we receive the sacrament? This inquiry is the more necessary, because this is the usual plea of men, that they are the true and dear servants of God, and do serve him day and night,

come to his service and to church, and think that is enough. I will name a few properties of a good servant, which I desire you to examine your hearts by, whether they be in you or no.

(1.) It is a necessary thing in a good servant to know his master's will and humour, and what will please him; and though I confess there are unprofitable knowers of God's will spoken of, that do it not, and who therefore shall be beaten with many stripes, yet necessary it is, that he that doth it should know it, and that not only for the matter, for so wicked men do, but for the manner, so to do it as it may be pleasing to God. A clown that goes to the court to serve his prince, if he do not know the fashion of the court, will do but untoward service. And therefore, Eph. 5:15, the apostle, exhorting to holiness of life, and walking circumspectly, or exactly in that strictness God requires, adds these words, 'not as fools, but as wise;' that is, not going about good duties as fools and bunglers, that do they know not what, but as cunning and wise artists that know what they do. And therefore at the 10th and 17th verses of that chapter, he, expressing his meaning, bids them 'understand what the will of the Lord is,' and what was acceptable to him; and to know this aright, it is requisite to know truly what a God he is, whom we have to serve; and therefore in Gen. 31:33,\* the knowing of God is made as it were the groundwork of all his service in the new covenant. To come therefore to the application of the sign, all men in their natural estate having but low conceits of God, do also fall short in their apprehensions of that righteousness which would please him (even as fools out of their shallow conceits can never please wise men), and hence they never come to be the servants of God in true holiness and righteousness. For the apostle, Rom. 12:1, 2, requires a true work of grace to 'discern what that good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God is.' Now by this truth, therefore, it is easy to shew that the most sorts of people in the world are not the true servants of God, because they never dream of, or do follow after, that true righteousness that he requires. To omit the righteousness of the papists, consisting merely in carnal, sensual pomp and ostentation, in their mass, music, crosses, holy water, and the like, I

shall consider the outward righteousness of those sorts of people who live among ourselves.

[1.] There is the vulgar sort of ignorant people, that think they serve God well enough with their good meaning, and by mumbling over their creed and ten commandments, and saying the Lord's prayer without understanding. Here is a poor blind sacrifice indeed. Alas, poor people, you worship you know not what; for what God do you think he is that will be thus served with saying even what you know not, nor understand aright? Your God must needs be a sottish God, an ignorant God, a foolish God, that would be put off with such ignorant, blind, and sottish service.

[2.] There are profane persons, that will drink, swear, and blaspheme God, rail upon him and his servants in every tavern; and yet because they come to church, and there bow themselves to God, think they serve him well enough. But I pray, consider what manner of God you make of him, whom you think you may thus easily deceive, mock, and cozen with fair words and outward compliments. Tell me, wouldst thou own such a servant thyself for one minute, that should rail, conspire against thee, and only now and then come into thy presence (as Gehazi did into Elisha's), and there compliment thee with good words?

[3.] There are civil men, that live in the bosom of the church, and think by their just dealing and giving content to men, and by carrying themselves smoothly and evenly in the world, to please God. Will this righteousness, thinkest thou, carry thee to heaven? God must then be such an one as thyself, that careth not much for his Sabbath, his word, his sacraments, or his children, but will be put off with the little morality which thou contentest thyself with. Didst thou never hear that God was an holy God, and that thou oughtest to follow after holiness, or thou shalt never see the face of God with comfort? Remember the righteousness of the Pharisees, which if thou exceedest not, thou shalt never enter into heaven.

[4.] There is a formal righteousness in professors of religion, who, because they side with good men, make a show, perform family duties, though deadly, perfunctorily, yet think thus to please God well enough; if they hear the word, delight in it, speak well of the preacher, and say of him that his voice is pleasant, Ezek. 33:32, and Ezek. 31:18. But, alas! 'bodily exercise profiteth nothing;' that is, fleshly and outward performances slubbered over, prevail nothing with God without true godliness: faith in Christ and a new nature aims at his glory, it is godliness must do the deed. The hypocrite in the 50th Psalm thought to please God with multitudes of sacrifices, which was the outward worship of the law; and these he offered up, though without faith, zeal, and sincerity of heart. He thought it would please God well enough; and what was the reason? You have it at verse 21; he thought God like himself, and what pleased his own carnal fancy, he thought it would please God. I say to these that think to please God with a half righteousness, a dead, dull righteousness, as God says to the people, Mal. 1:6–8. A mortal man would not be served so, and yet they thought God would. I desire every one to look into his own conscience, and let him but ask his heart this question, whether he thinks that that measure and pitch of obedience which he performs, will pass for current in God's acceptance at the day of judgment.

(2.) A good servant will be careful of his master's business, bear it in his memory, and not let it slip. Some servants, when they are sent of an errand, if they be careful to do it, they will be thinking of their message all the way; and so it is with a servant of righteousness: the duties which God hath enjoined him in his word, he is careful of them. What says David? Ps. 119:15, 16. 'I will meditate on thy precepts, and consider thy ways; and I will not forget thy word;' and though other business comes in, it shall not put that out of my head. And therefore, as God commands, he remembers the Sabbath, and hath it in his mind all the week to plot and contrive his business, so as that he may attend alone on that day.

(3.) A good servant will stand for his master's credit, and not be ashamed of his livery. He will stand in defence of his master, and will not hear him wronged; and so is a good Christian: he is for righteousness wheresoever he comes, and he will take its part, torn him whither you will, and is not ashamed to make profession to all the world whose servant he is. He will practise that strictness which the world cries down so much; and therefore no wonder if he gets so many a scoff, and snubs, and wry-looks for his Master's sake. And if men break out against any of the ways of righteousness, he will be for the defence of it with all his might; and if he be called to it, will spend his dearest blood in the quarrel. What shall we then think of those meal-mouthed professors, that are only for goodness in the company of their fellow-servants; but when they are in the company of their Master's enemies, turn their coats, and will serve righteousness but so far as it may stand with the good liking of their friends, parents, masters, or neighbours; and for fear of displeasing them, cut themselves short, and will go no further than may stand with their good liking!

But did men know and consider that God whom they serve is a just God, and righteous in all his laws, how durst they content themselves with a half obedience, seeing the same God that gave one precept gave another, as James saith? No; they would have a respect to all his commandments if they had a respect to him, for it is universal obedience which he requires. Again, did men consider God to be a holy God, and to be most delighted in such duties, wherein we have to do with him, in his ordinances, as his Sabbaths, word, sacraments, and holy meditations, they would labour to please him herein most, and would strive to be holy, as he is holy. Did men also consider him to be an almighty God, they would come with fear and reverence, with hearts broke and humbled in all their performances. If God had 'delighted in sacrifices,' says David, 'I would have given it him;' but he knew his delight, viz., a broken heart: such, saith he, 'thou wilt not despise;' and this he therefore brought with him in all his performances. If men did but consider God was a Spirit, they would labour to 'worship him in spirit and



truth,' as our Saviour says—that is, with changed hearts and renewed spirits—and durst not bring their old hearts with them, which they had from Adam. And if men did also but consider him to be the searcher of the heart and reins, they would in all their performances have all eye to their inward man, and humble themselves for their secretest corruptions therein. And did men consider God to be a God jealous of his honour, they would not dare to rest in things done out of self-love, and for by-respects, though never so secret, but would labour to work their hearts in all their performances, to have an eye to God's glory, and to deny their own interest and honour.

(4.) A good servant is content to submit, and to be subject to his master's will in anything he commands. 'Speak, Lord' (says Samuel, 1 Sam. 3:9, 10), 'for thy servant heareth.' Let God say what he will, he is his servant, and must and will obey, and is content to hear, and willing to yield any part of that righteousness God hath revealed in his word. 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' says Paul, Acts 9:6. To do! Why, he undid all that he ever had done, and took a clean contrary course to what before he had walked in. Yea, and what wilt thou have me suffer? he might have said as well, for what imprisonments did he undergo, and all for righteousness, sake! 'I count not my life dear,' says he, 'so I may fulfil my ministration with joy;' here was a good servant. We will suppose now God calls thee to offer up thy Isaac, to cut the throat of thy dearest son, to part with that sin which before thou didst love as thy life; art thou willing to do this? Thou art a good servant. Or suppose he call thee to deny thy credit and reputation in the world for the despised profession of his truth; and though thou beest trampled on, so he may have glory thou carest not, thou art a good servant. And so likewise when he calls thee, as he doth us all, in his word, to deny thy correspondences with thy former company in the unfruitful works of darkness, and to fall a reprovng them rather, and to gather up thyself from conformity with the world in their corruptions, and thou obeyest, though against the liking of all thy friends, thou art a good servant, and shalt not lose thy reward. And thus also, he

calling thee to the spiritual and constant performance of such duties as thou formerly didst neglect or slightly perform—as to hear the word, and to repeat it, and so pray it into thy heart, and to pour out thy soul in daily faithful prayer, and to deal plainly with God in confessing thy sins to him in private prayer, and to tell all, and to deal as honestly in confessing and forsaking as thou wouldst have God deal with thee in forgiving, and to turn thy heart inside outward to him—art thou herein also willing and careful to obey? Thou art a good servant. And God also requiring thee to sanctify the Sabbath, and to be at more cost than ordinary in a strict care of thoughts, words, and actions, Isa. 58:13, 14, art thou willing to submit? Thou art a good servant. And God also requiring thee in outward conversation, not only to avoid such actions as are scandalous before men, but to beware of unprofitable speeches, of spending away of time, as also to have an eye to the carriage of thy heart, watching over it continually to see how it is within doors, searching and ferreting thy corruptions out of their lurking-holes. This strictness God requires, and it is that great commandment given: Prov. 4:23, 'Above all keeping, keep thy heart.' Art thou careful to do this? Thou art a good servant. I could name an abundance more of that spiritual strictness and righteousness, but I should be too long. By all the instances mentioned, examine yourselves whether your hearts have been brought to stoop and submit to be made 'subject to the will of God,' Rom. 8:7, 2 Cor. 10:5, Is 'every thought brought into the obedience of Christ?' that is, is it made pliable, willing, ready and glad to yield, whatever comes of it? Dost thou come to God saying, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me do?' Oh how many are there in the world that would go for the servants of God, whose hearts yet will never yield to half of this, that never left any of their old sins for God, nor set themselves in a true earnest course to do any of these good duties; nay, whose hearts are so stout and proud as they stand out against, and are at enmity with, all these? They cannot endure this strictness. Tell them of sanctifying the Sabbath, and what a waspishness, a peevishness, frowardness, and perverseness appears in them, for they cannot endure to hear of it!

(5.) A good servant is he that sets himself apart from all other men's business, yea, even his own, too follow his master's. We use to say of servants, that they are not their own men, much less other men's. 'If I seek to please men,' says Paul, 'I am not the servant of Christ,' Gal. 1:10; that is, a good servant lives no longer to the lusts of men, no longer squares his life so as to please them, by living in the same lusts as they do. No; but he lives to the will of God, 1 Peter 3:4. We must not do our own cursed wills in anything, we are not our own, that we should live unto ourselves, but to him that paid a price for us. 'If any man serve me,' says Christ, 'let him follow me,' John 12:26. And you know what elsewhere follows upon the denying of a man's self. A man must deny his own will, his own business, and not follow the strain of his own heart in doing what he pleaseth and leaving undone the rest. How far short do men come of this, as those that will not deny themselves in their carnal credit, ease, or sloth, for the performance of good duties. They will serve righteousness but so far as it may stand with the good liking of their parents, friends, wives, husbands, masters, neighbours; and for fear of displeasing them, cut themselves short and pluck in their hands.

(6.) A good servant, as he knows and is content to submit, so he makes a necessity too of doing his master's will, and whatsoever comes in the way is not so necessary to him as this. David, a tried servant of God, says of himself, Ps. 119:31, 'I have stuck to thy testimonies;' it is not meant only in regard of defending them, but practising them; he sticks to it as a conclusion, This must be done, this sin must not be committed, this duty must not be omitted constantly, whatsoever comes between; as Paul thought that a necessity lay upon him to preach the gospel, and whenas his friends persuaded him not to go because of persecution at Jerusalem, 'I count not my life dear,' says he; die or live, I will go. Daniel also is an example without all contradiction in this case. When the decree was made that no petition should be put up to any God but the king only for thirty days, Daniel would not baulk a whit of his praying thrice a day, though it should cost him his life; he made therefore, you must think, a case of necessity of it, he could not live thirty days

without private prayer. Every man's heart pitcheth upon some cause as necessary for him to follow, and to it he sticks, and will not be beaten off of it. Thus a covetous man layeth this for a conclusion, that he will be rich (it is the apostle's own phrase), and an ambitious man is for applause, and a voluptuous man is for pleasure; let the commandment do what it will, what care they? There is no wicked man but sticks to false necessities, and they hinder his heart from turning. One man is hampered with correspondency with friends, another entangled in the world, and his heart hath interest in many things, and when he thinks of turning to God he sticks to these things as more necessary. But those that are servants to God in righteousness, in deed, and in truth, count obedience to God the one thing necessary, and that in comparison to it it is not necessary to be rich or learned, &c. There is in every man's life, yea, even in every day, a time that falls out wherein a man's dearest lusts will be hazarded for righteousness' service. Observe now in such passages what it is your hearts stick to as most necessary; is it either the obeying thy lust or doing thy duties? Let men have a calling in which they must uphold many unlawful practices or they cannot live, what doth the man plead? It is necessary (says he) that I must live. When men are cast into straitness, that either they must sin or lose their credit, what is the usual plea? It is a case of necessity (say they), what would you have had me do? Our own lives afford many of the like instances to them; examine now yourselves, what in these cases you usually do. Do you rather lay this conclusion, Let things be how they will, howsoever God must be obeyed; thy will, O Lord, not my will, be done. Hath thy heart such an eye to the will and command of God? Thou art then a good servant, and though thou failest sometimes in a particular action, yet still thy heart in thy course is firmly set for the commandment, and makes account so to be wheresoever thou goest. Thou knowest what thou meanest to do, and all the world shall not beat thee from it. I confess a child of God may have a great deal ado in his own heart to deny himself in some cases, yet still his heart cleaves to the commandment, and still thinks that to be more necessary; whereas a wicked man's heart slights the commandment in such a case, and thinks much it should

stand in his way, and he leaps over the biggest of all, if need be, for his master lust commands.

(7.) Another property in a good servant is to expect warrant from his master for what he doth, and not to go about his business hand over head, or to do so much as he lilt, and leave the other undone. Those that are servants of righteousness should look into the word as the great counsel, and should inquire of the Lord and of his word. Servants use every morning to come to their masters and know what their will is; and so should we in all our actions, that we may have warrant for them. He who in Micah 6 thought to serve the Lord with will-worship, says, 'Wherewith shall I come before the Lord? shall I offer up rivers of oil, or a thousand rams?' What says God there to him? 'He hath shewed thee,' saith he, 'O man, what is good; and what the Lord requireth of thee in his word.' Mariners that sail at random often cast their ships away, whenas if they would sail by compass and chart, they might safely arrive at the port. That which is called in Scripture walking with God is to do as Enoch did, who had God ever in his presence, had an eye to his commands, and observed his orders in every particular case, directing him, This thou shalt not do, this thou shalt now do. 'As the eyes of the handmaids were upon the mistress,' as David speaks in the case of salvation, Ps. 123:2, so should our eyes wait on the Lord in the case of his service. The apostle condemns eye-service in the servants of men, because their masters are not always present with them, and cannot behold them always; but it is commendable in the servants of God, because they are always in his presence, and his eyes behold whatever they do; and therefore they should do all as seen of him.

(8.) The last, and indeed chiefest, property of a good servant (which must be added to all these) is not only to know his master's will, and to be content to submit to it, but to do it effectually. You know there was one said he would go work in the vineyard, but yet did not, Mat. 21:30, 31. It is not enough to enter into the profession of God's service, and to call him Master, and give him good words: 'For not

every one that saith, Lord, Lord, but he who doth the will of God the Father, shall enter into heaven,' Mat. 7:21. For the same purpose John speaks, 1 John 3:7, 'Little children, let no man deceive you: he who doth righteousness is righteous.' And as he that doth sin (as in John 8:34) is the servant of it, so he that doth righteousness, that is, that makes it his trade, constant practice, and his course (for the word ποιῆν notes out an habitual continued practice), is the servant of it; and 'herein,' says John, 1 John 3:10, 'are the children of God and the devil manifest: he who doth not righteousness is not of God.' There be many that in their good mood will come and proffer their service, and set their hand to God's work, but they look back again, and as those in Hosea 6:4, their 'goodness is as the morning cloud, and as the early dew' it goes away; like as a mist, or new fallen in the morning, and seems to water the earth, but when the sun ariseth, it vanisheth away. When they had heard a powerful sermon, and had judgments threatened, being 'hewed by the prophets' (as it is at the 5th verse), and being wounded, pricked, terrified by the word of his mouth, then they would come and submit themselves, and do God a spurt of service. But yet, alas! their reformation was but as the lightning (as it is at the 8th verse), that flasheth, and is soon gone again. For (as it is at the 7th verse) still they broke their faith, and dealt treacherously in God's covenant. Thus traitors, when they are in prison, will do anything till released; but their traitorous head remaining still, they are as had as ever when at liberty. These are not servants, but runaways, and God will not own them, for he can scarce keep them for one day together.

Nor is it enough to do service to God constantly, and to abide by it, but we must do it thoroughly, having a respect to every commandment. This is God's testimony of David his servant, Acts 13:22, 'that he did perform all his will;' and it is Paul's prayer for the Colossians, that they might 'walk worthy of the Lord, and please him in all things, being fruitful in all good works,' Col. 1:10. To walk worthy of him, is so to walk as God may not be ashamed of us, but may say, rejoicing in us as he did in his servant Job, Job 1:8, 'Seest

thou not my servant Job, an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil?' We must endeavour to please him in all things, to obey him in one thing as well as another. A man will not own a servant who does but what he lists, and what pleaseth himself, and leaves his master's choicest business undone; who insists on tithing mint and cumin, and leaves the great things of the law, as sanctifying the Sabbath, and constant private prayer, unperformed. And we must be fruitful in all good works too; that is, making trial, and doing some of all sorts, always abounding in the work of the Lord. Let us look to ourselves, for there are many, Titus 1:16, 'that profess they know God,' and acknowledge him for their Master, wear his livery, 'but yet in works they deny him.' When a man in a constancy acts contrary to what God wills, he denies him. For if his course was but traced, it would be said, Surely God is none of his master, he will own no such servants; and therefore in works they deny him.

### **BOOK III: Evangelical motives to obedience**

Evangelical motives to obedience, drawn from the obligation which God hath laid upon us, by his appointing us unto good works, in his election of us, and by the greatness of his love manifested in the several instances of it.—Other motives urged from the consideration, that Christ having by his death conquered the devil, and destroyed his kingdom, we are by our Christian profession engaged to hate him, and fight against him as a public enemy to Christ and us, and by all our actions to endeavour the ruin of his dark kingdom of sin.—Other motives deduced from the divine presence and majesty apparent in our holy services and

performances; and also from God's design in the revelation of his word, that we should not only read and know it, but practice it too.

This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they who have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.—TITUS 3:8.

## CHAPTER I

A motive to love and obedience, drawn from the consideration, that this obedience is a business, an holy employment committed to us, which we should be careful to discharge.—That the doctrine of free grace enforceth the performance, and suits our spirits to it.

MY design is to consider the motives which the New Testament affords to invite men regenerate, to holiness, obedience, and fruitfulness in all good works; and to this purpose I have chosen this text as the most eminent, which hath in its coherence and connection a comprehension of many the chiefest things that might move us thereto included in it. The introduction in those words, 'This is a faithful saying,' refers to what forewent, of which he gives that encomium, and should rather close the former verse than begin this, as Luther and others observe. But because the apostle's scope is to bring upon those he would exhort to good works, the weight of all said in the foregoing verses, therefore it is fitly joined to this in this coherence, and is as if the apostle had said, That which I have now spoken is of all sayings or doctrines the most faithful, and tends the most of all others to provoke them that believe it to be careful to maintain good works; therefore, says he to Titus, affirm these things constantly. Ere I insist on those motives, which this so faithful a saying affords to good works, I am to speak to four things which serve to open the text.



1. That the exhortation to good works and obedience follows their having believed: 'that they which have believed in God,' &c.

(1.) Faith, then, is clearly founded upon no work in us or upon us, which is the apostle's scope to prove, as appears by the 5th verse, where, treating of that which is the ground of faith for salvation, he says, 'Not by works of righteousness, but according to his mercy, hath he saved us.' What God doth to save us, that is the only foundation for our faith; and a man therefore clearly and nakedly believes on God without consideration of works, 'that they who have believed in God,' &c.

(2.) It is in vain to exhort any to good works till they have first believed. Papists slander our doctrine, that by crying up free grace and faith, we deny good works; and upbraid us, that our doctrine affords not any motives thereto sufficient; and because (forsooth) we do not urge them to that end for which they would have them, namely, to merit heaven, therefore they reproach us that we proceed not upon sufficient grounds. But we do indeed proceed in the right order: first, we teach men to believe on free grace as if there were no works; and then to fall a-doing as if there was no faith to be justified by: 'that they who believe in God may be careful to maintain good works.' Yea, we add further, we urge good works upon a higher ground, for a better and more noble end than they can pretend to who assert that we are justified by them. You will say, What is that? It is to glorify God. All the world must needs grant that to glorify God is a higher end than to justify man: John 15:8, 'Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit.' That is the motive which Christ urgeth. Again, they say, we proceed not on good ground, because we do not good works to merit by them. Ay, but we go on a better ground, which is love and thankfulness; whereas theirs is a motive suited only to self-love. The devil endeavoured to blemish Job: Job 1:9, 'Doth Job serve God for nought?' And indeed religion founded wholly on self-love and interest would be mercenary and base; but to serve God from a principle of love and gratitude, is a noble act of friendship: John 15:14, 'Ye are my friends,

if ye do whatever I command you.' But of the others it might be said, You are my hirelings only; you only seek to merit by your services, and do all to merit heaven. When Paul, Rom. 6:22, exhorts to sanctification, he gives this as a motive, that 'the end is everlasting life;' but yet this life is a free gift of God, not what we merit, but what he freely bestows. That is a poor religion in which, when men have done all, they are workers of iniquity; but now if men work only for self, they are workers of iniquity, for setting up a man's self is original sin; and therefore, if we live according to that principle, we rise no higher than corrupt nature.

2. It is to be considered what is the import of that phrase, 'maintain good works.' The words are, προστάσθαι καλῶν ἔργων. Beza renders it, that they excel, or go before others (namely, heathens) in good works. The same word is used ver. 14; and that sense of comparison is favoured by that expression, Tit. 3:14, 'Let ours also,' &c., speaking of Christians as in distinction from heathens; and so then they that have believed (in the text) are set in opposition to unbelievers. It were the greatest dishonour to Christian religion (which the apostle boasts of to be so glorious and faithful a doctrine) if it should produce less, or not eminently more, of good works than moral principles in heathens have done: 'What singular thing do you?' says Christ; 'for these things do the heathens and publicans,' Mat. 5:47. Τί περισσὸν, what over and above other men, yea, what that is abundant in comparison of them, and which they think superfluous? Christ had used the verb of the same noun, ver. 20, concerning the Pharisees, who were so full of works that they looked to be justified by them. But, says Christ, except your righteousness doth περισσεύειν, overflow, exceed their righteousness, you cannot be saved.

Another meaning is, that they should take care of good works, as their business, function, office, which they are set over, so the word more naturally signifies; as in 1 Thes. 5:12, 'Know them that are over you' (speaking of officers). It is the same word, and doth govern a genitive case, as here also; so likewise the apostle, 1 Tim.

3:5, when he speaks of ruling one's family well, useth the same word to express a man's being over it as chief orderer, govenor, and disposer of it, as a president, which is applied to being over things as well as persons. Take any office of charge or trust, especially such wherein one hath others under him, and it hath such a name in the Greek and Latin tongues as to express the matter committed to his charge; and so we in English express the office in the title of the officer when we call him the treasurer, master of the ordnance or ammunition. These names import an office, and a man's having a great charge committed to his trust to manage, and this not as a petty under-officer, but as in chief. And so the word προστάθαι in the text is an elegant metaphor, and is as if he had said, Exhort them that believe in God to consider what office and function by so doing they have taken on them, and are hereby engaged in, even to be in chief over good works. And thus it imports three things:

(1.) That they have all sorts of good works committed to them, as their business and employment.

(2.) That they have them committed to them as the ware, the goods, the treasure they deal in, to see to it that no kind of good work be wanting (as one when anything is committed to his charge is careful of it), and which they are to improve and manage, as the most precious treasure committed to them as a trust by God. They are to husband it, and to have the care of it; and therein they are in chief too, in comparison of all other men, and are therefore to excel all others by far in faithfulness, care, and diligence therein. Moral civil heathens and formal Christians may pretend to this, but you are in chief; you are bonorum operum præfecti, the foremen, the presidents of the good work office; and God will require that at your hands which he will not at theirs (as states and princes do of their chief officers the account of such things), and therefore as your place is, so let your care be to abound and excel therein. And this interpretation, as it is more natural to the Greek phrase, so it is more genuine to the former words, 'that they be careful.' That which such places and offices of trust do properly require is care; and

therefore the apostle using this metaphor, that he might answer the force of it, useth also the word 'careful;' and both together do urge with a doubled strength this that is required of them. And with this falls in (though expressed here with a more emphatical addition) that which is used as a more ordinary ground of exhortation to holiness so frequently in Scripture: 1 Thes. 4:7, 'He hath not called us to uncleanness, but to holiness;' you are to make holiness your vocation, your calling, trade, and business; and so in 1 Peter 2:21, 'whereunto you are called;' and every one is to walk in his vocation. Thus good works are the very calling of a Christian.

(3.) The third thing to be considered is the motives, the incentives here used, which the former part of the words does direct us to, when he saith, 'This is a faithful saying, these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that,' &c. It directs us to the words or sum of doctrine afore delivered. Now, that doctrine delivered afore is the doctrine of free grace, as it is set out to us in the work of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, which he had insisted on to this very end in the verse immediately before, and in the foregoing chapter, ver. 11–13, all of which came in under the comprehension of these things in the text, and all which he himself here brings in (as, if you read what is afore and after, appears) to this end, to urge all sorts of good works upon all sorts of believers. Now, the doctrine of free grace is that to which in an eminent manner the apostle useth to give the style of a faithful saying. Thus, 1 Tim. 1:15, 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, whereof I am chief.' Which doctrine he would have ministers most frequent in, to affirm constantly, and to affirm with a special certainty and assurance; for so the word to affirm imports, to speak of them as things that hath the greatest reality in them, and which, when so delivered and so uttered, do mightily work upon men. And so I come to the main doctrine intended, which shall be made good out of this context and epistle, viz., that the doctrine of the free grace in God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, doth afford sufficient motives and inducements to men, already saved by faith

through that grace without works, to cause them to be careful to abound (above all others) in obedience and good works.

1. The doctrine of free grace is that faithful saying here intended, as that which he sets his *Probatum est* upon to be effectual to this end. 'These things,' saith he, namely, to teach, 'are good and profitable unto men.'

2. You have here the free grace both of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in their several works; you have them all here.

(1.) You have the free grace of God the Father. Ver. 4, 'After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared.' He intends the Father of our Saviour Jesus Christ, viz., God, so in the Greek, whom he calls Saviour in distinction from Christ; ver. 6, 'For he,' says he, namely, this God our Saviour, ver. 4, 'through Jesus Christ our Saviour,' &c. Therefore these are two distinct persons, and both our Saviours: the one the Father, the other the Son; and he speaks of this his grace as an hidden mystery, which we knew not of, being of old concealed in his breast towards us, and therefore used the word 'appeared,' ἐπεφάνη, broke out suddenly, unexpectedly, as Joseph's love to his brethren did.

(2.) There is the grace and love of Jesus Christ and his work, whom he therefore calls our Saviour; and he says no more there, because he had told us (but seven verses afore, chap. 2:4), that 'our Saviour Jesus Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.'

(3.) There is the grace of God seen in the Holy Ghost, and his work.

[1.] The gift of him and his person unto us to dwell in us. Ver. 5, 6, 'The Holy Ghost, whom he shed on us richly,' as the word is; and it is indeed the richest gift that ever was given.

[2.] In his work upon us, that he regenerated and renewed us; ver. 5, 'By the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit.'

[3.] In the concomitants of the gift of him unto us, expressed first in general and comprehensive terms, 'saved us,' estating us into the whole of salvation, absolutely and indefeasibly, fully and completely, in respect of the right to it; and this not of works, but according to his mercy, mere mercy. And then, secondly, it is particularly expressed in the parts of it: 1, justification from all sin, and a fulness of righteousness, ver. 7, 8; and, 2, a perfect title to eternal life, 'He then make us heirs of eternal life;' not children only, which is Peter's motive, 'but heirs of eternal life according to hope,' for so the words are to be divided from the other. Heirs of eternal life being relatives one to the other, these intermediate words, and 'according to hope,' being intended to distinguish our being made heirs here in this life from that hereafter. Here it is in hope, 'we are heirs according to hope,' but not according to possession; for as the apostle says, Rom. 8:24, 'What a man pass (or possesseth) why doth he yet hope for it?' Yet so as it is as sure as if we had it, for it is an inheritance, and we are saved, ver. 5, fully, completely already; and so the last clause of this doctrine is made good out of the words, that to men already saved through faith, or of grace without works, the doctrine of this grace affords motives to all good works.

Now before I come to demonstrate this in each particular, I shall premise this general proof concerning the whole of the grace of God in all three persons. 1 Peter 1:13, when he would exhort them to behave themselves as obedient children, and to be holy in all manner of conversation, ver. 14, 15, to move them to this, he had said before, ver. 13, 'Trust perfectly in the grace that is brought unto you in the revelation of Jesus Christ.' So do I rather read the words, than as our translators have rendered them. Trust, τελείως, is perfectly, not by halves (so in the margin), for this grace affords a perfect ground and stay for faith to rest upon; and then it is plain that θερομένην, which they translate, in the grace 'which is to be

brought,' as in the future and for time to come, may more naturally be understood, 'is brought,' it noting what at the present is brought, and so is to be read. It was the word 'hope,' and the Syriac translation together, that diverted this reading; whereas hope is often put for faith and trust, both in the Old and New Testament. In the Old, Job 13:15, that known place, 'Though he kill me, yet will I trust in him; I will hope in him.' And in the New, Eph. 1:12, 'That we should be to the praise of the glory of his grace, who first trusted in Christ.' In the margin it is 'hoped,' and so in the Greek. Thus then the words, 1 Pet. 1:13, may run, 'Trust perfectly on the grace which is brought to you,' or, as the vulgar, 'is offered to you.' And the other phrase, rendered 'at the revelation,' as if it were at the day of judgment, is manifestly, ἐν ἀποκαλύψει, 'in the revelation of Jesus Christ,' in whom this grace is made known, and is termed a revelation in respect of the former hiddenness and secrecy of it compared to the manifestation of it now, God having kept it secret in the times of the Old Testament. Thus, in Rom. 16:25, the preaching of Christ is called 'the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began.' And at this Peter hath as evident an aim in using this word here, having, in the words before, ver. 12, 13, said that it was kept hid from those of the Old Testament, yea, the angels, who desired to pry into it; but it is brought to you, even home to your doors, in the revelation of Christ, namely, through the gospel. Now having thus restored this Scripture in 1 Pet. 1:13 to its right meaning, that which I produce it for and apply it unto is, that the trusting perfectly in this grace should make us obedient, yea, and the more perfectly we trust, the more we shall be obedient; and you can never trust enough or too much upon it, and upon it alone, whilst (as it follows) you are obedient children, or as the children of obedience, made up of nothing else, you carry yourselves towards this grace. For why should the apostle upon this connection and coherence mention their relation of children, when he would have the grace of God to move them, but because it is the sweetest connection and comprehension of these two in the heart? For no man rationally is moved to anything which he hath not a principle within him suited to, and which answers that motive, and

which is to be the life and soul of it. If a man be a slave, one of a mere servile spirit, this grace speaks not reason to him; for that is practical reason to every one that suits his spirit. Now one under the law, as the apostle opposeth it to grace, Rom. 6, can find no reason, no strength, no efficacy in such cords of love and free grace, no more than a beast doth in principles of common reason; but if one be a child, and have the spirit of a child, and is 'under grace,' as the apostle speaks, then this grace, that is his sovereign, teacheth him this obedience, and he obeys it naturally, for he is a meet scholar and disciple to be taught this lesson. And this another parallel place in this epistle to Titus confirmeth: chap. 2:11, 12, 'The grace of God, that brings salvation, hath appeared.' Which is all one with what Peter had said, 1 Pet. 1:13, 'Which is brought to you in the revelation of Christ.' And because that this grace, that is in God himself, is the subject of the gospel, therefore that doctrine of it is called grace; as likewise because withal it is the object of our faith, it is called faith, 'teaching us, παιδεύουσα,' teaching and instructing us, as children are taught by their instructors and tutors. Now therefore as in the Old Testament they are under the law as their 'schoolmaster,' as their 'tutor' and 'governor' (I put two or three of the phrases together used by the apostle, Rom. 6, Gal. 3), so being under grace, their spirits are taught and disciplined by it, formed and framed to the principles thereof and the lessons it reads, which do all teach denying of ungodliness, and subjection to\* all dispositions and duties to God, as he is holy and gracious, which may make him perfect to all and every good work of all sorts, which he owes to himself in temperance, to live 'soberly' to his neighbour in justice, to live 'righteously' and to God in living 'godly.' That is, it teacheth perfect holiness to all we owe any kind of duty unto; for all we do, or can be supposed to owe, are either what is due to God, our neighbour, or ourselves; and it teacheth, as for the motive or incentive thereto, all these in one lesson, the grace of God appearing to the heart, and being manifest to a man's soul.

## CHAPTER II



That God's love, in electing us, is a great motive to all acts of love and obedience.—That in this his election of us, he hath ordained and appointed us to love and good works.

I come now particularly to demonstrate that the grace and love of God, manifested in our salvation, engageth us to holiness, obedience, and service.

The proper work of God the Father is election, and his grace shines most eminently there. Thus in the mention of all three persons, and in the ascribing the proper work to each, the apostle, 1 Pet. 1:2, attributes election to the Father. Now, therein I consider two things: 1. the act itself; 2. the love, the greatness of the grace and love shewn in it, and how strongly by both we are obliged to holiness and obedience.

1. That God should choose, and single, and design thee forth to this prefecture, to this office of care over good works, engageth to all diligence and faithfulness. The apostle judgeth it but reasonable, and upon that ground urgeth Timothy to give himself wholly up to that office the great God had chose and designed him unto; and he urgeth his engagement to do so by what obligation is found amongst men: 2 Tim. 2:4, 'No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life,' but gives over all other callings whatever, as the law of a soldier then was, 'that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.' Paul, when he was chosen to the greatest service that ever man underwent but Christ, was told by Ananias, Acts 22:14, 'The Lord God of our fathers,' that chose them, 'hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will,' &c., 'and hear the word of his mouth,' that is, obey him; and the sense of this fired Paul's heart. And Christ also, Acts 9:15, calls him 'a chosen vessel.' To what end? 'To carry my name;' that is, to bear my name about the whole world, and unto all ages after, in holiness of life and purity of doctrine; a vessel singled out to do it, purged, and 'made meet for his Master's use, prepared to every good work;' God having known, owned, and set his seal upon him for his own by election, as

Paul speaks, 2 Tim. 2:19, alluding to that in Isaiah, 'Be ye pure, ye that bear the vessels of the Lord: touch no unclean thing,' Isa. 52:11; much more the vessels themselves, chosen to bear his name, ought not to do so. It was a great and effectual argument to Cyrus, though an heathen prince, to persuade him to give leave and commission to the Jews to build the temple, even this, that God had, so many years before, designed him by name; that God had said, in Isaiah's time, of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd, that shall perform all my pleasure,' Isa. 44:28. This thus written of him long before he was born, and this coming to his knowledge, he was moved, and effectually moved hereby to perform it: Ezra 1:2, 'Thus saith Cyrus, King of Persia, The Lord hath charged me to build an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judea.' How much more should it move thee, that hast found, or hast good hope of (or thou hast hope of nothing), that God hath writ down thy name in his book from all eternity, as a chosen vessel that should know and perform his will? Paul, in like manner, strengthens this charge to Timothy with those prophecies that had been given forth of him at his ordination, when he had hands laid on him by the appointment of the Spirit of prophecy: 1 Tim. 1:18, 'This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war the good warfare.' By them, that is, to be stirred up the more by them, because it was thus foretold of thee; much more should we be stirred up to our holy duty, when from everlasting God hath chosen us hereunto. Now, Eph. 1, Paul expressly tells us that 'God hath chosen us before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him in love.'

2. Holy obedience being found to be the main thing pitched upon by God in those decrees of his, as the principal end, under his own glory, unto which he designed us, we should be the more excited to it. The first and primary, yet so in that place the apostle makes it; for the apostle's scope is, ver. 3, to enumerate the blessings, and the acts of blessing, with the proper designments of them as we are blessed with them in Christ, and to set them in their order. He begins with election: ver. 4, 'According as he hath chosen us in him

before the foundation of the world;' and withal lays forth the proper principal designment of election, as the first act of all other towards us; and the first and principal is holiness, 'to be holy and unblameable before him in love.' So that as the act of election is distinguished from predestination, and is the first of the two, so the primary and first aim God in that first act of election had was holiness, as essential to the person who was to be in Christ; and then adoption, or sonship, or right to eternal life and glory, which is the act of predestination, as it is distinguished from election, is but as an outward privilege or dignity superadded. When God chooseth a man, he chooseth him for himself, Ps. 4:3 for himself to converse with, to communicate himself unto him as a friend, a companion, and his delight. Now, it is holiness that makes us fit to live with the Holy God for ever, since without it we cannot see him, Heb. 12:14, which is God's main aim, and more than our being his children; as one must be supposed a man, one of mankind, having a soul reasonable, ere we can suppose him capable of adoption, or to be another man's heir. As therefore it was the main first design in God's eye, before the consideration of our happiness, let it be so in ours. It is not only the means through which God hath chosen us to salvation: 2 Thes. 2:13, 14, 'Who hath chosen you through sanctification,' &c. So sufferings are also said to be the means, but this is the end also, and that more than our glory and happiness; and therefore holiness for ever remains, and love, 1 Cor. 13; and we are 'chosen to be holy before him in love.' This portion has made me understand the reason of that order and placing of those benefits and fruits of election, namely, why election to sanctification is put first, and so sprinkling of Christ's blood put after it, yea, after obedience: 1 Peter 1:2, 'Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.' It is not to shew that sanctification, obedience should go before the sprinkling of the blood of Christ upon us, which is our sanctification; but his speaking of election sheweth (as Paul also doth) what was the most eminent and principal designment and end whereto we were elected, even sanctification unto obedience. Election was unto

holiness immediately and primarily, and was first and chiefly intended—I do not say it is greater in the worth of the thing, so Christ's blood is of infinite value—as that which God ultimately aimed to bring us unto. And though Christ's blood is of infinite more value, yet this is more than the sprinkling of that blood on us, for it remains for ever in heaven, when we need no more sprinkling of that blood.

3. To make this obligation laid on us by election the stronger, let us consider that as God hath chosen us unto holiness, and unto good works, so it is said reciprocally that he hath ordained good works for us. Thus the Scripture, that it might inform us, turns it both ways, that as he ordained us to good works, so he ordained good works for us to walk in; even as when election to glory is spoken of, to shew the certainty, and God's love in it, the Scripture doth not only say we are ordained and prepared to glory (as in Rom. 9:23, and elsewhere), but that this glory is prepared for us: 'Come and inherit the kingdom prepared for you,' says Christ; and so says the apostle, 1 Cor. 2:9, 'Eye hath not seen the things prepared for them that love him,' suited aforehand to make them happy. The same we find of good works, that a chosen vessel is said to be prepared for every good work, as you heard out of Timothy. And so in Eph. 2:10, good works are said to be prepared for us to walk in; not ordained only by way of precept, for so they are ordained to wicked men, but by decree and predestination, set out as a man's work and way; whence that phrase of Solomon is, 'What thy hand finds to do, do with all thy might.' A godly man's work (as Christ's was) is given him; and the apostle speaks it to shew what ordination good works have in our salvation, yet so as they might not derogate from free grace, for by grace we are saved without works. God, that made us new creatures, and suited us to good works, had prepared and ordained all sorts of good works, to which this new creature was fitted; as when he made man, he made paradise for him to walk in, and set out his way beforehand. Thus God hath chose out work for us, and (as Christ says, John 15:16) 'hath ordained us to bring forth fruit, and that our fruit should remain;' for both are of eternal purpose.

4. The consideration that he hath chosen you, not others, how doth it call for holiness! 1 Peter 2:8, 9, 'Christ,' says he, 'is a stone of stumbling to the disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed;' that is, with that kind of appointment which is to permit them to act as creatures, and to shew themselves such. He needed not have added that (for he brings it in with an also, or over and above), but to that end, to move them the more to obedience; now then, to move them, he adds, 'But you are a chosen generation, that you should shew forth the praises of him that called you' (which follows), so that he chose you, as in the former words; and this is spoken as in manifest opposition unto appointing others to disobedience. The like you have 2 Thes. 2:13, 14.

## CHAPTER III

That the great love of God in electing of us should be a strong motive and incentive to love and good works.

I come now to the love shewn in these acts, and shall demonstrate that all the mercies and other graces or love that are to found in election should move us to obedience: Rom. 12:1, 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.' It is a transition from doctrinal points to practical duties, and the illative therefore sends us to justification, sanctification (handled in chapters 3, 4, 5, 6); but it especially sends us to election, and the mercies in the bowels of it, of which he had treated in three chapters immediately before. This love of God bestowed on us, in and at election, the Scripture makes use of a double way to work holiness and obedience in us.

1. By way of imitation, it some way or other teacheth all sorts of graces, and is the lively pattern of them to us.

2. By way of incentive or motive, so as in such things wherein it doth not so fully serve as a pattern to be imitated (as in all it cannot), yet in those it serves as motives and inflamers thereunto.

1. By way of imitation. God's love in electing us is propounded as a motive to obedience: Eph. 5:1, 'Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children, and walk in love.' He speaks it of God's love, as distinct from Christ's; for of that he speaks as a further motive in the next words. I confess he speaks it upon occasion of God's love in justification there, that we should imitate it in forgiving others, as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven us, Eph. 4:32. Yet the force of the argument therein holds as strong, yea, more strong, in all considerations about his eternal love, which was the original, the

spring, the fountain, the cause of justification, and all else; yea, out of which he then justified, adopted, bestowed all blessings upon us in Christ. And as the virtues in a sovereign water are stronger in the spring than in the streams, so is this love in God's heart; and though it be applied only to love to brethren, yet it extends to all obedience, the fountain whereof is love to God; and the terms he expresseth himself in this are generals, which will reach to all in his love, and to all compliance therewith in us unto all commands. For when we are exhorted to be followers of God, it is a general that comes in upon occasion of that particular act of love shewn in forgiveness; as often general rules, and reasons, and promises are brought in upon occasion of particular instances, to confirm and enforce them. Then when it follows, 'Walk in love,' what! doth he mean it in this one act of it, of forgiveness, which is a 'going forth of love? No; but in all the duties of love besides. And though the apostle instances in this as a more broad and conspicuous way of God's love in forgiving us, and thereupon more particularly exhorts us to chalk out the like path to ourselves to walk in, of forgiving others, yet this is but one of those walks his love delights in. He hath dwelt in love (as John speaks), walked in love within his own grounds, within himself (which I speak as warranted by that phrase, 'which he purposed in himself to us,' Eph. 1:9), with infinite delight from all eternity; and in all these, all so far as he hath made known to us, the head ways of them, we should be followers of him, as well as in forgiveness or the duties of love to brethren. Thus we should walk in love, and out of love to him, in all those ways which he hath chalked out for us; and this we should do to shew our love unto him by it. This word, 'Be ye followers of God' (that is, as one that follows another in the same step), is too dull, too flat a word, falls short of what the apostle seems to intend, and therefore is to be taken in, corresponding with those that follow, 'and walk in love'; that is, in the same steps. In the original it is, be ye imitators, μιμηταί. This farther sense is also aimed at, that we should be like unto God in his love, as children are to their parents in feature and disposition; let our love answer to his, as limb to limb in a parent. Therefore he adds these words, 'as children,' that resemble the father, yea, often the grandfather most.

And everlasting love is as the grandfather that begat, and brings forth all these effects and fruits of love, adoption, forgiveness, &c. Yet still this word  $\mu\mu\eta\tau\alpha\iota$  would speak something more, viz., we should act over to the life the love of God, as actors do stories; we should not only have in our hearts the image of it, but we should act to the life the postures, the passions, the gestures, the looks, and the casts of that love of God; and we should have all these continually, as far as may be, before our eyes, to imitate them in our ways.

2. We should set up God's love, not as a pattern only to us, but as an incentive to inflame us; and therefore he adds these words, 'as dear children.' The words are in the original  $\omega\varsigma \tau\acute{\epsilon}\kappa\nu\alpha \acute{\alpha}\gamma\alpha\lambda\eta\tau\acute{\alpha}$ . 1. As children, to imitate, to act over his love in all your walkings towards himself and others. And 2. As beloved children, to take in his peculiar love to you, to invigorate and act you. Children are to imitate their parents, as they are their parents and their superiors; and so Christ urgeth it, Mat. 5:48, 'Be ye perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.' And so the apostle urgeth it, 1 Peter 1:14, 'As obedient children, fashion not yourselves;' that is, imitate not your former lusts,  $\mu\grave{\eta} \sigma\upsilon\sigma\chi\eta\mu\alpha\tau\iota\zeta\acute{o}\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\iota$ ; that is, be not cast into the garb, the mode of them, frame not yourselves to them; but be holy as I am holy; imitate me your Father. But the apostle, in Eph. 5:1, was enforcing a point of love. 3. And therefore he adds, 'as beloved children;' as darlings whom God loved and delighted to love; this is put in to make God's love the enkindler and incentive of this divine fire in us. Consider but how beloved, how dear you are and have been to him; consider the endearments of his love in all the singularities and eminent properties of it. What love was it you were wrapt in when brought forth? Everlasting love. What womb of love was it in which you as children were first conceived? It was in everlasting love. By what love were you chosen and predestinated to the adoption of sons before the world was? Eph. 1:5. It was that love which made you children; neither can any come to know how dear you are to God till they come to discover and drink of this love, the fountain, the original of all. And indeed it is with respect to having



been beloved with this love that they are called beloved children. As also, in 2 Thes. 2:13, he gives them this title and compellation on purpose, in reference to election: 'We are bound to give thanks always unto God for you, brethren and beloved of the Lord, because God hath chosen you from the beginning.' He contents not himself to have called them brethren, but on purpose adds the other word, 'beloved,' because it was in election they were first and chiefly beloved. And, in Col. 3:12, Paul joins both, and makes them an argument to all graces of every kind: 'As the elect of God,' says he, 'holy and beloved, put on bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering.' It is easy to conceive how bowels of mercy and kindness are required of us, as resemblances of that love which was accompanied with such infinite bowels and heroic kindness in God towards us; for out of these God chose you at first. It is also to be considered how much kindness, meekness, riches of long-suffering, and forbearance, and forgiveness God ordained in election to shew forth toward you. The fountain of them all was electing love, and in electing love was found all these, or it designed to shew forth these; only how humbleness of mind was shewn therein as a pattern to us may be a doubt; but it may be easily resolved by what I have said on Eph. 2,\* where I shewed the greatness of God's love, in this respect, that it was an humbling condescension in him, the great God, to look down on creatures. Ps. 113:6, 'Who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth.' If to look on them is condescending goodness, much more to love them, and ordain them sons, and friends, and companions with himself. And it was yet a greater condescension to ordain his eternal Son to dwell in human nature, and that nature to become one person with him, which was the fundamental decree of all, for we are chosen in Christ as in our head, Eph. 1:3. Look, therefore, whatever singularities, particularities there are of graces of any kind to be found in this love, they should either be patterns or motives unto us, to answer them in love and obedience: Eph. 5:1, 'As dear or beloved children, be imitators of God.' Take the words as a motive, and judge within yourselves how forcible it is to any heart possessed with childlike

love to God. Suppose God from heaven should say, What, my child (as that mother to Solomon), my beloved child, yea, as thou art my beloved child, do this or that, and therein obey me; how should this move any of you! Set this before every command, and think that God thus speaks to thee: 'As thou art my dear child, thou shalt have no other gods; thou shalt not commit adultery, murder,' &c.

Let us now run over all those special properties and singularities by which this love is commended to us, and see how they all enforce and persuade to holiness and obedience, and the giving of all love to God.

1st, Let us view the priority of this love, that he loved us first, not we him. Upon this ground Christ first, then the apostle John, enforceth all obedience to all commands.

First, Christ doth it, John 15:16. When Christ would move his apostles to that great and hazardous work of preaching the gospel over all the world when he was gone (as he moved Peter in those words, 'Lovest thou me?'), he urgeth this, that he had loved them first: 'You have not chosen me' (says he), 'but I have chosen you.' He mentions election to them, and therein this endearing consideration, that he had first chosen them, not they him; and then subjoins that he had ordained them to go all the world over, and 'bring forth fruit, and that their fruit should remain.' It is as if he had thus spoke to them: You did not first provoke me to set my heart on you, and single you out, but I freely chose and loved you. Then John (1 John 4) insists on the same argument, which he expresseth more takingly thus: 'Not that we loved God, but that he loved us,' ver. 10; 'and loved us first,' ver. 19; and we loved not him at all for a long while after his love and pity shewn to us. All the commandments are by Christ reduced to two heads: Mat. 22:37, &c., 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law

and the prophets.' Now John's scope also (in 1 John 4) is to exhort to both, and to move to both. He useth this as the argument twice in that chapter: 1, in verses 10, 11; then, 2, in verses 19–21. At the 10th verse he heightens the love of God: 'Herein is love;' that is, herein is love indeed; and he doth this on purpose to draw from us obedience to that command, and love to our brethren. Ver. 11, 'Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.' Therein are comprehended all the duties of the second table: Rom. 13:8, 9, 'He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet: and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' Then again, says John, 1 John 4:19, 'We love him' (so ours render it), or 'Let us love him' (so others render it, and indeed the word ἀγαπῶμεν is indifferent to both, and favours both alike), 'because he loved us first;' and from thence, ver. 20, 21, he infers love to our brethren, and that as a commandment from that God that so loved us: ver. 21, 'This commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also.' So that love to God, the sum of the first table, is enjoined, or rather sweetly flows from what the law of love requires; and we are bound to requite love with love to one that loved us first, and so highly loved us too, ver. 11. The other argument is fetched from a superadded commandment, 1 John 4:21, from him that thus loved us; and it is enforced from what Christ had said, John 14, 'If ye love me, keep my commandments.' Now in the midst between both these arguments he inserts this axiom, 1 John 4:17, 'As he is, so are we in this world.' This belongeth to the argument, why we should imitate God. The coherence carries it to God in his love, especially that love before all worlds, which he had treated of so largely before: ver. 16, 'We have known the love that God hath to us. God is love, &c. And herein is love, that he loved us first, &c. If then, as he is, so are we in this world, we shall have boldness at the latter day, because we behave ourselves so as to be like him.' Because as he is, that is, as he is in loving us first, and giving his Son for us, such we are in this world in loving others in imitation of him; or 'as he is, we

are in this world;' that is, we being imitators of that everlasting love of his, 'we shall have boldness at the day of judgment,' it being impossible God should disapprove of those that are like him in that which is most dear to him, viz., his love and the eternal acts of it. Thus Piscator and others interpret it.

2dly. Consider the peculiarity of his love, that he hath loved you above all others, in which there is another eminency of love: Deut. 10:14, 15, 'Behold, the heaven, and the heaven of heavens, is the Lord's thy God, the earth also, with all that is therein. Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day.' He here sets out the special love of God in choosing them.

(1.) He had choice enough; heaven and earth lay all before him, and all things in both, and he could have made every star, every pebble, so many sons to Abraham. As in the mass or chaos, the matter of all creatures, which lay alike before his power, out of the same matter he made the dull earth, he might have made the vigorous and shining sun; so he had all creatures in heaven and earth out of which to have made sons to Abraham (as John the Baptist speaks), but he chose them out of mankind, the seed of mankind.

(2.) He had before him all people of mankind, made all of one blood, Acts 17, and out of all 'he chose thy fathers and their seed,' out of all (as choice implies), yea, above all.

(3.) And 3dly, He made this choice, not out of a bare act of will, as one resolved to choose some person with a delight to love them, and delighting to shew this peculiar love to them.

(4.) And 4thly, That love and delight was all, and the alone cause thereto him moving, as that word 'only' (in Deut. 10:14, 15) implies: 'Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers,' &c. Now to what end is all this electing love thus set forth to us, but to the point I have in hand? Deut. 10:12, 'And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God

require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?' This Lord, the God of gods, Lord of lords, a great God, ver. 17, who is withal so good, so full of love, of all love to thee, what doth this God require of thee (the Hebrew signifies also to ask, request, entreat; so 1 Sam. 1:17, 20, 27, in the petition which Hannah put up to God, the same word is used)? What doth this glorious God, after all this love manifested, fall a-petitioning thee for (as though God did beseech, as the apostle hath it, 2 Cor. 5:20)? What doth he ask again of thee, as in answer to all this love? Nothing but thy love and thy obedience, which by the law of justice is a debt from equals, namely, to requite love with love, Rom. 12:8. He requires nothing but love, which (as Christ says) sinners, the worst of sinners, the most notorious sinners in the world, pay mutually: 'Publicans and sinners love those that love them,' Mat. 5:46, Luke 6:32.

## CHAPTER IV

Another motive to obedience deduced from God's great love in giving his Son to die for us.—That he requires nothing in requital of so inestimable a gift, but that we should love, obey, and serve him.—Other considerations of God's love urged, as motives to obedience; that he delights in loving us, and therefore it should be our delight to love and obey him.—The eternity and immutability of his love, urged as motives to faithful and constant obedience.

The greatness and immenseness of God's love in electing us was such, that he designed to shew it by a gift answerable: and that was the gift of his Son to death, to be a propitiation for our sins; and for this let us return again to that scripture in 1 John 4:10; 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but God loved us, and sent his Son to be

the propitiation for our sins.' And then it follows, 'Beloved, if God so loved us', &c., he puts a so upon it, as leaving it to the Holy Ghost to heighten this so by him unutterable. Our Saviour had done the like: John 3:16, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son'—a gift so great, that he hath nothing now left he values: 'He that spared not his Son, how shall he not with him give us all things?' Rom. 8:32. Now then consider, O man, what doth this God, that designed to give so great a gift merely to commend his love, require of thee again? What! 'Thousands of rams, ten thousand rivers of oil, thy first-born in requital of his first-born?' He twice renounceth all or any of these, both in Ps 50 and Micah 6. What is it the Lord asks of thee (says Moses also, Deut. 10:12)? It is all a diminutive: alas! as good as nothing to him. It is but thy love, thy service, which when thou hast returned to him to the utmost thou art able, fall down on thy knees, and say, thou art an unprofitable servant. All of it is that which he hath no need of, of which he might say as of sacrifice, 'If I had need thereof, would I ask thee?' It is that God who asks thy service, who might command it, and it is a favour that he gives thee leave to love and serve him. And it is but that love and service, which the worth and excellency of this God, if known by thee (though his love to thee were as yet unknown), would draw it from thee, and move thee to fear him that is so great, ver. 17, to love him that is so good and loving, ver. 15, 16, and to serve him, namely, in outward obedience, by walking in his ways, who commands all he doth command for thy good, ver. 14, and so thou servest, providest for thyself most in serving him. And as for that which he desires thee to part with for him, what is it but what is merely an hindrance to this love and service of him according to his greatness and excellency? and to part with it is for thine own good: 'Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your hearts, and be no more stiff-necked,' Deut. 10:16. It is an inference from what he had said before. Now what is that foreskin that makes thee thus stiff-necked? It is inordinate self-love. Self-love is the sum of the law of sin, as love to God is the sum of the laws of God. The laws of sin tell thee, thou shalt not fear God, nor worship him; thou shalt take his name in vain, thou shalt kill, steal, or commit adultery, &c. And if there be

any other commandment of sin, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, engrafted so deep in all men's hearts, 'Thou shalt love thyself above all things whatsoever.' But the law of God commands love to God, and obedience to him springing thence, and requiring the whole soul and strength (as Christ speaks) to love God above one's self, as by the proportion Christ sets is evident, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, therefore God above thyself. Hence this self called flesh, which opposeth true love to God, is enmity with God and his law, Rom. 8, and must be therefore cut off and cast away, ere we can love him and be subject to his law, as the apostle there speaks. And to this purpose the same Moses, preaching the gospel in another place, speaks, Deut. 30:6, 'The Lord will circumcise thy heart, to love thy God with all thy heart, and all thy soul.' What is it that this great God, that hath out of his love given a gift so great, and so dear to him, requires of thee? Not any part of what is truly and substantially love unto thyself; he permits the whole of it in substance still to remain, and requires only the superfluity of it. The Hebrew word used for the foreskin, which is to be cut off, signifies a superfluity, as that part of the skin which the Jews in circumcision did cut off is. And therefore Ainsworth emphatically translates it so here, and usually elsewhere, circumcise the superfluous foreskin; and by the choice of that superfluous skin to be the subject of circumcision, was fitly signified how little and small a matter it is that God requires of self-denial in us. What doth the Lord require of thee? Not to cut off self entirely, but only the inordinacy, the excrescency; and so some have understood that of James 1:21, 'Lay aside all superfluity of naughtiness.' God requires no more than that thou shouldst part with what will hinder thy loving him above thyself; and the word in its signification suiteth this also, for it signifies a stoppage that hindereth, and so is to be cut off, as that which letteth thee in thy loving and obeying him. And upon the whole to conclude, consider that in Deut. 10:12, 13, it is expressed, that 'it is for thy good that thou art to serve the Lord with all thy soul, to keep the commandments which he commands thee for thy good.' These words, 'for thy good,' are added to this thy loving and serving him; and so to bring this further home to the

thing in hand, herein thy love and obedience unto God doth but fitly and meetly answer as an imitation of that his love in election, and the contrivements of it, as was observed. For as God in that his loving us had eminently and above all a respect to his own glory, Eph. 1:6, 'to the praise of the glory of his grace,' yet so as he did withal take in such conspicuous affections of love to our persons, that he is said to have delighted to love us, and to love us most in this, that he makes himself, and his love and glory, our happiness and highest end, and accordingly so contrived his designs therein, as to hold forth both these, decreeing all for our good, as well as his own glory; thus in the like proportion and subordination, in imitation of this love of his, he allows us to love ourselves in loving him, and to that end hath given all his commands for our good, as out of Moses was observed; yet so as to set him up above ourselves, and make his glory, and the praise of it, our chiefest and greatest good. And thus Moses concludes that 10th chapter of Deuteronomy, verse 21, 'He is thy praise, and he is thy God.'

Let us proceed on to whatever other singularities or rarities are to be found in this love, and shew how we should answer them all in love and obedience, and that all and each should become the highest and most inflaming motives to us. Concerning all which let me premise this general consideration once for all, that by the same reason that the apostle urgeth this circumstance in God's love, viz., the priority of it, that God loved us first, as a motive to obedience to his commands, 1 John 4:19–21, and as Moses urged the peculiarity of this love, Deut. 10, by the same reason may and should any other consideration that commends it move us.

Therefore consider that God, in choosing thee, not only loved thee, but delighted to love thee. It was not barely an act of will that he would choose some, he cared not whom, as being indifferent about it; but it was an act of love, and not of love only, but of good pleasure, Eph. 1, and of delight too, as you heard, Deut. 10. How should the consideration of this sweeten obedience to thee, not only to do his will, but to do it willingly? This love should make not only



the commandment not grievous, 1 John 5, but a delight. It is hard to find an instance of this in the hearts of the ordinary sons of men; only in Christ our head we may find and have the great example. How reedy and willing did the fore-mentioned consideration make him to do God's will in all things, to fulfil all righteousness, and to make this work his meat and drink! 'I have a baptism to be baptized with,' says he, 'and how do I long till it is accomplished.' And what was one spring and motive hereunto? It was even the consideration that God had chosen him and delighted in him, which made him his servant and obedient: Isa. 42:1, 'My servant whom I uphold, my elect in whom my soul delighteth.' And therefore he took courage and resolution to go through with the work he was chosen to. Thus it follows, 'He shall not fail, nor be discouraged,' ver. 4. The sense and apprehension which Christ had, that God had written his name as the head, at the top of his book of life, and that his name was also engraven deeply on his heart, made him speak thus in Heb. 10:7, 'Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God.' But if you consult the place this is taken out of, there is more of the disposition of his spirit added: Ps. 40, 'I delight to do thy will, O God.' And in both places this it was that moved him, 'In the volume of thy book, thus it is written of me.' God had predestinated him as a man before all worlds, 1 Peter 1:20; God had delighted in him, as thus decreed, before his works of old, Prov. 8:30. And now that his time came to shew his love to God, and work for him, this infinitely quickened him; and therefore, having run his race and despatched his work, he says, John 17:4, 'I have glorified thee on earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.' And it follow, ver. 5, 'And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was;' which is interpreted by that verse 24, 'The glory thou hast given me' (and so ordainedst it) 'before the world was: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.' You may easily discern by the connection of the 4th and 5th verses, interpreted by the 23d, what had set him on work, and what he had in his eye, in despatching all his work on earth so willingly, so eagerly: it was God's everlasting love, that had designed to him so great a glory,

which therefore as soon as now his work was done, he utters as that the thoughts of which, and of his having been eternally ordained unto it, out of so great a love, had set him a-work. Now, then, hath God rejoiced over thee from everlasting, in his intentions to do thee good, with his whole heart and his whole soul (as Jeremiah speaks)? How should this consideration draw out, suck out thy whole heart from thee, to love and serve the Lord with all thy heart and with all thy soul! Was his whole soul thus delighted to love thee? Deut. 10:12, 15. Was it a pure act of good pleasure in him? Oh how shouldst thou strive, Col. 1:10, 'to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work.'

5. Consider that this love hath been from everlasting, Jer. 31:3. This antiquity of it, that it is of so long continuance, of so long a standing, should have its distinct influence also upon thee. This is therefore inserted, Eph. 1:3 'who hath chosen us before the foundation of the world, to be holy before him in love.' Paul minds the Thessalonians of it also, to move them to holiness: 2 Thes. 2:13, 'God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.' 'From the beginning.' that is, from everlasting: 1 John 1:1, 'The Word of life, that was from the beginning.' This consideration hath much in it to move us.

(1.) When one hath had his eyes and his heart long upon a thing which he desires to see accomplished, how greedy of it, how delighted in it is he, when he sees it begun to be accomplished! As Christ sitting in heaven, and expecting till his enemies be made his footstool, when he sees any new degree of it accomplished, how doth it rejoice him! If God hath so long since, even from eternity, designed out holiness for his children, he expects earnestly to have holy obedience and service from them.

(2.) Consider, that as this hath been in his eye so long, so how little a time it is since thou wert holy, or beganst to look towards it. His eyes and heart were toward thee before the foundation of the world;

and it hath been half thy time perhaps before thou beganst to look after him or his ways, or to set thyself to be holy before him. And when thou didst begin after so long time, thou didst find thyself enwrapt in the designs of eternal love upon thee, that ordained thee to this very thing before the world was. Oh how should this quicken thee to hasten thy work, and to make speed, as one born out of time! God loved and chose thee from the beginning, 2 Thes. 2, and had no other thoughts nor stirrings of affections but of love and kindness to thee; but thou from thy beginning hast had no other but thoughts of provocation and enmity against him, for thy thoughts had been only evil from thy infancy, Gen. 6:5. As therefore when David would move God not to cut him off in the midst of his days, what says he? Ps. 102:24, 25, 'I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days: thy years are throughout all generations. Of old hast thou laid the foundations of the earth.' This speech of David I turn into an exhortation unto thee. His love hath been to thee before he laid the foundation of the earth, and throughout all generations; thy being and existence was but as this morning unto him, and it was the midst of thy days ere thou brokest off thy iniquities by repentance. Thy time of love is short, and thou hast already shortened it; Oh now fall to work and ply thee, and make, if possible, the rest of thy life an whole life to him. Peter had a touch of it, 1 Peter 4:3, yet without upbraiding; for our God is so good, as he upbraideth no man that turns to him from his former sins. Well, what says Peter? 'The time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles.' He says no more, yet it is enough to quicken us; yea, it is the scope of the apostle to do it. The consideration of this, with the other of God's love, he sets together on purpose to press this exhortation, that those that have believed should maintain good works. He fetcheth his rise from the third verse: 'We ourselves were sometimes' (too long a time) 'foolish, disobedient, serving divers lusts;' and yet God loved us all that while. So ver. 4, 'When the love of God appeared, that had been hidden,' &c. You therefore that served nothing but sin before, should be the more diligent now in serving God, &c.

6. Consider that this love of God hath been constant to thee and unchangeable, ever since and all along from the beginning, the same, 2 Thes. 2:13, and so continues to the end, John 13:1. Yea, it is such as nothing can separate from it: Rom. 8:38, 39, 'I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Jesus Christ our Lord.' And this should move to constancy and continuance in well doing always, in which we should suffer nothing to interrupt us, nothing to separate us from it. The apostle (in that 2 Thes. 2, from verse 13 to the end, and chap. 3:5) improves this consideration of the everlastingness, unchangeableness of God's love (for this place speaks at once to both) to move them to stability in every good word and work, and to cleave fast to all the doctrines and commandments both by faith and obedience. He had spoken before how God would give up the reprobate number of professors of Christianity to antichristian doctrine and unrighteousness (in plain words), 'that they might be damned.' But (says he, ver. 13) 'We are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth;' both these two being necessary to salvation. 1st, It is necessary to believe the truth as it is in Jesus; 2dly, to be sanctified and made holy men by it, and God from the beginning hath chosen you to be saved through both. Therefore, says he, vers. 15–17, 'Stand fast, and hold the traditions which you have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle. Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.' It is therefore an exhortation, seconded with a prayer for their establishment in faith and holiness, ver. 16, 17, manifestly founded upon and deduced from what he had spoken, ver. 13, now alleged, God hath from the beginning chosen you. In verse 16, he makes use of it as a prayer, 'God, even our Father, who hath loved us, and given us everlasting consolation, establish you in

every good word and work.' The sum of which is, that God hath out of love chosen us from the beginning or everlasting, and thereby hath given us consolation everlasting; the object of it being his unchangeable love, his love which hath been from everlasting, and will be to everlasting. Consolation is put chiefly for the object matter, that might and doth afford everlasting consolation, as the doctrine of faith is called faith. And thus it is rather to be taken, because his petition thereupon in the 17th verse is, 'Comfort your hearts,' namely, with this which is so comfortable a ground of everlasting comfort; as also because he adds in the 16th verse, 'And good hope through grace.' He might well say so, for the matter and ground of consolation is founded on the pillars of eternity, on that unchangeable love of God of which he speaks, whose love and gifts are without repentance. Now the things he suitably exhorts to and prays for, as that which is and should be the fruit and operation of that love in our hearts, are two. The first is, ver. 15, to stand fast against all opposition made against the truth delivered, as soldiers that keep their ground. The second exhortation is, to lay hold, sure hold, and hold fast with strength, κρατεῖτε; therefore the Syriac adds fortiter, as Judas bade them hold Christ: Mat. 24:40, 'Whom I shall kiss, hold him fast.' Be you as stable, fast, and immoveable in your faith and obedience, as God is in his love, who hath loved you from the beginning, from everlasting. God hath held you fast, and none can, or shall pull you out of his hands; do you hold as fast to his commands. The word signifies also studiously and carefully to observe, Mark 7:3, 4, and so it relates to commands given for practice and obedience, and imports withal constancy therein. And by the way, as for their direction to know what was truth to hold, and duties and ordinances to be observed by them, what to stick to when in those times antichristian dreamers should come to draw them away from the truth with all deceivableness of unrighteousness, he refers to what they had been taught, either by word or by epistle, so leaving nothing to revelation immediate as their rule. Now they had then the apostle's teaching by word of mouth; we wanting that, are left to stick to what is written as sufficient for us, and as having nothing else to have recourse to, and

therefore we must not leave the Scripture, or admit any other during all the time that antichrist is to deceive the world (for this is the only direction that is given for the whole of those times), and we are sure antichrist is not yet out of the world. Now this standing fast in the doctrines, and holding fast the observation of these traditions given them, he further interprets to be constancy in well-doing: chap. 3:4, 'And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that you both do and will do the things which we command you;' that is, will be constant and immutable in your obedience, which still in the enforcement of it hath a correspondency with, an aspect upon, and an inference from, that love of God from the beginning. This is in his exhortation. Then, 2dly, in his prayer, by which he further insinuates their duty, this inference may yet a little further also appear; for he grounds his petition upon those acts of God's eternal love: 'God, even our Father, that loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.' And chap. 3:3, he interprets this establishing to be keeping them from evil: 'But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you and keep you from evil;' and he adds in ver. 4, 'And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you;' that is, will be constant, immoveable, uninterrupted in the doing of them. You both do and will do as God hath loved you and will love you evermore; so then, to be stable in every good word and work is to keep themselves from evil, both for the present and for time to come for ever. This becomes those who profess to hope that God hath chosen them from the beginning, that God hath loved them with everlasting love, and thereby given them matter of such everlasting consolation. And look what arguments Paul in prayer useth unto God to grant this to them, which are thus suited to the matter of his petition, as you may discern; the same may be turned upon us as motives to move us thereunto; for what we would move God with in prayer, God expects should move us in practice. Now it is the eternity, stability, and the immutability of that love, which he useth as a motive, to stablish them in every good word and work.

The very same exhortation to constancy, diligence, and unchangeableness in well-doing, if I mistake not, the apostle in like manner foundeth upon the immutability of God's counsels towards the heirs of salvation, expressed in his promises to them, out of the coherence of Heb. 6:11–13, 17, 18 verses compared, 'We desire' (says he, ver. 11), that is, exhort, 'that every one of you do shew forth the same diligence,' which out of love they had formerly and at first shewn, ver. 10, 'to the full assurance of hope to the end.' He provokes them to diligence with constancy, that they be not slothful, but laborious, ver. 10, in every good work, and 'followers of them who, through faith and patience,' or constancy in well-doing, joined with patient suffering for it, 'inherit the promises.' And what promises are they he lays before them, and what is more eminently held forth in the promise? As he had exhorted them to diligence and constancy without slackening, so suitably he lays before them that in the promise which answereth thereto as on God's part, citing the great promise made to Abraham the father, in the name and for the behalf of all the heirs of promise: ver. 13, 'For when God made promise to Abraham,' who after he had patiently endured, obtained the promise, ver. 15. And in the promise the apostle, to quicken them hereto, singleth out (with an eminent observation) the faithfulness and immutability of God's counsel, which is the point in hand, and unfoldeth in the tenor of the promise the oath annexed to it, 'Wherein,' says he, 'God willing more abundantly to shew to the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it with an oath,' ver. 17. As God therefore cleaves to us in his love without separation, we should in obedience cleave to him therein 'with full purpose of heart,' Acts 11:23. As God hath stuck to us, and would suffer none to divert his love, we should inviolably stick to his commands, as David did: Ps. 119:31, 'I have stuck unto thy testimonies.' And as nothing shall or can separate us from the love of God in Christ, as on his part; and as none of all those millions of heroes far excelling us, that have been in all generations, so took his heart as to alter his purpose of love towards us, or to allure him from us; so neither let anything ever separate us throughout our course from pursuing after communion with that love in keeping

his commands. Let not wife, children, honours, riches, pleasures, temptations on the left hand or right hand, or whatsoever can fall out or present itself unto us, ever separate us from the love and service of God. He that forsakes not these, being wooed by so great a love (as hath been described), he is not worthy of him and his love, nor of the least beam of it. An heart inflamed with this love will do or suffer anything. I make a great observation of this in the instance of Paul, when Christ had brought him first upon his knees, and had humbled him, having struck him off his horse. 'Lord,' said Paul then, 'what wilt thou have me do?' But when afterwards this love of God had fired his heart, then what was it he was not content to do and suffer? And when (in this Rom. 8) the tide and full sea came in and overflowed his heart, insomuch as he cries out, 'Who shall separate me from the love of God in Christ?' then it was that he was willing to have been himself separated from Christ, accursed from Christ, as Christ was from God on the cross, for the glory of God in the conversion of his brethren. Now nothing but this love could have raised up his heart thus high.

I shall conclude this part of this discourse with what Paul concludeth his in the 2d and 3d chapters of the 2d Thessalonians. He had exhorted them to constancy, praying for stability in every good word and work, laid before them the eternal love of God to move them, and also put the Lord in mind of it to move him to grant it to them, and had expressed his confidence herein: chap. 3:4, 'And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that you both do and will do the things that we command you.' But how should we attain this? might they say, and what is the best, the readiest way of all other to arrive thereunto? He immediately adds, 'And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God!' So prays he, and in praying thus for them suggests the most effectual way to attain to this obedience. By the coherence before mentioned, I understand it of the love of God towards them, that love spoken of chap. 2:16. And this is that single, and only, and all-sufficient direction Paul gives them unto all obedience, viz., to have their hearts guided into that love, and the comprehension of the heights and depths of it, as



elsewhere he prays for the Ephesians. And this is to be obtained no way but by prayer to the Lord to lead them into this. When you hear any duty pressed, you presently call for directions; and those are usually as difficult to practise and attain as the things or graces they are prescribed for. Paul here prescribes but one, but it is a sovereign one, and withal the only way to attain it, viz., prayer. The Lord or person he prays unto is the Holy Ghost, manifestly distinguished from God, namely, the Father and Jesus Christ. The love of God the Father, and the longing after and waiting for the revelation of Christ in his glory, are here made the subject matter, the journey's end, the sight, the enjoyment, the object of the Spirit's giving them. And so elsewhere it is made the proper office of the Holy Ghost, to lead us into all truth, John 16, to guide our feet into the ways of peace, and as meetly it is appropriated to him here to direct our hearts into the love of God, and longings after Christ. For as he it is who is given us of God, to communicate the love of these other two, who sustain the consideration of objects to be revealed and communicated by him, so, Rom. 5, 'the love of God' is said to be 'shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost,' whom he hath given unto us, as on purpose to that end. So then you have all three persons in this small verse, and a prayer is made to the Holy Ghost under the title of Lord, which some deny to be found in the Scripture. The word that is here translated to direct is *κατευθύναι*, that is, to guide you by a straight way, or by a right line. It hints this further to me, which hath been in my heart from other considerations, that of all ways and means that tend to work and keep us, the love of God apprehended, and inflaming love in our hearts to God again (for so I take the love here, both passively and actively, for he leads us into love unto God, by discovering the love of God), is the direct straightest way of all other; the shortest cut, as we use to say, for it is by a straight line. There are other motives and persuasives that have done victoriously, but this excels them all. As I use to say of that way of living by faith immediately, in comparison of poring upon graces in ourselves, and importing assurance therefrom, that this latter is rather a going about, and fetching a compass with a great deal of difficulty and uncertainty; but that other way of faith is as the

north-east passage to the Indies, the shortest and speediest way of comforting and upholding the heart when found out. The love of God shed abroad will contribute more in a moment towards our comfort and peace, than all other considerations in a man's whole life. And therefore pray as Paul did, that 'the Holy Ghost would direct your hearts into the love of God. And withal, this prayer informs us, that our hearts do of themselves seek out other ways to encourage and uphold them in obedience, and other motives are more suited to the natural disposition of them, and we are apt to neglect these considerations of God's love; therefore it is that he so solemnly prays to the Holy Ghost to guide and direct them into it, because otherwise they would never find this way, or light upon it.

And observe lastly, that the subject of this the Spirit's guidance is said here to be the heart, for indeed that is the proper seat and vessel for God to shed abroad his love into, as, Rom. 5, the apostle doth in like manner express it. It is the heart, and not the understanding (for this love passeth knowledge). And I having upon occasion of handling the greatness of this love (on Eph. 2:6), viewed all that I could find in the Scripture to set out the greatness of this love by, found little to what might have been expected, to exaggerate and greaten a subject of that magnitude this is of. I resolved the reason of it into this, that it is left to the Spirit to make an immediate report of this love by impressions of it, rather than by notions, or rational arguments, or inferences. It is left to him to speak that to the heart which can be but whispered unto the mind. It is too big for words, and too glorious to be clothed with man's apprehensions, much less expressions, and it is fit only to speak itself; and that may be a reason also, why we find so little of rational inducements drawn from this eternal love to enforce obedience. I have given you all I could find in the New Testament. I attribute it to this, that this love spoken by the Spirit to the heart persuades to it without any more arguments, and will not take in the assistance of reason, or notions, or inferences to urge the commands of itself, but will itself do it, and doth it abundantly. It remains that I pray as

the apostle doth, 2 Thes. 3:5, 'The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God!'

## CHAPTER V

Motives against sin, because it is Satan's great work and interest, who is Christ's greatest enemy.

He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.—1 JOHN 3:8.

The subject on which I intend to discourse, is motives to holiness and against sin, drawn from such arguments as the New Testament affords, such as arise from the thoughts of Christ and his love, and from the consideration of the end and design of his death.

One great end of his death I have already shewn in another discourse,\* to be his overcoming Satan thereby, and so redeeming us from the power of him that had the power of death. What motives to holiness the consideration hereof will afford is the thing now to be considered, and what use faith may make hereof to strengthen and help the heart against sin. Now the scope of this text is punctual to it. The apostle's scope is to give an exhortation unto holiness and against sin; and to this end he sets forth Christ and Satan as two opposites and antagonists: Satan, as is denoted to us, having set up sin as his work; and Christ is described as the founder of holiness, and destroyer of Satan's work. These two have drawn after them all the sons of men into two several parties, who are here, and shall be hereafter, distinguished for ever, by the poise and inclination of their spirits, and course and sway of their lives, as they stood to sin or righteousness, and shall accordingly be judged to belong to either Christ or Satan. 'Little children' (says the apostle, verse 7), 'let no man deceive you: he that doth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. And he that committeth sin is of

the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose was the Son of God manifest, that he might destroy the works of the devil,' verse 8.

Christ the Son of God is the fountain of holiness and righteousness to all that hope for, or expect, salvation from him; verse 3, 'Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.' And ver. 5, 'In him is no sin.' And ver. 6, 'Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.' So as (verse 7), 'He that doth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.' Christ requires of all he justifies (although he imputes a righteousness of his own to them), that they themselves be so truly and really righteous in their hearts and lives, as rightly from thence to be denominated righteous, as truly as all other denominations are from what qualifications are in a man, from which he acts accordingly. A man is termed a wise man, that hath a principle of wisdom, and acts wisely, though he may have mixtures and strains of folly; so giving the like allowance to a holy man, he that doth righteousness, makes it his business, work, trade, and study to do so, is righteous. Let no man deceive you with the doctrine of the imputed righteousness of Christ, as if it discharged you from having a true inherent holiness of your own, such and the same for kind as he had. No; it obligeth you unto it, to be yourselves 'righteous, even as he is righteous.'

Now to sharpen the exhortation, and make it yet more pungent, he sets forth withal Satan, Christ's enemy and opposite, and the contrary head, fountain, leader and author of all sin, and opposer of all righteousness, who sinned from the beginning, and was himself the first that brought sin into the creation, perpetrated it himself, and was the cause of it in all others; and who not only then sinned and diffused it, but he 'sinneth from the beginning,' that is, hath continually made it his trade to sin, and to cause others to sin. Though Adam brought it in among men, yet it was but by one act, and of that act Satan was the designer; but Adam was not the continual cause of sin to others, and is dead long since, and ceased

to sin, but Satan sins still from the beginning. He sins not only personally from the beginning, but by provoking and tempting others continually; for so the devil's sinning from the beginning is here principally to be understood, as he is the causer of men to sin, as at the beginning he did to our first parents, and he thereby makes the sins we commit his works; for our sins, or the sins in us, as caused by him, are called his work.

1. Our apostle brings in this of Satan's interest to sin as a distinct, yea, a farther motive to the saints against sin, to be superadded to the former. He had said that sin was a transgression of the law, ver. 4. That consideration is to move you as creatures and subjects to God, for you are therefore to be such as live under law and obedience; but that is denied now-a-days to be any obligation, though to John it was. But consider yourselves as persons redeemed by a righteous Saviour, bearing your sins, who took sins away, ver. 5, and in whom is no sin; he could else never have taken sin away in us, nor could he have any other end in dying than to take sins away, seeing himself had none. Will not the ingenuity of this move you? Then (as the apostle John says) consider whose interest and whose cause sin is; it is the devil's work, and if the law of subjects will not move you, let the law of arms. That sin is the force and strength of the kingdom of Satan, Christ's enemy, is an higher aggravation of it than [that] it is a transgression of the law. What is but felony in time of peace as breach of the law, is treason in time of a common engagement; and to gratify a professed enemy at such a time is as witchcraft and rebellion.

2. As he thus sets forth sin as the devil's proper work, thereby to deter from it, and exhort the more powerfully to constant holiness, so he pronounceth every one that commits sin to be of the devil, and that hereby the children of God and Satan are manifestly distinguished: ver. 10, 'In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil; whosoever doth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.' He instanceth in that one duty, and he turns it both ways, either to omission or

commission; and the reason he gives is full, for the devil sins from the beginning, that is, makes a trade, a practice of it. He interprets it to be meant of a way or a course of sinning, as by the other he signifies a course of righteousness. Of the devil he saith, 'he sins' (not, hath sinned) 'from the beginning;' he hath made it his work without interruption, without ceasing; therefore whosoever he be that continues in sin, commits it, makes a trade and practice of it, is of the devil, for he sins as he doth. As a gentleman may do an ignoble work of a tradesman, but yet ceaseth not to be noble by it, for he lives upon his lands, and not upon his work, so may a godly man do a piece of a sinner's work, and he doth it too often; but he doth not make it a trade, nor live on it (1 John 1:10, and 2:1, 2): he lives on higher things, and if he belongs to Christ, Christ will not suffer him to continue in sin; for Christ came to dissolve the work, as the trade, the haunt of the devil in him; and he would wholly lose his end if he preserved not his own, if he broke not that haunt, that way of sinning, and the dominion, the rule, the work of Satan in him, and so defaced that character wherein the children of Satan resemble their father, in being workers of iniquity, as Christ calls those, Luke 13:27, that have been the greatest pretenders to him. They shall be found to have been (if you take their whole course) 'such workers of iniquity' (Ἔργαται), Luke 13:27. And in this sense he that commits sin is here taken, as by the opposite afore, he that doth righteousness is righteous. Where not one alone act of righteousness, but he that worketh righteousness, that makes it his study, business, and life, is meant: 'He that lives in sin is of the devil.' He speaks of the differing states of a believer and unbeliever; because Christ was manifested to do this (or to do nothing), namely, to dissolve the devil's trade and work in us. He hath spoiled the devil's business, and he will suffer no man (whom he died for), after he is engrafted into him, to be the devil's factor.

3. The apostle holds forth Christ and Satan to be two fountains, the one of sin, the other of righteousness. All mankind (according as their courses and ways are) fall either to the one or the other, and are either of God or of the devil. Though men consider it not, they

hold of the one or the other in capite, as of their head; yea, they are children of one of these. John 8:44, 'You are of your father the devil, and his lusts you will do.' Their indoles, genius, disposition, and practices, are the same that his are, and he is their prince, their sovereign, their natural, or rather unnatural, lord; and in this the children of God and of the devil are manifest; even as here the apostle says, 'He that commits sin is of the devil, and he that doth not righteousness is not of God.' He knows not Christ, nor ever truly saw him, or was acquainted with him, ver. 6, for he came to take sin away, to dissolve the works of the devil, &c.; and therefore, all you that profess the name of Christ (says John), look to this, and examine yourselves by it, deceive not yourselves, but walk by this example.

I have thus given you the general scope of the apostle's words; and the design of my following discourse is not now to urge that point of the distinction of a regenerate and unregenerate man, by their several courses of sin and righteousness, but to exhort believers in Christ unto all practices of all sorts of righteousness, and to dehort them from all sin upon all occasions. Now unto this end (which is also John's scope), I shall present unto you, which this scripture is so great a ground for, the great and dividing interests of these two opposites, Jesus Christ and Satan, in respect of sin and righteousness. The devil sinned from the beginning, and drew men after him, and set up his design; and Christ was promised from the beginning, and in the end appeared to break this design of Satan. The devil had always a faction for him and for sin from the first; and therefore John instanceth, 1 John 3:12, in the eldest son of reprobation, Cain: 'Not as Cain,' saith he, 'who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother.' So that if you profess yourselves to belong to Christ, you are thereby instantly engaged to set upon the practice and advancement of holiness and righteousness; and to oppose and destroy sin, upon this interest and account, that you are engaged together with Christ, and so his interest in this became yours. And to put an addition of strength hereto, and to encourage you the more therein, I shall join to this another scripture, which is

the close of Peter's first epistle: 1 Peter 5:8, 'Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.' The things which out of this text I have designed to handle are principally two.

1. That there is a general engagement of all Christians against Satan, as against a common enemy, against whom as such they should all direct, intend, and point their opposition in fighting against sin, and the force of that engagement.

2. I shall propound the encouragements we may take to ourselves in this great conflict.

1. There is a general engagement of all Christians against Satan as their common enemy.

- (1.) The devil is a common adversary (so Peter speaks of him), a malicious enemy, 'seeking whom he may devour,' making that his chief end and business, to destroy and devour men's souls, as a lion doth his prey—an industrious enemy, walking about, and spying out advantages privately and particularly against every soul.

- (2.) Satan's chief work and business, wherein he shews himself our adversary, lies in drawing us to sin. This the coherence of the apostle Peter shews, for his exhortation is, 'Be sober, and watch,' which evidently hath respect unto lusts, inordinate affections growing upon a man's spirit, and those are the advantages which Satan seeks; and by the prevailing thereof it is, that a man is devoured by Satan, and to effect this it is, that he walks up and down to do this his business.

- (3.) The saints' resistance of Satan herein is a common engagement. He is your adversary (verse 8), and not yours only, but of all the brotherhood (as the word is) 'that are in the world,' who suffer and are in danger and jeopardy in this respect from him; who therefore, as one man, are all engaged against him to resist him. And in fighting against sin, they should point, and direct, and intend their



opposition against Satan also (whom resist, says Peter), and have an aim at him in their resisting of sin, sharpening and whetting up their spirits against him.

(4.) The force of this engagement is to be considered.

[1.] For the first, that the devil is our adversary, and a common enemy, I will not insist on it.

[2.] That to draw us to sin, and to preserve ourselves from sin, is the great interest on both sides: namely, to draw us to sin, and to move us to yield to loose affections, is the devil's interest; and to be sober, and to resist him herein, is ours. Heb. 12:4, 'You have not yet resisted unto blood, fighting against sin.' To what purpose comes in that addition, 'fighting against sin'? It is to shew that the eminent matter of contest, and contention, and scope of a Christian is to fight against sin, which every true believer hath set up as the principal business of his life in this world. A Christian is sin's antagonist, as the word here rendered 'fighting against' is in the original (ἀνταγωνιζόμενοι). Well, but how is it connected with the former speech? He had minded them, chap. 10, how they had already in their goods and names been prejudiced and spoiled. What was the bottom cause of it, but fighting against sin, because they would not deny Christ, or forsake their profession, and so sin against Christ! On this account the apostle puts all those their former sufferings. Now (says the apostle), for this principle and resolution, if you continue in it, as it is indeed your end and interest, you may be brought to martyrdom, unto blood, which yet you have not been, as many others have afore you. And it bath not been resisting authority, or opposition to men, and a contending with them about a worldly power, or interest; but the world through Satan's instigation comes upon them, to urge them to a compliance with sinful customs and practices, and they hold fast to their principle, to fight against sin (that they would not sin, was the bottom ground of their opposition), and so chose to suffer rather. So then not to sin, to fight against sin, is at once the interest of all

Christians, and the cause of all persecutions, which by sinning they might avoid; but (as it is in chap. 11) 'they chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.' This is our part and interest; but then, on the contrary, the devil's part is to sin, and to draw men to sin is his interest; yea, it is the main end and design of that other part of his power, viz., the bringing persecutions on the saints, for he doth it to draw and tempt them unto sin; that is in his eye and design more than to vex them, or to bring an outward misery upon them.

That subject therefore which I shall a little insist on, is the demonstration how much, and how properly and peculiarly, our sinning is both the work of Satan and also the interest of his kingdom, to set forth both which, that place, 1 John 3:8, doth most fully serve of any other scripture.

1. That scripture tells as he hath sinned from the beginning, therein charging him, as he that was the first that brought it into the creation of God. He was the first that sinned himself; John 8:44, he is said to 'speak a lie of his own,' for none tempted or tempteth him to sin; and he is 'the father of it,' as the first inventor of any trade is termed in Gen. 4:20, 21. And, moreover, he was the cause of it in all others, and that in a far different manner than Adam was, or any of mankind have been to others, as Jeroboam or the like. Adam brought in sin by one act traduced down to us, but himself is long since dead, and hath ceased to sin; but the devil sins from the beginning, and hath made it his trade continually to sin, and draw others to sin; and they are the sins in us men, as caused by him, that are termed his works, for they are those works of the devil, which Christ came to dissolve and to take away, verse 5. But Christ was not manifested to take away the devil's sins that are personally in himself, nor shed a drop of blood to hinder him from sinning; but his sins and his works as in us, these Christ came to dissolve, these sins which are his wicked work in us.

2. Sin is in a peculiar and proper manner termed his work more than ours, and is owned by him accordingly; and thus though we are the actors of these sins more immediately, yet it is Satan who loves sin, as it is a work of iniquity. He is the very inventor, and loves the very workmanship of it in us, as Christ loves in a believer the new creature, 'which in Christ Jesus is created unto good works,' Eph. 2:10. A mechanic that works to get his living, loves not so much the work he makes, as the livelihood that comes by it (as of the makers of Diana's shrines it is said, Acts 19:24), and so men love sin for the pleasure, that cannot be enjoyed without it; but there are principal artists (as they are termed), the curious painters and inventors, who when they have invented a curious piece that pleases their fancy, love the work itself. Thus doth the devil love sin as his own work; and as God, having made the world, upholds it, gives virtue to nature, and works hitherto (as Christ says), so sin being the devil's creature, he preserves it, upholds it, diffuseth it, and so sins from the beginning in tempting and provoking us. Adam, poor man, when fallen (by whom it is said that sin entered into the world, Rom. 5), as also our mother Eve, but looked upon all the sins he or she saw any of their sons commit, as evils of which themselves were the cause, and viewed them with a sad and heavy heart, and with this mournful reflection, I have made all this work in the world. But the devil looks with another eye upon all the sins which are done under the sun; and says as Nebuchadnezzar, This Babel and confusion in the world have I built for the honour of my majesty, in my opposition to God. He looks as God did upon his works, and is refreshed, for it is merely, purely his own.

3. It being his work, and he the inventor, he hath the monopoly of it, the gains of it,—and let him enjoy them, as by the ordinary law all first inventors use to do,—and all we men work but under him, though we are also said to seek out many inventions, as Solomon speaks, but so as he hath the chief business and affair in it. Sinners take pains, like the merchants from far that travel sea and land, that is, go over all things delightful in this world, the delights of the sons of men, and seek to and fro to bring in pleasures from them to

themselves, and fall into many snares and temptations, that pierce their souls with many sorrows; but the devil hath the custom out of all, and they bring in but the bullion to this great sovereign's mint. The coinage, the prerogative thereof, is his, and it is his stamp and superscription the works bear. Sinners, like the poor Israelites, gather straw where they can find it, do burn, 1 Cor. 7:9, and are inflamed with lusts, but it is his brick which they make. If you ask how his glory, his kingdom, his greatness is increased by it, I answer,

(1.) The power, the glory of his kingdom lies in sinning; for sin, as sin, is his interest, and sin (as it opposeth God) set him up at first to build pyramids and trophies for his own glory in dishonouring of God. You are busy like bees flying to and fro to a thousand flowers; and, poor souls, you aim at honey, but then you return with it unto his hive, where you, and he, and honey, are all burnt together. Look as Christ's kingdom consists in peace, joy, righteousness (Rom 14:17, Heb. 7:2), so the devil's kingdom consists in sin, and his throne is established by it. Eph. 6:12, the devils are called 'rulers of the darkness of this world,' and the world is the bound of his dominion; but that wherein properly his rule lies, is the 'darkness,' the sin of the world, which he is the ruler of; insomuch as that which is his top interest is sin, and his throne is established by it, and founded and built upon it, as Christ's sceptre and throne is 'a sceptre of righteousness,' Heb. 1:8. A sceptre is an ensign of power, and kings' sceptres are made of gold; but Christ's sceptre is formed of righteousness, pure righteousness; and this is that interest of his kingdom, so as iniquity is the interest of that of Satan.

(2.) Our sinnings through his temptations are the greatest, if not the only delight and pleasure he hath. They are as meat and drink to him, his food and nourishment, and we thereby become caterers and providers for the devil's banqueting. This is founded on 1 Peter 5:8, for wherefore is it that Peter gives him hers the character of a roaring lion, and compares him thereunto, but to represent him as one that seeks for a prey! for roaring is hers attributed to him, as to

terrify, in respect of the dreadfulnes of the danger, so in relation to his own hungering after a prey; a soul acting sin is his prey: Ps. 104:21, 'The young lions roar after their prey,' and so the devil doth too; for it follows in 1 Peter 5:8, that he seeks whom to devour, and to that end walks up and down, and seeks a prey both by spying out a Christian's looseness of spirit, and also by eyeing God to have a commission from him to fall upon him. In Ps. 28:5, a roaring lion is translated by the Septuagint λέων πεινῶν, the same word which Peter here useth for devouring.\* When a lion is hungry, he roars more terribly; and as roaring is from the speediness and impatiency of desire, so the satisfaction of that appetite is delight, and devouring the prey is his pleasing enjoyment; suitably his pleasure is sin, that is his prey, and when you sin much, and draw others to sin, you feast the devil with the blood of your own souls. His curse was to eat dust for his food, Gen. 3:14; being banished heaven, he lives on men's lusts, and on things earthly, in which yet he delights not, for he tastes not meat or drink; but to tempt others herewith and to draw them to sin, this delights him, and is a joy to him. The apostle termeth all our righteousness σκύβαλα, dogs'-meat; but sins are the devil's meat, and therefore he walks to and fro seeking it, as lions do their food, Ps. 104:22; yea, he calla other devils to feast with him. Plutarch says, the manner of young lions is, when they have their prey, to roar to invite other lions to come and eat with them; so the devil brings seven other devils worse than himself; and as there is joy in heaven if a sinner be converted, so in hell when a converted sinner falls into sinning.

4. Let us but view what expressions the Scriptures use of men's sinning against God, and turning aside from him to serve any lust, and we shall see that they evidently argue that our sinnings are the devil's interest. Thus the apostle, 1 Tim. 5:15, speaking of younger widows marrying again when they had vowed themselves to Christ, as was the practice then, says, that they had 'already turned aside after Satan.' If we never so little decline from Christ, return to Satan; and if we give way to any passion, it is to 'give place to the devil,' Eph. 4:27. And what he says of anger, wrath, &c., he intends

also of any other sin or lust. 'Let him that hath stolen, steal no more,' as giving place to the devil. Thus also when Peter would exaggerate Ananias's sin, Acts 5, he saith not only, Why hast thou sinned? but 'Why hath Satan filled thy heart?' Thus 'he that commits sin is of the devil,' 1 John 3:2. He is of his side and party, yea, of the devil as of a father, John 8:44. Yea, the measure of men's wickedness, more or less, is expressed by their having fewer or more devils in them. Mary Magdalene had seven devils, Mark 16:9. And the devil is said to return to an apostate backslider with seven devils worse than himself, to express that his latter days shall be more wicked than his former; yea, the scripiture calls a sinner 'devil,' John 6:70. And as Judas joined with the devil in betraying Christ, the devil is said to have 'entered into him,' Luke 22:3. Yea (consider it, brethren), though a man be a good man (as Peter was), yet in any foul act or sin he puts off the Christian, and turns devil for that time. It was the sharpest word that ever Christ uttered to a man that was holy, 'Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence to me,' Mat. 16:23. It was the wont word that could be given him, and yet Christ, who is truth, spake it; and he exceeded not in passion above the merit of the thing, for guile was not found in his mouth. And he speaks it with indignation, as of one he abhorred, Get out of my sight, I cannot endure to look on thee. It doth not signify that Christ loved him not, but Christ spoke thus, that he might the more pungently and piercingly set on his sin upon him. Thus the incestuous Corinthian, though a good man, 1 Cor. 5:13, is called τὸν πονηρὸν, that wicked person. The man was good; he had spirit or grace in him to be saved, ver. 5, yet in the act he was a devil; for ὁ πονηρὸς is the style of the devil in John, and elsewhere. And therefore it is that excommunication is to be a delivering up to Satan; and the apostle would have him delivered up to Satan, ver. 5, as a suitable punishment. Thus you say, when you turn an untoward servant or child out of doors, Now go to your companions. And thus an excommunicated person is delivered to Satan, as it were in these words, You acted the part of the devil in sinning; he entered into you, and you cast your lot with him (as Solomon speaks), and therefore let the devil keep you company a-while, and affright and

torment you, that so you may learn what it is to have the devil again. And accordingly at last wicked men, as having followed the devil's design, are cast into 'the fire prepared for the devil and his angels,' and they and he are tormented together in the same lake of fire and brimstone common to both, because the cause, the engagement, was common to both. All these and many more expressions, which might haply be gathered together, evince this, that sin is the devil's great interest, and that to sin is to maintain the devil's quarrel, to fight Satan's battles against the Lord, to build up his kingdom, to strengthen his cause, to side and take part with him.

Use 1. If it be so, as I have proved, that sin is the devil's great business, and the interest of his kingdom, then we may be sure, that in every sin to which we are indulgent, we have dealings with the devil: whilst we are in this world (as Peter speaks), we are subject to be tempted (as Paul says, Gal. 6:1), and therefore 'let us be sober and watch;' and (as Christ exhorts, Mat. 26:41), 'watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation.' Our dear Lord had then taken three of his strongest disciples to assist him in his temptation, the sorest that ever was: they fell asleep. Well, says he, you will have your turn; your time of temptation will come, and you had need watch better for yourselves than you have done for me, or you will be undone. And in that compendium of prayers our Lord gave us, he puts in two petitions much to one purpose: 'Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from that evil one' (so in the Greek), the head, the author of all evil. That particle ἀλλὰ, but, shews its coherence and conjunction with the former petition; and so the meaning is, that God would not so give us over to Satan, as that he should devour us, or undo us. He doubles this petition, and twines it both ways, because temptations to sins are all our lots; and therefore we should eye the devil in them, as one with whom we have to do. And though it is true that no man is tempted but of his own lust (says James, chap. 1), yet there is no lust stirs, but this temper blows it up. He observes which way the stream is inclined to run, and he applies his winds to blow in accordingly: there is no great sin but he hath a hand in it, if not by beginning it, yet by

promoting it. This you may learn of the same James: 'From whence come wars?' says he, James 4:1. It is true that they arise from our lusts, that war in our members, prone enough to rise up in arms upon every occasion, and from thence is all inordinate love of the world. And the spirit that is in us lusts after envy fast enough of itself; but yet there is over and above a devil that acts and inflames all these; and therefore when he gives counsel against all these, he closeth all with this, ver. 7, 'Resist the devil,' as the great leader of all these warring lusts. 'If you have bitter envyings and strife in your hearts, this spirit' is not only 'earthly and sensual,' but the devil is in it, 'it is devilish.' Are there divisions and offences in churches? Rom. 16:17, the devil is in them; so Paul suggests, ver. 20, comforting them, that the God of peace, that loves peace, and is among them, would tread down Satan, the head, the ringleader of them, shortly. Doth anger arise? Take heed, the devil stands at the door watching to enter: Eph. 4:26, 27, 'Be angry, and sin not,' &c., 'neither give place to the devil.' A lust given way to, opens the door for him to enter and fill the heart; and what he speaks of anger, is true of all those sins he there names afore and after, viz., lying, stealing, uncleanness, &c. Is a man covetous, and resolved to be rich? 'He falls into temptation and into a snare,' 1 Tim. 6:9. Whose snare it is you may easily know by what is joined with it, viz., temptation. It is the snare of the tempter, which in 2 Tim. 2:26 is called 'the snare of the devil.' Thus every lust is, and by it he entered into Ananias's heart and filled it, Acts 5. Hath a man an evil tongue? Though it is bad enough of itself, yet the devil heats it in his forge, inflames the lust of it, and sharpens the wit to it: James 3:6, 'The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity amongst our members; it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and is set on fire of hell.' In like manner, with respect unto uncleanness, this unclean spirit takes all occasions to tempt us, 1 Cor. 7:5. The apostle exhorts man and wife not to be a long time asunder (but upon absolute necessity), 'lest Satan,' says he, 'tempt you for your incontinency;' that is, whereas the most of men have not that gift of continency (which, ver. 7, he says he had), and therefore to avoid fornication and burning, are supposed to marry, ver. 2. Satan spies out all



advantages to stir up that lust ere you are aware, you having that in you which the apostle calls your incontinency, and to provoke you to some unclean act. All lusts else are the devil's snares; and in a word, in all these cobwebs there inhabit spiders, and every straggling love of inordinate affection that goes out, and is fastened to anything in the world, is the spider's dancing-rope to go in and out of his house upon.

Use 2. What weight should the serious consideration hereof have upon our spirits, both to preserve us from sinning, and to humble us for having sinned.

(1.) To preserve us, and to be a motive against sinning. Doth any lust begin to boil within thee? Think with thyself, and say, This is Satan's scout, he is in ambushment not far off, and the devil is now approaching, for, lo, I feel his darts, his fiery inflaming darts, as Paul calls them. These darts cast into my heart came out of his forge, I feel them as fire in my bones; and as in war darts use to be thrown at the first onset, when the enemy is approaching, so are these; but he will come on with sharper weapons and sorer assaults, and enter into me if I take not heed. Our Saviour Christ espied him afar off: 'Now is the prince of this world a-coming,' says he; so mayest thou, as one army doth another, when their forlon is approaching. Christ indeed could say with comfort, 'He hath nothing in me;' but thou canst not say so, for he hath that in thee will betray thee to him, and join with him against thee. Think then with thyself, Now I have to do with the devil; and now resist, and give not place to the devil. If thou wert sure thou hadst to do with the devil, thou wouldst avoid him; if he took a shape and appeared to thee, thou wouldst not deal or track with him; but know, that when thy lust, thy passion, thy pride or covetousness is up, he is surely at thy elbow. As therefore the apostle, Heb. 13:2, exhorts to works of hospitality, because 'thereby some unawares have entertained angels,' as Lot and Abraham did; so for certain thou, by letting in this or that sin, lettest in the devil, and entertainest him, though thou seest him not. And though thou yieldest but to one act of sin only (as thou thinkest),

yet thou servest the devil, and dost his work, yea, and hast communion with him. The poor prodigal aimed but at husks to fill his belly, Luke 15:15, but he could not enjoy them but by joining himself to the farmer, the devil, whose all the swine and pleasures of sin in this world are. Oh consider this! 'I would not,' says the apostle, 1 Cor. 10:20, 'that you should have communion with devils.' All men, especially Christians, abhor that; he takes that for granted, and yet it is in the nature of the thing itself; by yielding to sin, you become companions with the devils, as they in eating things sacrificed to him did. In eating his dainties of sinful pleasures he seems to feast you, but really and indeed you entertain him. In sinning, we have communion with Satan, as in righteousness we have with God; only with this difference: in works of righteousness we have communion with God in a work that is God's (for as Christ saith, we 'work the works of God'); and then, further, we have communion with his person by faith eyeing him, and walking in the light of him, and in so doing he often manifests himself to us; but though we have not such sensible communion with the person of Satan as with God by faith, yet having to do with his works wherein he acts us, we have remotely to do with his person. For as merchants each with other, we have to do with his wares, and his commodities, not only for the present, but for hereafter. Now then, in the entrance to any sin, consider upon what is said, that it is the devil who is thy guide, and wilt thou follow him? Thou makest thereby a kind of covenant to serve him ere thou art aware of it. All men do it implicitly, as we say of them that go to cunning wizards, but in such a case thou wilt do it explicitly.

(2.) Hast thou sinned, and therein acted the devil's part? Humble thyself greatly, and that upon this consideration, that thou hast sided with Satan, and the devil hath cause to say, thou hast manfully, or rather devilishly, took my part this day. The apostle James having shewn, that in yielding to their lusts they closed with the devil (chap. 4:1, 2, and 7 compared), exhorts them to renounce Satan, and to draw nigh to God, and then to be afflicted and mourn. 'Humble yourselves,' says he, 'in the sight of the Lord.' Would it not

break thy heart to hear Christ from heaven, after such or such a sin or fact, to call thee devil, and to bid thee get thee behind him, as he did to Peter? Now Christ hath the same affection in this respect whilst he is in heaven, and when he was on earth, not only to turn away his lace, and withdraw the light of his countenance from thee; but with indignation (for the present) to reject thee, and cast thee behind his back, and to remove thee as an accursed thing in his sight. Christ said thus to Peter, and thou deservest it; but humble thyself and be not discouraged; for at another time, when the same Peter had played the devil worse by far, in forswearing his Saviour, and had acted the devil in his colours—for the devil is a blasphemer, and the father of lies, and Peter had done both by lying and forswearing Christ—yet then Christ turned not his back but his face upon him. Christ looked back, and one look of Christ cast the devil out, as the believer doth experience, that when Christ appears by faith in the heart, the devil is gone, and Peter went forth and wept bitterly. Be not therefore discouraged, for Christ still loved and prayed for this Peter, and exercised these varieties of dispensations to the same Peter, to shew us that he useth both upon occasion to his children, and we should have the one in our eye to humble us, the other to encourage us. We have an enemy on earth, Satan, but an advocate in heaven, 1 John 2:1.

## CHAPTER VI

A motive to holiness, and to flight against sin, drawn from the consideration, that his holy war is a common engagement in which all angels and saints are confederates.

I shall now demonstrate that there is a common engagement of all believers against Satan in fighting against sin, and that they are to point and direct their opposition against him. My purpose is not to enlarge upon the warfare of a Christian, the subject of so many tongues and pens, but my scope is to whet and edge your spirits

against sin, whenever you find your spirits tempted and lusts high, and to animate you unto an opposition to the devil.

I shall give you the story of this war against Satan, and shew how ancient and how long a continued and universal an engagement this is.

1. God in paradise proclaimed this war, and stated it there, so old is it; it began there, and it was proclaimed there. I will not for the present go so high to say, that it began before between the Son of God and these evil angels in heaven, though some affirm it. This devil he affronted our great God in both his courts: his court in heaven, where angels are; and his court on earth, paradise, which God himself built for Adam personally, as the seat of him who was made king of all the earth, and father of all men. The devil, by tempting our first father and mother, was the cause of their first sin, which was the original and fountain of all ours. 'Because thou hast done this' (says God, Gen. 3:14), and done it enviously, maliciously, and subtilly, knowing what would be the consequence of it to all mankind, 'thou art therefore accursed.' The man and woman were deceived, as birds by the fowler, but the devil was the deceiver, and therefore he is cursed above all. It is therefore the common quarrel of our nature, as we are men, to make war against him.

This engaged God himself. God laid it to heart on our behalf, and shall not we? Yea, it drew in all the three persons, who appeared in making man, and said, 'Let us make man after our image,' which this devil sought to deface. They are all answerably disgusted at this destroying of their image, and are resolved to renew it.

1. It was God the Father who dealt then personally with the devil, and who cursed him; for it was he that gave the law to Adam of not eating the forbidden fruit, as appears by this discourse, and it is the same person that curseth Satan, and he it is that is that God of peace who heads him under, Rom. 16:20. And it is the same 'God of all grace' that helps us against him, 1 Peter 5:9, 10.

2. God the Son was he that was to become the promised seed, and who was on purpose designed out by God to deal with him. It was he who was instantly proclaimed the general upon the place of the affront, and the head of this quarrel; and so he was then professedly engaged, and that by his own consent standing by.

3. The Holy Ghost, though not mentioned, yet to be sure we may find him to be there, as he must needs be Satan's opposite here upon. For the devil spoiled that in man which is more properly his work (holiness being the work of the Holy Spirit); and their very titles ever hereafter shew their opposition. Thus the one is called the Holy Spirit, and Satan is termed the unclean spirit in the Evangelists and in the Acts no less than two-and-twenty times; and so he is called too in the Old Testament, Zech. 13:2; and he and his angels are frequently called evil spirits both in the Old and New Testament. And the opposition of these two is seen in every saint's heart every day. These words also in Gen. 3:15, 'I will put enmity between her seed and thy seed,' do involve the whole seed of elect men as well as Christ, as I have shewn in another discourse.\* Thus it is an universal engagement; yea, and as you see God's heart was so upon it, and his counsels and resolutions in this point so ripe and ready, as he stands not deliberating; but upon the very place in paradise where the mischief was done, and well nigh as soon as it was done, he proclaimed war. He stays not as long as till he had turned man out of paradise; yea, and he professeth himself to be the beginner, contriver, and undertaker of this war: 'I will put,' says he, 'enmity,' &c. It is a war, then, of God's own making; and properly his more than ours. Thus great and solemn it is, not a quarrel only against sin, but against the devil; between thee and the serpent, that is, the devil.

As the war was thus early proclaimed, so you read how accordingly it was carried on from the first, that men began to multiply in the earth, even by the two first sons of men, sons of Adam, that were in the world; the devil took the one, Cain, and God took the other, Abel. This early division and parting of the seed John takes notice

of: 1 John 3:10–12, 'In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil; whosoever doth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.' As if he had said, This different seed and quarrel, which in Gen. 3 was spoken of, caused arms to be taken up presently. The devil, as he had set up, so he carried on his design, and drew men after him from the beginning. He had a party for him from the first of the sons of Adam, Cain; and God carried on this quarrel in like manner against sin and the devil in the heart of the next son, Abel. Sin was the interest that made the division; for Cain killed him 'because his works were evil, and his brother's righteous,' says the text. And these two, Cain and Abel, led on all that followed under the whole Old Testament; all under it fell the one way or the other. The elect, then, as they had the promised seed in their eye, so withal they had Satan as their adversary in their eye, whom they should oppose; for by their being instructed in the one part of the promise, they were also in the other. And hence the word Satan (or adversary) was the usual name both anciently and frequently in the Old Testament given to the devil, even from Job's time: Job 1:6 and chap. 2, 1 Sam. 29:4, 1 Chron. 21:1, Ps. 109:6, and Zech. 3:1.

In the end, the general himself came down into the field, and he was 'manifest to destroy the works of the devil,' yea, and he died in the quarrel (I need not repeat what I have said at large about this\*); and when he had by death destroyed him, he triumphed over him, and left it to you ἐπιτελεισθαι (as Peter's word is) to accomplish the victory. So then unto that war, which against Satan and sin as his work was proclaimed by God in paradise, Christ sounded the alarm, and upon his cross set up his royal standard thereon, appointed that the rendezvous to draw elect men to him when he was lift up, John 12:32; and unto it and him hath been the gathering of all the saints ever since. Know then that Christ, in redeeming us, not only intended an obedience to his Father, and glory to him, and our

salvation with it, but withal he aimed at the destruction of Satan; he acted not only the part of a son that learned obedience, and of a saviour, but also of a warrior, an avenger and destroyer. Now, the saints are to fight in this quarrel out of the same interest Jesus Christ doth, and they ought to be spirited with his aims and ends; and therefore, 1 Peter 4:7, we are exhorted to arm ourselves with the same mind that was in Jesus Christ our general, and therefore to direct our opposition as Christ did. And whereas, Heb. 2:14, he is said to have 'destroyed him that had the power of death,' in the 10th verse he is set before us as the captain of our salvation, ἀρχηγὸν.

No sooner was Christ gone to heaven, but unto his standard all the saints and brotherhood on earth, the church universal, have and do flock in all ages, and enrol their names: 'We,' says the apostle Paul, 'wrestle against principalities,' &c., Eph. 6:12. We, he speaks it indefinitely in the name of all the saints; and so Peter speaks too: 'Resist your adversary,' says he, 'knowing that the same afflictions' (that is, the same temptation from him) 'are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world;' that is, this is the common cause in which all saints are engaged, not one excepted; and is not this a great engagement, then? That which is translated 'brethren' is in the original 'brotherhood,' ἀδελφότητι, shewing that they are engaged, not only all and every saint, nor singly all and every one, but as a joint body they all strive together as one man; so then these are the two eminent parts of the communion of saints, namely, to love the saints and to resist this common enemy; and the whole brotherhood is engaged in both. And the same God that hath put in love into the brethren, hath put into all their hearts also an enmity against Satan in fighting against sin. The apostle adds, 'in the world;' and so speaks of all saints in all places, and in all times present and to come. The catholic church and the communion of saints are joined together in the creed, and are of equal extent in this.

Your baptism is the sign and sacrament of this universal engagement, so the primitive Christians understood it. Hi sunt angeli quibus in lavacro renuntiamus. In the Common Prayer-book

it is made sacramentum militare, manfully to fight under Christ's banner against sin, the world, and the devil, and to continue Christ's faithful soldier; and again particularly it is interpreted to be a promise to forsake the devil and all his works; and the scripture is not averse to this very notion, if the whole coherence of the 6th chapter of the Romans be observed. The apostle speaks of our being baptized into Christ, and our conformity to him professedly avowed in baptism, ver. 3, 4, to the 12th; and what is his inference from thence? ver. 12, 13, 'Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies, neither yield you your members, as arms, or weapons of unrighteousness, but yield yourselves unto God.' So then through baptism, they were milites sacramento obstricti duci, in allusion to the Roman custom of being by an oath (which was called sacramentum) engaged to their general. And whereas he says, yield yourselves unto God, add but that of James 4:1, and it carries it to this engagement against Satan I insist on; for whereas the apostle (in Rom. 6) had in military language expressed it thus, 'Let not sin reign, to obey it in the lusts thereof, but yield your members as weapons to God,' James following the same metaphor (chap. 4:1-8) thus speaks, 'Whereas lusts war in the members, yield yourselves to God, resist the devil.' The devil is the leader, lusts are but the common soldiers.

All men therefore must of necessity fall to one side or the other, either be subject to God, and so resist the devil, or be subject to that evil spirit. He supposeth every man, when tempted, to be set in the midst between God and the devil, putting themselves under God's protection, or yielding themselves unto God; they are engaged in a war as against their lusts, so against the devil, and are thus to direct their opposition in fighting against sin. Calvin\* hath a good speech on those three passages of James, as they lie, whereof the first concerns our duty to men, humility: 'God gives grace to the humble.' 2. Submit to God. 3. Resist the devil. He shews (says he) whither or against whom we should direct our opposition; for whereas he had taught modesty and humility towards men, and submission towards God, he with the same breath sets Satan as our professed enemy,



whom we should rise up against and resist, and give no quarter to him; but whenever thou wouldst mortify a lust, is laying the knife to the throat thereof, thrust it down even unto the devil's heart also, give that one blow, and all with the more violence as spiting him therein. Reach him in thy intention and aim, for God warrants thee to do it in that blessed curse, 'I will put enmity between thee and the serpent;' and Christ loves that you should do it (for himself did so) for his sake, and in his quarrel.

The last thing to be considered is, what force and efficacy this engagement against Satan should have upon our hearts to make us holy, to resist the devil, and to fight against sin, as it is Satan's interest; which, if you please, you may take and turn into the use of the former. We have lived in times in which we have all felt, more or less, the power of a public engagement in our spirits, and have seen by experience of what efficacy it is. Let me speak to you then in the language of the times you have run through. When, after thou first gayest up thy name to Christ, thou didst oblige thyself in this so solemnly a stated and public war, yea, and further from that time, every one of you was then set as in a garrison, to keep his own soul, and to preserve it from lusts which fight against the soul; so as it is not to be looked at by thee only or singly, as thine own soul, and thine own salvation, but also as now made a castle and fortress of Jesus Christ delivered up unto thee to be kept as with a garrison. This allusion is warranted by all these scriptures put together, Luke 11:21, 22, and Peter's words, 1 Epist. 1:5, 'kept as with a garrison,' and Paul's words, Philip. 4:7, to which may be added that of 1 John 5:18, 'He that is born of God keeps himself, that the evil one touch him not.' So then thou hast in charge, as John speaks, to keep thyself that the evil one touch thee not, nor come within thee. Now think what a trust this is, not only of thine own soul, but of a garrison of Christ's, and what a wickedness must it be at any time to betray it, or to hold correspondency with the enemy; yet so in every indulgence unto sin thou dost And moreover, consider that though a transgression in time of peace is but a small matter, as to steal some trifle, or for a servant or apprentice to run away, yet to run away,

yea, to step aside in time of war, is death. Adam's sinning at the first was a transgression of the law, but it was but as in time of peace; yea, all thy sinning in unregeneracy, was but as in a time of peace, in comparison to this now (when Satan kept his house, thy heart was in peace, says Christ, Luke 11:21), but every sin now is against the law of arms; it is a sending supplies to the enemy, or a letting in a foreign power into Christ's quarters and dominions.

But to urge more particularly the force of what hath been but even now discoursed, Peter's exhortation here, you see, is to resist the devil, which is done in resisting sin, and in doing that we must have our aim at Satan, and be moved the more with an opposition unto him; and what spirit truly exalted would not the consideration of each of those particulars move and raise? The men time then that thou art tempted to pride, uncleanness, envy, revenge, covetousness, or any other lust (in which the devil is always at the head), make use of these considerations to strengthen thy spirit against both them and him.

1. Is it nothing to thee to consider how ancient a war this is, and hath been, an old feud descended from hand to hand, till brought down to thee from paradise, and an old hatred though in a successive body, as a nation whets on to pursue the destruction of the enemy? Ezek. 25:15. The devil as he is the old serpent, so he is the old enemy. As Solomon says, to sharpen friendship, 'Thy friend and thy father's friend forgot not!' So say I, to sharpen thy hatred against the devil, thy enemy and thy father's enemy forget thou not. Satan is thy enemy, thy first father's enemy, the empoisoner of our nature, the adversary of all the saints, remember this and resist him. Therefore, when the next temptation from him riseth, think with thyself, Shall I ever yield to such an enemy?

2. All that is holy in heaven or earth are combined with thee in this quarrel, thou art environed not only with a cloud of witnesses and spectators, but with a crowd of fellow-engagers. All the three persons were drawn in, and espoused this thy quarrel; all the holy

angels have fallen in, and in respect of their opposition unto Satan it is that they are termed an heavenly host, the militia of heaven, Luke 2:14; and their opposition to the devil is on our behalf, as appears from Rev. 12:7. And as these engaged with thee are greedy and curious spectators and beholders of the issue of every temptation, and as I told you there was an invisible world you shall one day judge, so there is an invisible world that beholds you in all your actings with or for Satan. We are members of that other world, and in fighting against sin do carry on that general cause of that other world, striving to do God's will on earth as it is done in heaven. God hath 'made us a spectacle to angels and to men' herein, 1 Cor. 4:9. When Christ had to do with Satan in the wilderness and in the garden, he had angels both times to view him and to guard him, and minister unto him. I have shewed in another discourse\* how Christ had made the devil a public shame before the world, Col. 2; and if the devil gets thee to sin, he makes thee a public shame before the same world. 'I charge thee,' says Paul to Timothy, 'before Jesus Christ and the elect angels,' walk so and so, 1 Tim. 5:21. And as the things of this life are made small matters in comparison of those of the other world by the apostle, 1 Cor. 6, so thy sin, as it is known amongst men (which is but man's day) is a small matter unto the blot thou hast in thy reputation before God and Christ, and the angels in that other world. And God himself and Christ are the greatest spectators of all: 2 Chron. 16:9, 'The eyes of the Lord run to and fro through the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards him: herein therefore thou hast done foolishly,' said Hanani the seer unto Asa. Thou hast shamed thyself quite before the great God; you may behold this in the case of Job (and it is worth our considering), how both God's heart wrought, and how the devil's, concerning Job. That conference between God and the devil about him is carried so, that you see the heart of each how they are affected with this spectacle. You find God begins and boasteth of Job, as one he liked to talk of: Job 1:8, 'Seest thou not my servant Job? There is none like him on the earth, fearing God and resisting evil;' which the devil could never fasten on him or bring him to, as you may see by his conversation, Job 31

throughout. God boasts of him, as a general would do of some eminent worthy that was never yet foiled or taken captive, or as a master or tutor would boast of some eminent scholar; and Oh how this pleased God at the very heart, as I may speak with reverence! Well, when he had given Satan leave to bring all these evils on him, and Satan came before God another time, chap. 2:10, the thing God again spoke of was still concerning Job: ver. 3 'And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job? There is none like him in the earth, fearing God and eschewing evil, and still he holds fast his integrity.' And though thou hast moved me against him, yet all thou hast done hath not moved him. Those words, 'and still he holds fast his integrity,' God let fall on purpose to vex and confound the devil, and to shew how much he gloried in it; and the devil, as put to the foil in it, puts it off upon want of some further and greater trial, in which God lets him use his skill. The result of both maketh this apparent, how much it confounds the devil, to think, I have tempted this man, and I cannot for my heart get him to yield; and on the contrary, how much it rejoiceth God to see Satan so often assault a man, and yet still to hold fast his integrity. God puts the emphasis there, as on the other side he observes with grief how often a man hath been foiled: 'This they have done these ten times,' says God, Num. 14:22. It mightily heightens the spirit of a soldier to fight in the view of his general, that, as Paul says to Timothy 'he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier,' 2 Tim. 2:4. True stories have many instances, and romances imitate the truth herein, and bring in great champions fighting in the sight of their lover, whose honour and service they have undertaken. Let us look to Jesus, the author, finisher, and crowner of our faith. 'Blessed is he 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,' James 1:12. This Paul had in his eye. 'I have fought,' aye he, 'a good fight; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which God, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day,' 2 Tim. 4:7, 8. He eyed God (as they in their Olympic concertations did the judges) to see how he stood with a crown and a shield. Ps. 5:12, 'Thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous with favour,

thou shalt crown him about as with a shield;' so in the original, God both assisting as with a shield in the combat, and ready afterwards to crown him that overcomes. Oh, whom would not the consideration of these things hearten to stand out against sin and Satan therein! Oh, where are Jobs and Pauls to be found on earth, that hold fast their integrity!

3. Consider how the general came down into the field, was tempted in all things as you are, and at last died in this quarrel, to overcome on your behalf. Now the death of the general enrageth the soldiers, as was seen in the battle where Gustavus Adolphus, king of Sweden, lost his life, and they make their enemies' lives go for it; and by his death Christ hath begun to make thee free, and hath, as was said, entrusted thine own soul to thee, as a castle for thee to defend. If a town or castle hath cost blood, the blood of many soldiers to win it, and he to whom it is entrusted should yield it up, how heinous would the action be! So much blood as it cost the gaining, so much will be reckoned to the betrayers of it. But hath it been the life of ordinary soldiers, or your own conquests, that gained you liberty? No; it was the precious blood of Jesus Christ, which redeemed you from your vain conversations; and shalt thou now give it up to his utter enemy whom he came to destroy, and whom he by force threw out? and wilt thou do this for a few good words, for husks, and such wretched allurements?

4. Remember how it was told thee that thy Saviour perfectly triumphed for thee over this devil, as conquered in thy name and stead. Now this is a great incentive. As the apostle reasons from his death against sin—'How shall we, that are dead, live any longer therein?'—so I from his triumph. Thou art more than a conqueror in him, and conquerors fight with other spirits than other men, as those that know not how to be foiled. This know, that it is thy duty by faith, and thou oughtest and art bound to triumph in Christ, and to give thanks for the victory as already past. Paul in the midst of the conflict falls a-thanking God: Rom. 7:25, 'I thank my God,

through Jesus Christ.' And, 1 Cor. 15:51, 'I Thanks be to God, that giveth us the victory, through Jesus Christ our Lord.'

Now then, 1, if it were but barely betraying what Christ triumphed for, how dishonourable were it! In so doing, look as Christ put the devil then to open shame, thou puttest Christ to open shame before the devils: as Heb. 6, the apostle speaks, Thou makest what in thee lies, Christ's glorying void, which Paul professeth he would rather die than do. But it is more especially so when thou thyself hast also given thanks for the victory through faith. View this in the glass of the times, if public thanks have been given for a victory, or the gaining of a stronghold, and a triumph made upon it, and the great guns let off; for the same persons to yield up what themselves thus joined in triumph for, how dishonourable and hateful were it! As thou art to shew forth Christ's death till he comes, so Christ's triumph also, and so to act as a conqueror, as to be able to say, I have overcome that evil one. Nay, let me tell thee, in case thou yieldest to thy lust, thou givest occasion to Satan to triumph; and that not only against thee, but against Christ also; and so thou not only failest Christ, but shamest him. Oh that ever Satan should with an easy suggestion win that from Christ which he so triumphed for! The reason why the devil and wicked men rage so in open scandal, and a saint's known falling, is, because he remembers the shame Christ once put him to; and now, thinks he, I am revenged for it; and so with the greatest joy he spreads and multiplies the report of it, so infinitely doth he please himself with it. You find in the Psalms how David still prays he might not be made a scorn to his enemies, nor that they should triumph over him; the same holds much more in respect of spiritual enemies.

Add unto this the further baseness of it in this respect, to yield to, and to be overcome by, a routed enemy rallying again, by a stigmatized enemy (for remember how Christ used him), by an enemy thrust through. If a known cheater should come to your shop, whose nose is slit, or ears cut off, would it not be accounted the greatest folly to be gulled by such an one?

Last of all, let it something move thee that we are to be his judges. You are to judge the fallen angels; how will you be fit to do it if you sin with them! How dishonourable is it for judges to be found to have cast their lots with cut-purses and thieves; or for judges to leave their seats (now you 'sit with Christ in heavenly places,' Eph. 2:6), how unworthy and unbecoming is it!

I shall conclude with a few words of further direction and encouragement, drawn from what Peter says, 1 Peter 5:9, 'Whom resist.'

1. From the word 'resist,' consider that Satan, who tempts you, is an adversary without you, the word ἀντίστητε doth import this. Peter speaks of them in whom Christ dwells, and bids us understand ourselves herein; that when Satan tempteth any of us, he is but as one that stands without us, and we are to withstand him as one that attempteth to come in upon us. Compare this 1 Peter 5:9 with Eph. 6:13, 'Take unto you,' says Paul, 'the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand.' ἀντιστῆναι, those principalities and powers spoken of, ver. 12. Not only the like word ἀντιστῆναι, withstand, imports this, but the other metaphor here also; for it were in vain to exhort a man that had his enemy in his bosom to put armour on (which is a thing he is clothed with), to withstand him. It is the case indeed of every unregenerate man, to have the devil within him, who is therefore in the first place to be exhorted to turn from Satan to God, and to have Satan cast out of him; but a godly man is assaulted by Satan from without. That other exhortation also (Eph. 4:27, 'Give not place to the devil') argues him without us, seeking to come in, and to get room or place in our hearts. If you give way to a lust, he enters in; yea, it is made one eminent difference between a man unconverted and converted, that Satan is within them whilst unregenerate. Hence Christ is said to have cast out of Mary Magdalene seven devils that were within her, dwelling as in their own house, Luke 12:24. So in 1 John 4:4, this difference is put between the world and godly men, that Christ is in one, Satan in the other: 'Stronger is he that is in you, than he that is in the

world.' He doth not only work in wicked men effectually, but he himself is 'in them;' yea, as Christ is said to be in us, and we in Christ mutually; so of the world it is said, that the devil is in them, and that they are in the devil: 1 John 5:19, 'The whole world lieth in wickedness.' The words in the original are, ὅλος ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ κεῖται. He had said before, 'He that is born of God keepeth himself, (that is, take his whole course), 'that the evil one' ὁ πονηρὸς, 'toucheth him not;' which evidently argues that Satan is not in him, but without him, much less is he in Satan; and then he adds these words, 'the whole world lieth,' ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ, 'in that evil one' (as he had done in the former verse), that is, the devil, the author of all wickedness. And John in this epistle had designed out the devil by ὁ πονηρὸς, that wicked one, chap. 2:13, 14. Chap. 3:12, 'Cain was of that evil one.' And this is a deeper phrase than to say they are under his power; for it implies in its analogy, that as of their natural life it is said, they 'live, move, and have their being in God,' so of their life as sinful, that they lie and move in Satan, and he is their element as it were. They are all as young ones in his belly, and are quickened and nourished by that wickedness they take in from him, as the child is by the mother. But it is a great advantage to a believer that his enemy is without him. A strong party may be kept out by a few that are in an house, and will stand to defend it; and therefore give not place to the devil; but if he knocks, open not to him, for if he sets in his bill he will turn the master out. Yea, let me strengthen this yet further, that there is a stronger within us than is without us: 1 John 4:4, 'Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is he,' viz., Christ, 'that is in you, than he that is in the world.' And so it concerns Christ to help us to keep possession, more than it doth us, for we are his house, and he as a Son is to take care over his own house, Heb. 3:6; and Christ's graces in us are the goods. Now it concerns the governor that hath a fort committed to him, and is in possession, most to defend it. It concerns him in point of honour, though the goods within be of little worth, to defend and maintain his own, especially whenas he hath already triumphed over the enemy. All our conflicts, therefore, are mainly to shew forth Christ's power the more in us. It is true, that against



these ships that launch forth with Christ in them, the devil (who is the prince of the air) will be sure to raise up storms; but be of good comfort, Christ is in thee, though thou art but a poor cock-boat, ready ever and anon to be overwhelmed, and Christ will never suffer himself to be cast away. Julius Cæsar said to the mariner in a storm, *Tecum fortunam Cæsaris vehis*; but a greater than Cæsar is in thee. All those storms and waves are but to shew his power in rebuking them; go to him and awaken him, and he will do it for thee.

2. Another encouragement is, that if thou standest stedfast and fixed in thine own will, he cannot hurt thee; this both words, 'resist' and 'stedfast,' do imply. There can be no greater security given to combat with any adversary than this, that he cannot wound thee unless thyself will. I shall but add this illustration to it: when Christ was tempted by Satan, and he had had power to carry his body up to the top of a pinnacle of the temple, from whence a child with a push might have thrown him down with ease, yet the devil could not; which is the more observable, in that he could hurry and bring his body to the very place (as he can us to an object that shall tempt us and bring us into ticklish and tottering circumstances), yet still throw him down he could not, he must have his own consent to that, and he could do nothing but persuade. Thus it is with thy will, for Christ's temptations are the patterns of ours. Austin makes this the wonder, that whereas the devil is a dog in chains, yet lo, how he doth prevail, when yet he can only bark and solicit, but hurt and bite none but him that is willing, and joins himself to him.\* The like hath Bernard: *Videte fratres quám debilis est hostis, qui non vincit nisi volentem.*

3. Be but stedfast in believing and thou art victorious. Have but an inward courage, let not thy heart fail thee, and thou conquerest. 'I have prayed,' saith Christ, 'that thy faith fail not.' Keep up thy heart but in confidence (so saith the apostle, 'Hold fast your confidence'), for faith supports it; yea, it is but having an eye, a look unto Christ, 'the author and finisher of our faith,' and unto God, 'the God of all grace,' as the 10th verse points out. It is but to cry out to him for

help in time of need (as the word signifies, and as the apostle, Heb. 4:16, directs us); it is but to see our own weakness, and to look out for a strength in the grace that is in God and in Jesus Christ, and we overcome. 2 Tim. 2:1, 'Above all, take' (says the apostle, Eph. 6:16) 'the shield of faith, wherewith (alone) ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.' And the reason the apostle here puts the article, ἐν τῇ πίστει, is not to note out religion in general, but the eminent use of that grace in this victory. 'This is your victory, even your faith,' 1 John 5:4. I enlarge not on this, only observe the easiness of such a victory, as an encouragement to us; as Christ says, 'Fear not, only believe,' Luke 8:50.

I go on unto what is more directly propounded by Peter purposely for encouragement, in those words, 'Knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.' It ought to be a comfort and encouragement to us, that to be thus tempted is the common lot of all the brotherhood universally in the world. They are all fellow-sufferers with us in this kind, not from men only, but from Satan by sore and grievous temptations; and this will afford unto us a double consideration for encouragement against temptations.

1. That there are all sorts of temptations dispensed amongst them. If they have not that which thou hast, they have some other; yea, and every one hath that which shall be personally most grievous to him. There are 'manifold temptations,' as James and Peter says, and God exerciseth all with one or other; and the more to lead thee through them, is the more to make thee perfect, for Christ was thus made perfect that he ran through all; therefore be not discontented with thy lot. Yea, the apostle intimates that the same, the very same that befall any one, do befall some other in the world (which is a wide place, and hath many saints in it), τὰ αὐτὰ τῶν παθημάτων, 'the same of sufferings;' that is, the same sort or kind of sufferings that befall one befall some other; they have all sorts amongst them. We have heard Job complaining, says Calvin, did ever the like befall another? (in his 3d, 4th, 5th chapters). But the apostle here on the

contrary saith, that nothing doth befall us in this which we may not behold in some or other members of the church. In 1 Cor. 10:13, the apostle comforts the Corinthians with this: 'There hath no temptation taken you,' saith he, 'but what is common to man; but God is faithful,' &c.

(1.) He speaks to them as believers, and as considered in the state of grace, and as those that were under the protection of God and his promises. Why else doth he comfort them with this word, 'but God is faithful'? &c.

(2.) He speaks of temptations to sin; yea, of their having been overcome of sins, and great sins, idolatry, fornication, murmuring; and he had laid before them great punishments for such sins: 'Let him that standeth,' saith he, 'take heed lest he fall,' namely, into sin for time to come. And then to comfort them for their having fallen, he adds, there is no temptation hath befallen you but what is common to man; that is, to the saints of God as clothed with human infirmity, by reason of which a saint may fall into sin. Camero says, sins cannot be meant, because the promise is, 'they shall be able to bear them;' now it is not a promise to the saints to be able to bear sins. But I answer, that promise imports two things.

1. That sins are sufferings to the saints, and the greatest. Why else doth he speak of bearing them, and speak of this as proper to a saint?

2. The promise is not that their spirits should bear them, that is, brook them, as being contented with them as sins, but that they should be able to submit to the providence of God under them, and not despair, as Calvin saith; and submission to God in point of sinnings, and bearing up one's heart not to despair, is the greatest patience.

A second ground of encouragement is from this, that all the brotherhood's being involved thus in temptations is part of the

communion of saints. Consider how not all singly, but all jointly as one man, are engaged with you in the same strivings; and so helping one another, ye strive together as one man, and

Multorum manibus grande levatur opus;

one is fighting in one place, another in another; one against one lust, another against another; and this should hearten all and every one. This mightily encourageth soldiers that they fight together. Now thou hast the hearts of all the saints with thee; yea, every one helps each other by their prayers, by their victories; yea, by virtue of this communion of saints, all the prayers thou putttest up for thyself are for the whole, and what thou lovest is lost to the whole party. How doth this move the Jesuits in their undertakings everywhere in the world! What thou winnest is won to the whole party; every prayer thou putttest up for thyself is put up for the whole, as Christ in that his form of prayer hath instructed us. And at the latter day you will all rejoyce together, and stories will be told who did most valiantly at such and such a time; how thou wert stormed, and the devil's mine sprung, which he had been a long while a-contriving, and how thou stoodest it out against all.

## CHAPTER VII

Motives unto holy obedience, and unto a boldness in our Christian profession, drawn from the majesty of the Lord that appears therein.—With an exhortation to preserve it, and the means of maintaining the honour of our profession.

For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.—MARK 6:20.

We have here a great and strange wonder—a wolf, or as Christ called him, 'a fox,' afraid of a lamb. Herod, a king, is afraid of John Baptist,

which shews a plain contest between two majesties, which should overcome. We have here a king reverencing a greater majesty than his own, in a subject, and in a subject too of the meanest outside, clad not in silk, 'as those in king's houses' (as Christ said of him), but in camel's hair. I may upon such a strange encounter say, What ailest thou, O Herod, that thou fearest John? Look on him; what is it thou viewest in him to work the least degree of fear? Art not thou a king? Take heart, reassume spirit. Ay, but he is an holy and a just man, and overcomes me (says Herod), and that is all the reason indeed. 'Herod feared John, knowing him that he was a just man and an holy, and revered him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.'

There are two doctrines natural to this scripture.

1. That there is a glory and majesty shines in the graces and lives of holy and just men, so far as they are holy.

2. That there is a special majesty and authority discovers itself in the word of God preached, when it is delivered and administered by holy men. Here is both fear and reverence, as the effects assigned to a double cause: (1.) Reverence to his preaching upon hearing of him. (2.) Fear, because he knew that he in his person was a just and holy man.

1. I say there is, as an authority, so a majesty, for it encounters here with the majesty of a king, and outshines it to an awe and reverence: and therefore must be in its kind, a majesty greater than what was stamped upon him. There are other proofs of it, as in Isa. 26:10, 'the majesty of the Lord' is said to 'shine in the land of uprightness.' And these two sentences are strictly to be conjoined as to this sense, that where uprightness in righteous men dwells, there, in those upright men, the majesty of the Lord shines and appears, which wicked men's consciences, though glimmeringly, do discern, although they will not behold, that is, acknowledge it. The reasons of the doctrine are,

(1.) Because God is in them, and darteth eminent beams of his majesty out from them, in their conversations: 2 Cor. 6:16, 'I will dwell in them and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people;' and 1 John 4:16, 'He dwelleth in God, and God in him.' God is said to be in them; therefore, as the body hath a majesty in it, which appears in the subjection of beasts to the face of man, because a reasonable soul dwells in it, and a majesty answerable to such a soul appears in it, so it is here. And as Solomon's temple, wherein God manifested his glorious presence, is therefore said to be glorious in the Scriptures, much more are these living temples of the Holy Ghost, wherein God keeps his court and residence. The King of glory cannot come into the heart (as he is said to come into the hearts of his people as such, Ps. 24:9, 10), but some glory of himself will appear; and as God doth accompany the word with majesty, because it is his word, so he doth accompany his own children, and their ways, with majesty, yea, even in their greatest debasements. As when Stephen was brought before the council, as a prisoner at the bar for his life, then God manifested his presence to him, for it is said, 'his face shone as the face of an angel of God,' Acts 6:15; in a proportionable manner it is ordinarily true what Solomon says of all righteous men, 'A man's wisdom makes his face to shine,' Eccles. 8:1. Thus Peter also speaks: 1 Pet. 4:14, 'If you be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are you: for the Spirit' not only of God, or of grace, but 'of glory resteth upon you.' And so in the martyrs, their innocency, and carriage, and godly behaviour, what majesty had it with it. What an amiableness in the sight of the people, which daunted, dashed, and confounded their most wretched opposers; so that, although the wicked persecutors 'did eat up God's people as bread' (as it is Ps. 14:4, 5), yet it is added that they were in great fear upon this very account, 'that God is in the generation of the just.' God stands, as it were, astonished at their dealings: 'Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge' (so in the words afore) 'that eat up my people as bread,' and make no more ado of it than a man doth that heartily eats his meat? They seem to do thus, they would carry it and bear it out; but for all that they are in great fear whilst they do thus, and God strikes their hearts with

terror then when they most insult. Why? For 'God is in the generation of, or dwelleth in the just,' and God gives often some glimmerings, hints, and warnings to the wicked (such as Pilate had concerning Christ) that his people are righteous. And this you may see in Philip. 1:28, 'And in nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.' In that latter passage I observe, that an assurance of salvation, and a spirit of terror, and that of God, is given to either. In the Old Testament it is recorded of David, 1 Sam. 18:12, that although Saul hated him (ver. 9) and sought to destroy him (ver. 10, 11), yet 'Saul was afraid of David, because the Lord was with him, and was departed from Saul,' which is the reason in hand. God manifested his presence in David, and struck Saul's conscience with his godly and wise carriage, and that made him afraid.

(2.) The second reason is, that God hath subjected the consciences of all men to the graces and uprightness that is in his people, which will appear by three things:

[1.] There is an assenting to and approbation of their courses in men's consciences. There appeareth to them an amiableness and a beauty therein, so as they cannot but say, their ways are good. Thus Paul says of himself, who yet was spoken against more than any man: 2 Cor. 4:2, 'We have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, but commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.' His conversation was such, as any man that knew his ways and manner of life, could not but in his conscience approve of what he did as good, and holy, and just. And thus David was so upright in his actions, that Achish the king of Gath, an heathen, acknowledgeth it: 1 Sam. 29:6–8, 'Surely, as the Lord liveth, thou hast been upright, and thy going out, and thy coming in, is good in my sight: and I have found no evil in thee; yet the lords' (for their envy at thee, and their own particular interest) 'favour thee not.' The like he says too at the 9th verse, 'Thou art good in my sight, and as an angel of God.' And such trust did he repose in him, 'he made him keeper of his head,' and

committed his life to him, 1 Sam. 28:2. And the reason of all is, because holiness is light, and so is to the conscience as light is to the eye: Eph. 5:8, 'Ye are now light in the Lord: walk as children of the light.' If you ask what that light is which is in them? he answers, that 'the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth;' so that their godliness, and what is the fruit of the Spirit in them, is light. And as sore eyes, that cannot endure to behold the light, yet cannot but say that the light is good, it is amiable, it is glorious and beautiful, so it is here, an holy profession and life is as beauty is to the eye; if the eye be opened, and beauty laid before it, it cannot but acknowledge it such.

[2.] An holy profession and life hath not only an amiableness in it, but an authority also to reprove wicked men: Eph. 5:11, by 'walking in the light,' you (the saints) shall 'reprove their works that they are evil.' And this authority ariseth thus, that holiness doth manifest sin and the vileness of it in evil men, and lays open their consciences to themselves, by the light shining in a believer's profession and life, and so reproves them, for their consciences have in and of themselves a light that shews them their villanies, and therefore they practise their wickedness in secret: ver. 12, 'It is a shame' (says he) 'to speak of what is done in secret by them.' There is a shame in it, a guile in their courses, which they avoid by secrecy; but by the coming in upon them of the light of a contrary holiness, which hath a glory in it, the shame of their secret wickedness riseth up with the greater power upon them.

[3.] Holiness in the saints hath the authority of a judge, as to the consciences of wicked men, and it is a forerunner of what authority they shall one day exercise; for they have the honour to be judges in the world to come, and they do begin in their lives here. So Lot was among the Sodomites, and therefore the saints are said to bind wicked men in cords, Ps. 2. And wicked men look upon a godly man as a judge, and fear him as a judge; and as they fear the word, so they dread the lives of the saints, as Herod feared John, 'because he was a just and holy man.' And thus, so far as any severity of



righteousness did appear, the wise and grave men obtained authority amongst the heathen upon this very principle. God gave them restraining graces of his Spirit, and an authority accompanying them, insomuch as we read of Cato being a man of immoveable justice and austerity, that the generality of the people would cease their plays, and such sinful spectacles, till he was passed by. It is the counsel Seneca gives, that a man should set before his eyes a Cato, or a Lælius, as a judge of his actions; Cogita Catonem judicem. Now, if these glow-worms that shined in the dark had this authority on men's consciences, what honour have all Christ's saints, if they endeavour to hold forth holiness, who ought to be burning and shining lights in a crooked generation!

(3.) Lastly, True and genuine holiness is the lively image of God; and so much as there is of the image of God, so much glory and majesty is there: 2 Cor. 3:18, 'But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' The image of God, according to the proportion of its appearance, in any kind or degree, hath a majesty in it, as God himself hath; and still so much of the image of God as appears, so much majesty. As for instance, in man, though fallen, there being left some prints of the image of God and superiority over beasts, answerably there is a majesty in man, by reason of which beasts do fear him. Thus also there is an impression of majesty upon kings and magistrates, of whom God hath spoken, 'I have said ye are gods,' as in relation unto men; and God accompanies them with a majesty and an authority answerable. And so far as God doth back this his image, so far they reign and rule, and their subjects' hearts are touched to obey them, as Saul's subjects were when he was made king. So of David, it is said that 'God had subdued the people under him,' Ps. 144; and the church is called the queen, Ps. 45, as being the spouse of Christ, and her children are styled princes; and as Christ is said to have glory and majesty in the third and fourth verses, so in like manner, ver. 9, she is said to be 'all glorious within.' As queens participate of majesty with their husbands, so the church with Christ.

The doctrine thus proved, an objection is to be prevented. You will say, Experience confutes all this; for there are no people counted viler than the people of God, and their ways are esteemed foolishness, and they are insulted over and opposed; where, then, is this majesty you have spoken of?

1. I answer, that some, though brought up in the church, yet never saw the light, nor were acquainted with the power of godliness, or the possession of it, but have lived as men in vaults, and were never brought forth to see the light, and so speak against what they know not, Jude 10. Peter also attributes it to ignorance, that foolish men speak against the people of God: 1 Peter 2:15, 'That you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.'

2. Godliness is yet further prejudged to many such by misreports. Men look upon it through false mists and distorted mediums, false glasses, false prejudicate suggestions which enemies have instilled into them; even as Bernard, an holy man, did upon the Waldenses, whom he wrote against. 'Report' (say they in Jer. 20:10), 'and we will report it.' Thus of Christ men spake by hearsay, some one way and some another, John 7:12.

3. The real scandals, yea, the utter fallings away of many professing godliness, confirm them in this opinion, so as indeed the majesty of God's ways, and of the profession of them, by this means comes to be much obscured, yet so as it still appears; for though many withdraw and fall back, yet they may see some who are true, that hold out, and rejoice as a giant to run their race.

4. Godliness being clothed with so mean an outside (as it was in Christ, that there was no form nor beauty in him, Isa. 53), is therefore obscured; for the world looks for the kingdom of God to come with pomp, as did the Pharisees; but the best of the saints are said to have worn sheep-skins, Heb. 11. They were leather-coats, of whom yet (says that scripture) 'the world was not worthy;' who (as that insinuates) dealt unworthily with them, because they discerned

not their worth by reason of the meanness of their condition. And Christ says, because the poor received the gospel, therefore 'Blessed are they that are not offended in me.'

5. The blame lies much upon true Christians themselves, who do not labour to express the beauty of holiness, and to put forth that majesty as they ought and should. They soil it by too many infirmities, and suffer their hearts and lives to lie bedusted till all the glory is covered over therewith. There is too much indifferency, not a due resoluteness and peremptoriness for the ways of grace. There is too much self-seeking and earthly-mindedness, and conforming to the world; and carnal men view only (as the Egyptians did) the dark side, are intent upon the bad that is in them, but despise and turn away their eyes from their graces.

6. Though all men should see it, the holiness of the saints, and have glimmerings of it more or less, yet God, Isa. 26:11, tells us that 'they will not behold it,' that is, acknowledge it, but deal unjustly with it, oppose, scorn, and deride it, for it is the majesty of God shining in uprightness, which they are said to deal (oppositely) unjustly with, which also is in the next verse interpreted to be their envy at God's people.

And this will easily appear if you consider but two principles that are in the hearts of men.

1st. There is conscience, to which godliness approves itself more or less, as conscience itself is enlightened.

2dly. But there is withal another principle more prevailing in the hearts of carnal and unregenerate man, viz., a wisdom devilish, earthly, and sensual, as James speaks; by the dictates and principles whereof men are guided and ruled, imprisoning that light of truth in the conscience, labouring to blind it and put it out all that may be. Now these lusts and sinful dispositions, making men drunk (as the phrase is, Deut. 29:19, they are said to 'add drunkenness to thirst'),

though they have some glimmerings of this majesty, yet whilst this drunkenness lasts, they stand not much in awe of it; and therefore it is no wonder they are so neglective of it. A servant over whom his master hath a great hand and authority, and he fears him exceedingly, yet if he be drunk, he is regardless of his master, is not afraid to abuse him; and thus, whilst men are drunken with lusts, they mock, and contemn, and slight godliness and godly men. But observe them on their death-beds, and in their month of pangs of conscience, as the prophet speaks;\* when their lusts are allayed, and the heat gone, and the drunkenness over, and they are a little soberised, as at the day of death or sickness they will all be, then the remembrance of their ways and carriages, and their revilings and misusings of godly men, dashes them and confounds them; and then they will send for a good man, as Pharaoh sent for Moses at midnight, and desire them to go and serve their God, and to bless them also. You will all be made sober one day; 1 Peter 4:1–7, the apostle there useth this phrase of 'living to the lusts of men;' for it is one thing to live and please their lusts, and another to live to their consciences.

7. And lastly, Their opposing of godliness doth not argue but they may have some glimmerings of the majesty of it, and yet not sin against the Holy Ghost in their opposition. For they may hate it out of love to their own evil works. John 3:20, 'Every one that doth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.' For sin causeth rebellion, and puts all out of order; and so as beasts, though there is an innate majesty in man over them, yet at times they will (as Christ says) turn upon you, rend and devour you; so it is here in this case: Ps. 14, 'And have they no knowledge' says the Psalmist there, 'who eat up my people as bread?' And so in Ps. 2, 'Let us cast away their cords from us.' And truly thus men deal even with God himself; there is no principle more rooted in the heart than that there is a God, and that he is a judge, 'yet the fool says in his heart, There is no God,' and 'there is no fear of God before his eyes.' Yet it cannot be denied but that the majesty of the Lord himself appears to men's consciences.

Use 1. Is there such majesty stamped upon the graces and lives of upright ones? Then, first, this may be an encouragement to them to go on and persist in these ways, and to abound in holiness, and to strive to get a reality and excellency therein. For look how much more real, serious grace, sincerity, and holiness, appears in you, so much more majesty and authority appears also. Be bold in that holy profession, which hath been grounded upon the rock, and which hath a spring of regeneration and sanctification to maintain it; for there is such a majesty annexed to it as will bear out itself, and dash, and confound, and muzzle its foolish opposites in the end. This is a great motive unto godliness, and so the prophet useth it: Isa. 58:8, 'Thy righteousness shall go before thee;' that is (as Calvin hath it), the testimony of thy goodness and uprightness shall appear before God and man, and be an usher to make way for thee in the hearts of men. 'And the glory of the Lord' (that is, the majesty of the Lord) 'shall be thy rear-ward,' fighting for thee in the consciences of wicked men, or shall environ and encompass thee round, as that light did Paul when he was struck off his horse. As the apostle makes this a discouragement to sinful ways and courses, that shame attends them, and is the fruit and issue of them, Rom. 6:2, so on the contrary it may well be an incitement to holiness, that majesty, and glory, and honour, and fear, and reverence in the consciences of men, doth accompany it even here in this life. And so the apostle makes it his concludent motive to the Philippians, which he shutteth up all with, Philip. 4:8, when he had exhorted them to walk in those ways they 'had heard and seen in him' (ver. 9); see with what elogies he adorns them; 'Whatsoever things,' says he, 'are true, and to be revered'—for so the word is, ὅσα σεμνὰ, veneranda—'whatever are pure and lovely, or amiable; if there be any virtue or praise'—that is, anything worthy of commendations, as all virtue and godliness is—'think of these things.' By these epithets the apostle allures them to godliness, holiness, and purity, even because they are amiable, lovely, drawing reverence and praise with them. So he calls them, because they are so in themselves, and they are thus to the consciences of men. And it is their consciences that is the noble part that is in them, and chief relic of the image of God;

and therefore though by reason of their lusts they distaste and despise you, as being contrary thereunto, yet in the highest, noblest part, and most retired thoughts, they do approve and praise you: Cant. 6:9, 'The daughters saw her and blessed her, and the concubines they praised her.' And the testimony of an enemy is the best testimony in the world, as Moses urgeth it, 'our enemies being judges,' Deut. 32:31. Be therefore encouraged to hold forth the word of life, as lights in a crooked generation: Philip. 2:15, 16, 'That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world: holding forth the word of life.' Although the majesty of true godliness be under clouds now, yet the time will come when the sun shall break forth as at noonday: Ps. 137:6, 'And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as at the noon-day.' And even in this world when thou art dead, the envy of wicked men against thee will cease; post mortem cessat livor. But thy name will live and be precious, for the rust will wear off, and the precious metal appear. Read throughout the Scriptures, and the stories of all ages of the church, and look what a man, or company of men, professing piety and the truth were in any age, such in the end will their name be, and be owned in after ages to come; and the reason is in Micah 7:8, 'When I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light unto me.' And ver. 9, 'He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness.' And the reason of all is, that there is a truth in thy holiness (as the apostle John in his 2d and 3d epistles styles it), yea, and the greatest truths; for if the word written be such a word of truth, as heaven and earth shall pass away sooner than the least tittle of that shall fail, and therefore God preserves it in the truth of it for ever, then much more the truth written in men's hearts and lives, not with ink, but by the Spirit of God, will be verified and ratified by him in thee; and God thinks himself obliged to back truth, being the God of truth, and cause it to obtain and prevail. But there is another reason, that is, the glory of God that is in thee: Isa. 46:13, 'For Israel my glory.' And the saints are the glory of Christ, 2 Cor. 8:23, and Christ will see to his own glory, as it is engaged in

them; and therefore in Isa. 26:11, he says, 'They shall see and be ashamed for their envy at the people.' However, know this, that by a bold holy profession of Christ and his ways in sincerity, though intermingled with very many, and perhaps great infirmities, you make work for the day of judgment: 1 Peter 2:12, 'Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles; that whereas they speak against you as evil doers, they may by your good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.' They now speak evil of you for what they espy to be faulty in you, and wickedly pervert your best actions, and brand you with hypocrisy and carnal ends; yet they shall be forced to glorify God then, and all the glimmering convictions or suspicions they had darted into them will rise up against them in that day. And though now the seeds of these convictions are sown in weakness in their consciences, and pass through them but as ordinary, cursory, and common thoughts, yet they will rise in power when Christ shall revive them.

Use 2. Let me exhort those who are invested with this glorious profession, to manifest, and preserve, and maintain this majesty, and not to suffer it to be soiled and justly debased in the eyes of men. It is not considered by godly men as it ought, what they have committed to their trust, even the majesty of the Lord, and that they carry the majesty of the Lord about with them; and that therefore they should be careful how to behave themselves, as we see men of place and of authority are, lest they should do anything unworthy of it, so as to debase and vilify it. For were this considered, our lives and carriages in the world would be other than they are. What manner of men should we be in all holiness of conversation? But professors do not consider this, that they have that in them, which if it were maintained and preserved as it ought, and in that purity it might be, would not only reprove the unfruitful works of darkness, Eph. 5:11, but put to silence also the opposers, 1 Peter 2:15, yea, cause them to be ashamed who speak evil of the ways of God, as it is in 1 Peter 3:16. It would plainly dash and put out of countenance the pomp, glory, and splendour of all unregenerate men's courses, whose glory, when it is at the highest top thereof, is but their

shame. That therefore you may have this consideration of, and respect unto, the majesty of the Lord in you, consider but these grounds and motives,

1st. If you consider it but barely in itself, as an honour put upon you, you ought to have a regard to it and a care of it; and therefore the apostle, 1 Cor. 6:19, when he would dehort them from uncleanness and fornication, he puts them in mind of the honour that was in their bodies: 'Know you not,' says he, 'that they are the temples of the Holy Ghost?' As if he should say, if you considered the honour that is put upon your bodies in that relation, you would not debase them and defile them, and take the members of Christ and make them the members of a harlot; and therefore, 1 Thes. 4:4, he speaks of possessing a man's vessel in holiness and in honour, that is, they were to labour to keep it undefiled, in respect of that honour that is put upon it. As fornication is thereby aggravated, that it is the defiling the honour of the body, which ought to be preserved, so likewise by the same reason, all soil, and scandal, and filth in you, above what it is in other men, may be aggravated by this consideration, that it is a debasing of the majesty of the Lord in you; and therefore also this is made one of the chief and main aggravations of drunkenness, that it debaseth the glory and honour that is put upon man, and the image of God in him, and lays a beast in a man's room. Take example from customs among men. You see kings having majesty stamped upon them, how careful are they to preserve it inviolate and undiminished and undebased, though they are men subject to infirmities as others, heaps of dust as well as we; therefore what actions of state and distance are invented and observed merely to preserve the dignity of their character!

2dly. But it is the majesty of the Lord; it is not yours, but his, put upon you by him. Magistrates have an especial care and endeavour to preserve their authority; and therefore, though they would put up many things, were they only personal wrongs and debasements, yet if that authority they have comes to be debased, they will stand to maintain and preserve it, especially when one represents a king, as



ambassadors do. They use strictly to stand upon all points, to advance the majesty of their master, and take that on them which otherwise they would not, and forbear to do, not that it is unworthy of them, but of the person they represent. Now therefore consider this, you that are saints indeed, you that bear about you the divine or godlike nature, 2 Peter 1:4. Consider that God's majesty is stamped on you; the beauty of the Lord is on you, Ps. 90:17. You are his glory, Isa. 46:13. You represent him in this world, and are in his stead. Consider therefore 'what manner of persons you ought to be, in all holiness of life and conversation,' 2 Peter 3:11, and therefore endeavour so to live in the world as God would, if he were now amongst us as in the days of his flesh, according to that speech, 1 John 4:17, 'As he is in the world, so ought we to be in this world.'

3dly. If the interest God hath in it will not move you, then let your own engage you to have a care to maintain the majesty of your profession.

(1.) Consider that you are to be the judges of the world hereafter, 1 Cor. 6:2, and therefore how ought you to behave and demean yourselves, that you may have that authority in men's consciences therein, and that you may be a witness against them without exception. But if you are guilty of the same crimes whereof other men are, they may except against you as incompetent judges. As therefore you look to be honoured with this prerogative at the latter day, lay the foundation of it here.

(2.) If you look no further than this life, you have need to look to maintain this majesty, for you will else be unfit instruments in doing good to the souls of others; you cannot rebuke, nor can you exhort, unless you have authority and acceptance in men's consciences. And therefore Paul bids Titus rebuke and teach with all authority: 'Let no man despise thee,' Titus 2:15; that is, preserve thyself from all just contempt and occasion of men despising thee in their hearts, that thou mayest be fit to reprove, and rebuke, and teach others, and do good to their souls. One that keeps himself

without rebuke and reproof, blameless, may with authority rebuke another, and it will be taken well; and the rebuke will stick the faster, as being thrown by a powerful hand. For as God first accepts the person, then the offerings, so do men; if the person be not accepted with them, and in authority over them, their reproofs and rebukes will be the less acceptable also; and therefore the apostle requires that a minister, because he is to be employed in bringing home of others to God, should be one 'of a good report even among them without,' lest he fall into reproach, and so his ministry do little good upon them. So that if ministers or others would do good to the souls of others, they must labour to preserve the majesty and beauty of holiness.

(3.) Suppose you will not be moved by these considerations, yet if you respect your own safety, and would preserve yourselves from the injuries of a malicious world and from the strife of tongues, so as to muzzle men's mouths, and silence them from speaking evil of you, or chain their hands from violence towards you, then preserve the majesty of God in your possession, for it will preserve you. This kept Herodias and Herod's fingers off John from killing him, though they itched to be at him; Mark 6:19, 20, it is said she had a grudge against him, and would have killed him; and Herod, as it is likely, had a mind to do so too. But it is said she could not, 'for Herod feared John as a just and a holy man.' And when he did murder him at last, it was with much reluctancy, grief, and sorrow of heart. It was this kept Christ safe a long while also. The rulers of the Jews would have often laid hands on him, and would have spoken against John, but that they had by their holiness won such authority in the hearts of the people; therefore it is often said, when they would have attempted this they dared not, 'because they feared the people.' And therefore, if rulers' hearts were set against you, yet this might be a means to keep you safe, and keep off many attempts and abridgments of liberty which else would light upon you. And the truth is, it is one of the greatest wonders, that the world and devil, being such strong and deadly enemies to God's people, should keep their hands off of them, they being so few and the other so many.

But it is this majesty of the Lord appearing in them that is a curb upon men, and God's being with them casts a fear upon their hearts. There is an excellent place for this, Ps. 105:12–15, where, speaking of the preservation of the patriarchs in the midst of the Canaanites, their utter enemies, he brings it in as a wonder, that when there were but 'a few men in number, yea, very few,' and strangers also, exposed to indignities, yet God 'suffered no man to do them wrong,' yea, secretly 'reproved kings for their sakes,' speaking and suggesting to their hearts and consciences that they were his anointed, namely, his people—anointed with the graces of his Spirit, as all Christians are, 1 John 2:20–27, and that they were prophets. The conscience of this restrained Abimelech from doing Abraham wrong, Gen. 20:7; yea, and this was a means at the first for the primitive Christians to have peace, Acts 2, there being some converted by the apostles, who continued stedfastly in their doctrine and fellowship, and breaking of bread and prayers; and ver. 43 it is said, 'fear came upon every soul,' so that they were a terror to the wicked amongst them. Ah, my brethren, were the majesty of the Lord but advanced and preserved in this kingdom by continuing the word and ordinances, and giving them full scope and liberty to make the desert places of this kingdom to see the excellency and glory of our God, as it is in Isa. 35:1, 2, then should our enemies bow down before us, and lick the dust off our feet, Isa. 60:14; and as the fear of the Lord fell upon the nations when the Israelites came into the land of Canaan, so it would now on our enemies. But because it is so much depressed among us, and the majesty of the Lord not beheld, acknowledged, and advanced, therefore God goes not out with us. See this in Jehoshaphat's time, 2 Chron. 17:7; because he sent his princes and priests into all the cities of Judah with the book of the law, the priests to teach, and the princes to back the word and cause the people to yield to it, therefore the fear of the Lord fell upon all the kingdoms of the nations that were round about, so as they made no war against him. This is the way to secure the kingdom, by thus advancing the majesty of the Lord.

(4.) To conclude all with this, as the last motive hereunto, consider these opposing times wherein there hath been long a great battle fighting in heaven (that is, in the church), whether godliness, or civility and formality, &c., should get the victory, as of old between Michael and his angels, and the dragon and his, whether Gentilism or Christianity should prevail. Now you have a weapon in your own hands, if you would but use it, viz., the majesty of the Lord that is stamped upon you. Draw it forth and unsheath it, as Christ, when the soldiers came to take him with staves and spears, did but exert his majesty, and they fell all to the ground. And though your enemies be more in number, and have more swords and staves than you, yet if you would but hold fast that majesty that is in you, they would not be able to stand out. You are an army of kings, and a few of them against a multitude of slaves are likely to get the victory. When the Russian bond-slaves had rebelled, and gathered a great and mighty army, their masters agreed to meet them with no other weapons than their whips, whereby they used to lash them; and all lashing them together, the remembrance of their authority over them, and of the smart of the whip formerly felt, struck such terror into them, as they fled like sheep before the drivers. You, therefore, that are the ensign-bearers of God's majesty, be exhorted to fight it out, and to contend with wicked men, and godliness at length may prevail. The majesty of the Lord is your rear-ward, and therefore till the glory of the Lord departs from Israel, never despair of victory. Know that there is a promise made to the church under the gospel, giving this hope, Isa. 61. He speaks of Christ, and his coming to preach the gospel, which Christ himself, Luke 4:18, interprets of himself, and of the church under the gospel. In the 6th and 9th verses there is this promise made, 'Ye shall be named,' that is, acknowledged, 'the priests of the Lord;' and it is added, 'Men shall call you' (even the standers by) 'the ministers of our God;' and at the 9th verse it is said, 'Their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed.'

But now it will be asked what you are to do, what means there are to manifest and preserve this majesty of the Lord in your souls and lives?

Unto which in general let me premise but this, that then you do it when you so far approve your hearts and lives to men's consciences, by walking in this world as God himself walked, that men are convinced and judged, and say, Of a truth God is in you. This description in general I take out of that 1 Cor. 14:24, and what there is said of prophesying in the assembly of the saints I apply to their whole lives. When you so walk and demean yourselves, and so in all things approve yourselves to men's consciences, that whereas now it is in report and profession that God is among you, and men are in doubt whether it be so or no, men are convinced that it is so, and that of a truth (as it is there) God is in you, then the majesty of the Lord appears in you.

1. I say, approving yourselves to men's consciences, for that is the subject party, or the territories of that majesty. That you may not conceive amiss of it, I do not exhort to surliness, pride, stateliness, keeping aloof of and at a distance, which is a thing the world objects to godly men. No; this is the devil's majesty, and of the princes and great ones of this world, which comes to nought, as the apostle says, 1 Cor. 2:6, 7, distinguishing between the wisdom of this world and that which is of God, and between the majesty of the Lord and of the world. Now as the kingdom of Jesus Christ is not of this world, so neither is the majesty of his kingdom. And therefore it is not heaping up of riches, learning, worldly respect and authority that is a means to advance this majesty, but it is endeavouring to be holy as God is holy, 1 Peter 1:15. Therefore,

2. I add, it is by living holily, as Christ would if he were here. It is to be merciful as he is merciful, kind, faithful, true, as he is, pardoning of injuries as he doth, purifying yourselves as he is pure; in a word (as you have it, 1 John 4:17), it is demeaning yourselves here as God would if he were in the world; and therefore think not thou canst no

ways advance the majesty of the Lord because thou art poor, or contemned and despised, and not regarded in the world, for thy poor outward condition. For Christ was all these, and yet the majesty of the Lord appeared in him; and Peter says they were eye-witnesses of it, 2 Peter 1:16. And thou in all these estates mayest approve thyself to the consciences of men, as Christ did. If thou art poor, yet if thou keepest thy sincerity, and dost not use shifting, base, unlawful means, but walkest faithfully in thy calling, and manifestest that thou livest by faith, and dependest on God, and shewest a contentedness in thy condition, and that thou livest a more comfortable life by the help of thy faith, delighting thyself in the Almighty, than those that have most abundance, the majesty of the Lord appears more in thee than a professor that glisters more in the world in regard of outward things. Or art thou in disgrace, and in reproaches, abused and contemned? Labour to approve thy heart to God, seek the honour that is of him, be patient, and revile not again; only take heed that thou sufferest not as an evil doer, and be not discouraged from practising all the duties of godliness with constancy and cheerfulness, and thou shalt approve thyself to the consciences of men, and 'the Spirit of glory shall rest upon thee,' 1 Peter 4:14. Keep but thy innocency, and let them do what they will, thy light shall break forth as clear as noonday. And that majesty which shall appear in thee shall melt all the disgraces cast at thee, as the sun doth snowballs cast at it before they come half way; or they shall all fall off like burrs cast upon a looking-glass. For still know this, and build upon it, that nothing from without can debase the majesty of God in a man, no outward condition whatsoever (as Christ says of defilement, that nothing from without defiles a man, but all defilement is from within, a man's own heart), nothing from without can soil the majesty of God in him, but all that men lose is from within, from sin, and sinful, ungodlike, unChristlike, and unsaintlike carriages in their several conditions.

But I shall now shew some particular means whereby Christians may maintain and keep the majesty of the Lord from being soiled and debased in them, and preserve holiness in the beauty, lustre,

and brightness of it, so as to commend it to men's consciences with authority.

1. Christians must be innocent and harmless. I premise this, not as though in itself simply and alone, or chiefly, the majesty of the Lord did appear; for many are so, in whom the beauty of holiness doth not appear; but yet it is a thing that is fundamentally and mainly necessary thereunto, and which serves much to commend it and approve it to men's hearts. For as in all pictures and paintings there are ground-colours laid, which though simply in themselves have little gloss, yet must first be laid, or else the brightness of the other colours, and oil and varnish, in which all the gloss lies, will not so eminently shine and appear; so, nor will the beauty of holiness and majesty of the Lord appear to be in you, or come to be approved of in men's consciences, without innocency and harmlessness. And therefore when the apostle, Philip. 2:15, 16, tells them that they were to 'shine as lights in the world, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation,' and they were to 'hold forth the word of life,' that is, to hang forth that holiness the word requires, as a light in a dark night, he withal admonishes them, that if they would shine thus indeed, they must be 'harmless and blameless,' which though simply it be not the light, yet it is the lanthorn, as it were, through which it shines; which if it be not made of some diaphanous and perspicuous matter, as glass, and that kept clear too, the light is dimmed, though never so great, and is kept from shining; and therefore if they would shine as lights, and hold forth the word in their lives, they must be blameless and harmless, they must keep their innocency, they must keep their lives clear, pure and undefiled, and from being 'spotted in the world,' as James says, James 1:27. And he adds also this motive as the effect of this, 'that ye may be the sons of God,' that is, manifest that you are of him; that as he in this world doth no man wrong, so neither do you injure any man; and by this, you shall both manifest yourselves to be children of your Father, and approve yourselves to men's consciences. And though a man hath never so much holiness and sincerity in him, yet by any failing in this kind he shall never

approve it to men's consciences, for men look upon this light through this lanthorn. As magistrates when they are not innocent, but oppressors in any kind, or bribe-takers, and do men wrong, are made obnoxious by it, and lose their authority by it, and their hands are often tied by it in punishing sin and wickedness, and they cannot execute justice as they ought and should, no more will ever holiness uphold its majesty and authority in men's hearts, when you are thus obnoxious to men. And therefore Samuel, contesting with the Israelites for rejecting him who had been their judge, professeth his innocency: 1 Sam. 12:3, 'Whose ox or ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded or oppressed? or at whose hands have I received any bribe?' If he had indeed been guilty, then to have despised and rejected his authority had been the less offence. You therefore that have this majesty of the Lord committed to you, should have a care so to carry yourselves in dovelike innocency and evenness to men here, that God may expostulate with those men at the latter day, who now reject and contemn his majesty stamped upon you. Whom of you all, then God may say, did they wrong, or deceive, or defraud, that you did so much speak against them? Is it merely that they were holy and zealous in my service, and in those duties I require? In Nehemiah, chap. 5, when some of the Jews had oppressed their brethren, by letting corn to use, and had taken mortgage of lands of their brethren in a time of dearth, and the like cruel uncharitable dealings were among them, see what he says at the 9th verse in this case: 'Is this good that you do? ought you not to walk in the fear of our God, not to dare to do this?' Why? 'Because of the reproach of the heathen their enemies.' They had the name to be the people of God; and how durst you do it, says he, knowing that God would be reproached, and your religion reproached by it? And he, good man, professeth, that because he would credit religion, and shew the fear of God was in him, he had not been chargeable as former governors were, yea, had not taken that which by custom he might: at verse 15, 'But so did not I, because of the fear of the Lord.' He required not his due (verse 18), because of the hardness of those times; even that allowance which was appointed to him as governor he required not, and all this 'for the fear of the Lord.' His meaning is, that he did it in



reference to God, whom he feared, that he might honour him, and credit his religion in him the more, and that there might be no cause of reproaching it, as it may be expounded by the 9th verse. And this was it which made old Jacob say to his sons, his cruel sons, Gen. 34:30, who oppressed the Shechemites, that they 'made him stink in the nostrils of the inhabitants.' And so injuries done to men that are enemies to the gospel by revilings, or defraudings, or by violence in any kind, will cause religion to stink; for men being so great lovers of themselves, and haters of holiness, are sensible of injuries done unto them in any kind, and revenge all upon the religion you do profess. And as the injurious carriages of the sons of Eli, in taking off the flesh of the sacrifices where they pleased, against the law, caused the people to abhor the sacrifice of the Lord, so if you be found wrongful to men, and justly provoke their self-love in them by any means, it causeth them to abhor all your other profession, and all the duties of holiness, which otherwise they could not but approve.

2. Labour to do good to all as much as lies in your power. This is a second means to help to commend that grace that is in you to men's consciences, to cause them to think well of it. This you may see was the means whereby in the primitive times the Christians as first got favour with the people, notwithstanding their cleaving to the apostles, continuing in their strict doctrine, and separating themselves from the world, and meeting together and praying, Acts 2:44, all which are matters at which the world so much storms; yet because they parted their goods to them who had need, and brake their bread freely, it is said, ver 47, they had favour with all the people, whilst they did thus strive to honour their profession. And this is one thing that credits God himself much to the world, and wins good words from men of him, whom though they hate, and truly hate him as holy and as a judge, and cannot endure that majesty of his which appears in the world, yet because he doth good unto them, and 'gives them rain and fruitful seasons,' and thereby bears witness to their hearts of his goodness to them, therefore they speak well of him, and many say they love him because he is good to

them; whereas should they only know him by his severe and strict commands in the world, and by those glimpses they have of his majesty therein, they would assuredly express revilings of him, and would not have that esteem of him that now they have. So when wicked men see and view in you nothing but zeal for God and duties of holiness, and feel none of your goodness extended to them, they will more purely hate you; but if besides your zeal to God they find you do good to them, then out of self-love men would be drawn to approve good courses, and to see and acknowledge that God is in you; for they love those that do good to them, and speak well of them; insomuch as the heathens used to ascribe divine honour to those persons, and thought something more in them than men, who did them some great, extraordinary, public good.\*

Having despatched the preparing means to make godliness to be approved of men and acceptable to them, I come secondly to such things wherein it may appear and be put forth.

1. Shew forth the graces of the Lord Jesus Christ, as Peter exhorteth: 1 Peter 2:9, 'Shew forth the virtues or praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light,' being 'holy in all your conversation.' In your eating and drinking, in your callings, express other ends, doing all in such a manner that it may appear all is done for God and to God. Whether you eat or drink, let all be to his glory; and, as Zechariah prophesieth, let holiness be written upon the bells of the horses and upon your bowls, Zech. 14:20, 21; that is, when you go to plough or cart, or sit down to drink, or go to war, let all these be done in a holy manner, that men may read upon your drinking-bowls as it were this inscription, 'Holiness to the Lord;' that you dedicate them, yourselves, and all you have to God, that these vessels of common use may become as truly dedicated to God in a holy use of them as the bowls in the temple were; and even in these common actions endeavouring to express holiness, and fear, and reverence, and rejoicing in God, you may make as great a difference appear between them, as performed by you and others, as is between a picture varnished and oiled and another that hath but

bare, dead colours. Moral virtues sanctified have a holiness, a glory put upon them: therefore Peter useth the same word to express the graces of Christ in that place that Aristotle doth to express his moral virtues by. Express you Christ in them; let his holiness appear in you.

2. Abound much in holy duties, Isa. 61:3, 6, 9, in praying, in mourning and humbling yourselves for sin, in sanctifying the Sabbath, &c. In the 3d verse it is said of those that 'mourn in Sion,' and are brokenhearted Christians, and 'fruitful trees of righteousness, that God may be glorified;' that they at the altar shall be named the priests of the Lord, for the holy sacrifices they should daily perform and abound in; and 'men shall call them the ministers of our God,' when they are diligent in praying with their families, instructing them, and whetting the word upon them. Men shall call them so, and give that report of them; and ver. 9, 'All that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed whom the Lord hath blessed.' Therefore, as Paul says to the Philippians, chap. 1:9–11, 'Be filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the praise and glory of God,' that God may be glorified, as Isaiah there says, and so Christ also, John 15:8, and then God will thus glorify you according to his promise, 'Those that honour me I will honour.' So to abound much in private prayer, though in secret, and none knows it, yet it will add a lustre to thee in thy conversation. Conversing with God so familiarly forty days, caused Moses his face to shine when he came off from the mount; and so conversing much with God will make thy face, thy presence to shine. As wisdom is said, Eccles. 8:1, there to make the face to shine, so much more will prayer; for a man by much prayer keeps close communion with God, God walketh with him, and he with the Lord. Let all thy actions too shew forth thy meekness and humility, &c. The meekest man by nature must learn another kind of meekness of Christ: 'Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly.' Forgive injuries, because God hath forgiven you, you were sometimes injurious to others. That which did win Christ's authority was holiness and meekness: Ps. 45:4, 'In thy majesty ride prosperously,

because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness,' Meekness did add majesty and grace to him; he that is holy God will exalt, and others will exalt the man who humbleth himself. Be patient in wrongs, nothing overcomes and wins ground more. It is the best victory; you overcome in the heart of the party that wrongs you, you melt it, dissolve it, and 'heap coals of fire upon his head;' you overcome in the eyes of others, and are in their esteem above him, and he under you. So David overcame Saul's conscience, 1 Sam. 24:17, 18, when he had Saul, his enemy, that sought his life, at an advantage, and some bade him kill him when he was asleep, yet he spared his life and forgave him. This mightily convinced Saul, and drew this confession from him, 'Thou art more righteous than I, for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil,' ver. 17. And, ver. 19, 'For if a man find his enemy,' says Saul, 'will he let him go well away?' He looked upon his own heart, and saw he could not have found in his heart to have done this, and few men else would have done it. Such bowels of mercy are proper only to God's elect. Such a person indeed will savour and smell of prayer, and having gotten God into his heart, the gleam of his presence with him will appear in everything he doth. It will compose the heart, and compose the countenance also, and thy conversation, and cause all to shine, that men shall say of thee, the contrary to what Job's friends said of Job; when they saw him impatient, they said, 'Surely this man restrains prayer from the Almighty,' but they shall say of thee, Surely this man prays much, and is abundant in it, his carriage all day long is so heavenly.

Labour also to humble thyself, and to mourn and confess thy sins with much and daily godly sorrow; for humiliation removes the shame that comes by sin, which covereth another's face, and which daunteth another's heart; but thou 'wilt shew thyself thereby clear in this matter,' as 2 Cor. 7:11; and God also dwells in an humble heart, and draws nigh to him; and so God's presence appears more in such an one, and God also will 'lift up him that humbleth himself under his mighty hand.'

Labour also to make peace betwixt others and God. This will make thy steps beautiful in their eyes, when they discern thou aimest at their soul's good, and sanctifiest the Sabbath strictly; for that day, by reason of the duties of it, is a glorious day, Isa. 58:13; that day is as a Christian parliament day, wherein he rideth in his robes, as it were, and the majesty of God will appear in thee all the week after. So also be much in holy conference of the things that belong to the kingdom of God. Ps. 145, David, speaking of the saints, says, 'They shall speak of the glory of Christ's kingdom, and make known to the sons of men the glorious majesty of his kingdom.' Speak great words of God, your interest in him, privileges by him, and what glorious things are laid up for those who love him.

But then, 3, be sure you say and do. For the want of this the Pharisees lost their authority in the hearts of the people, and Christ won and gained it from them. As Paul says of himself, that he would make it appear that he was powerful not only in writing, but that he was so in presence also, so do you endeavour to express more power in your lives than in your speeches; as Christ did not often in plain words tell them so much that he was the Messiah, but, says he, 'Let my works testify.' As man never spake as he did, so never any man did the works he did. Endeavour to be mighty in word and deeds also, Luke 24:19. As kings will not dispute but do, so do you; do not stand talking only of the majesty of his kingdom, but, as David said to Solomon, 'do it,' 1 Chron. 28:10, that all may come from you *tanquam in verbo regis et sacerdotis*, you being kings and priests to God your father; and let all your principles of holiness appear to be with you, as the laws of the Medes and Persians, which you never turn or go from, but are irrevocable. This will preserve and maintain majesty indeed, as it doth majesty in a king.

4. Do all you do with as much reality and fervency of spirit as you can;—Apollos is said to be a mighty man, not only in regard of his eloquence, but fervency of spirit also, Acts 18:24, 25—that men may not see light only shining before them, but feel heat, and vigour, and energy also in you. John was a 'shining and a burning light;' it is not

shining light only, but it must be burning light that confoundeth wicked men. There is light in the work itself when it is done, but the heat lieth in the spirit and manner of doing it: be 'fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;' contend earnestly, put forth your might in whatever you do, as Solomon says, Eccles. 9; 'be zealous of good works.' Press to the mark, as aiming and endeavouring to reach as far as possibly you can; labour not to do much only, but to have your spirits shine much in that which you do, that, as the darkness of Egypt was not discerned only by the eye, but was felt also, so let the light of your works not be seen only, but let them be felt also; express seriousness and reality in all, else they will think, as they do, that you act but a part. Actors on the stage, though they act the parts of kings upon the stage, yet who fears them? There appears no majesty, because they do but act, and have not the spirit of kings, nor the affections of kings, though they take on them for a while the person, state, actions, and speak the swelling words of kings.

5. Endeavour to do all with sincerity, aiming to manifest holy ends in all, and manifesting and laying aside of your own ends and aims. Thus Paul did approve himself to men's consciences, 2 Cor. 4:2, 'We have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty.' He had no secret ends and aims, no underhand projects for himself; nor have we 'walked in craftiness' (unless it were to win their souls, as he says elsewhere), 'but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience,' and to God also, 'in the sight of God.' And therefore, see how he endeavours to manifest and clear to them through that whole epistle, that he sought not theirs but them, and did preach the gospel freely to them. And so also in the 1st chapter of that epistle, ver. 12, 13, 'Our rejoicing,' says he, 'is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity' (εἰλικρίνεια, perspicuitate animi, with a mind you might see through) 'we have had our conversation in the world, and not in fleshly wisdom;' that is, we have endeavoured to shew we have had no ends of our own (for fleshly wisdom will still be propping for itself); as Job says, chap. 22, a worldly wise man is profitable to himself, but still the event hath shewed that God was our aim, and

we have walked in godly sincerity, and this with such plain-heartedness and cleanness of mind, that you might see through us in all our actions. And 'we write no other things to you than what you read and acknowledge;' that is, what we now say of ourselves by writing, you have formerly read in our actions and conversations; and you do acknowledge it, ἀναγινώσκετε, recognoscitis, you may remember it was so, you know so much already, and may now remember that this is true; and so 'I hope you shall acknowledge,' that is, have cause to do so, 'unto the end.'

6. Be constant and even in your courses; walk not unevenly, but steadily. The primitive Christians, who, as I said before at the first, won so much upon the hearts of the people, are said to have 'continued in the apostles, doctrine'; and that 'well-doing' whereby, 1 Peter 2:15, we should 'put to silence the ignorance of foolish men,' notes out a continued act of well-doing. Kings who sometimes take state on them, or any superior else, and then neglect it as much another time, lose majesty by it: Qui servat constantiam, servat dignitatem, vincet aliquando pertinax bonitas. Gamaliel gave this sign and aim to know whether they were of God or no, if they go on and hold out; if not, they will come to nothing, says he; and constancy therefore overcomes and convinceth, because it argueth reality; for it is impossible long wholly to dissemble and act a mere part. The heathen could say of their Fabricius, by reason of his constancy, that virtue was incorporated into him, so as it was as possible to turn the sun out of its course as him out of his way of virtue.

7. Let Christians be unanimous and communicative each to other; this we have commended to us by the example of those primitive Christians who grew in favour with the people: 'They continued in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and prayers,' Acts 2:42, 'and fear came on every soul,' ver. 43. For, as David says, Ps. 14, 'God is in the generation of the just.' God is in every one of them; but when there are more together, there is more of God among them, and he shines more. An army of kings banded

together, strongly cleaving and entering into mutual leagues (as when the people of Israel came out of Egypt), a fear must needs fall on the nations about them. They fear your face, and they fear your prayers as cannon shot from heaven. 'Hereby shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another,' if you cleave together; by this they shall know that God and Christ is in you.

Last of all, I will give you a caution or two.

1. If you would preserve authority in wicked men's hearts, have no fellowship with them in the unfruitful works of darkness; distance reproaches them, and keeps authority in their consciences; but 'reprove them rather,' says the apostle, Eph. 5. *Nimia familiaritas contemptum parit*, they will espy out your weaknesses, and work upon them.

2. Take heed of violent passions, rash anger, impatency. As they come from weakness, so they will weaken you in their hearts; such passions make servants control their masters, children their parents. As drunkenness is to reason, so are violent passions to grace; they are a short drunkenness, and so exposeth you to contempt; as Noah, when he was drunk, Ham mocked him though he was his father, for he then discovered his nakedness and shame, and so dost thou in thy passion.

3. Take heed of earthly-mindedness. It were debasement to a king, and would lose of his esteem and majesty, to load muck-carts every day; so you who are heirs of heaven, it must needs debase you to lade yourselves with thick clay. Let your affections, your conversation, be in heaven, where your treasure is; magnify not earthly things above their own rate, as the world doth. Alexander knew Porus to be a king by his contemning all things. Do not fear men, as kings do not; contemn the pleasures of Egypt, as Moses did. Nebuchadnezzar left his throne and fed amongst beasts; his glory then departed from him.



4. Take heed of falling into scandalous sins; like Delilah, it will shave thy hair, and then thou wilt be as another man, and the Philistines who revered thee before will mock thee. Going up to his father's bed did lose Reuben his excellency. As Tamar said to Amnon, thou wilt be as one of the fools of Israel, and they all will laugh at thee as at a fool, and whither will thy shame go? Thou thereby strengthenest the hands of the wicked, and they will say, Behold, he is become as one of us.

## CHAPTER VIII

Motives to evangelical obedience from this consideration, that it is the great design of the gospel to promote the life, and power, and practice of godliness.

But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own souls.—JAMES 1:22.

Holiness of heart and life is urged upon us, as we stand in relation to the word of God, as written and engrafted in the heart, which holiness in other Scriptures is called, 'obeying from the heart that mould of doctrine,' that is, answering it in the life. Here in the text it is called doing of the word. James spends most of this epistle upon it to urge it, and to shew the vanity of that religion which is destitute of it. Now by doing the word in a large sense, not simply outward obedience is meant, but the whole conformity to the will of God in the inward and outward man; it is a conformity to all that the word exhorts to. Now the word exhorts to faith, to change of heart, to inward sanctification in the will, as well as to a godly conversation, and so all inward holy dispositions and motions are doing the will of God. Thus the whole building from top to bottom, faith, and both inward and outward holiness, are called doing by Christ: Mat. 7:24, 'Hearing my sayings,' says Christ, 'and doing them, is to build on a rock,' namely, on himself. The reason is, because doing hath relation to command. Now his command is to believe, 1 John 5:13. Faith is therefore called 'the work of God,' John 6:29. It is indeed the work of all works, and so to increase in habitual grace, faith, knowledge, &c., is called doing: 2 Peter 1, 'If these things be in you,' says he, ver. 8; but he says, ver. 10, 'If ye do these things.' When Paul disputes, as we do against the papists, that no man is justified by works; what! doth he mean external works only? No; but he excludes from our justification our whole righteousness, both root and branch, the inward as the root, and

outward as the branches, because under works of the law is comprehended a complete conformity to the law, and to what the law requires, and so he means hereby inward as well as outward holiness. For when the law says, Do this, it therein commands inward holiness in doing, as the root of doing, or the law is not fulfilled. And thus when the law forbids any evil work, it forbids original sin as well as actual, for law binds the whole man.

1st. It is the end of the word to enjoin such entire holiness. 1 Tim. 1:5, 'Now the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned.' The apostle in that chapter reckons up many particulars, and concludes, as if he had not mentioned all: 'If there be anything else contrary to sound doctrine, according to the glorious gospel.' He concludes in general, to involve all particulars not enumerated, and he calls it the glorious gospel, as that whose glory would not love iniquity. Now, says he, the end of this commandment is love to God and man, out of a pure heart sanctified inwardly, and rightly directing it, and for pure ends, all which unfeigned faith worketh in him that believes. This, you see then, is the end of the command, and this is one end of believing the gospel if in truth. And his scope is to compare this doctrine with Jewish fables and tradition, ver. 4, which consisted in speculations and disputes; whereas all our doctrine, in every part of it, tends to practice; and this is the glory of our religion, that all the truths of it tend to holiness and godliness, and are practical, or strengtheners of us in practice. The incarnation of Christ, God manifested in the flesh and ascended to glory, is termed the great 'mystery of godliness,' and the whole doctrine of the gospel is called the 'doctrine which is after godliness,' Titus 1:1, 1 Tim. 6:3. For that is it which it all tends to, and all truth is practical; therefore John calls it 'doing the truth,' 1 John 1:6, a strange phrase to a speculative philosopher, and 'walking in the truth,' 2 John ver. 4. In the epistle to Timothy, the apostle Paul had spoken of exhorting servants and masters to their respective duties; for indeed every truth in the gospel, savingly known, will have influence into the actions of all relations, to make men conscientious in performing them, and holy

in them. He instanceth but in one kind, to shew the like in all the rest, and to shew the glory of all sound doctrine in that respect. The same apostle, Titus 2:1, calls the gospel sound doctrine, because it tends wholly to soundness and integrity, and to make the whole man such in all and every part of him, and to keep every one in their duties; as aged men, ver. 2, aged women, ver. 3, young men, ver. 6, servants, ver. 9, 10; for the grace of God, namely, the gospel of grace, teacheth men all these duties. And because this is the professed end and scope of all the doctrine of Christianity, and of the word held forth by the professors of it themselves and in the nature of the thing itself, therefore if men profess the truths of it in any kind, thereby differencing themselves from other men, and yet prove faulty in their lives, presently the word is blamed by others: Titus 2:5, 'Let wives be obedient to their husbands, that the word be not blamed;' or as you have it, 1 Tim. 6:1, 'that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed.' Not only the name of God, but even his doctrine is mentioned; and why? But because it is expected all his doctrine should tend to holiness, and to make all relations (for of servants he there speaks) holy. And on the other side, walking holily in all relations is said there to adorn the doctrine itself, as well as to glorify God. Thus every defect and miscarriage lights on the word and the truths professed, as being such truths which teach men otherwise; and all holiness tends to glorify the word, as that which is the great design of it. And indeed all holiness and obedience is but the holding forth in the conversation that word of life which is in the heart, and changeth the audible word into a visible work. The saints are as 'lights in the world, holding forth the word of life,' Phil. 2:15. As grace is but the word engrafted, so obedience is but the word held forth. When the apostle says you shine as lights, he makes use of the same word used by the Septuagint, Gen. 1, for the heavenly lights; for as the light that is in the stars is ordained to be held forth to the world to quicken things below; and as the gathering together of that light, which was scattered by the first day's creation over all the mass of matter, into those bright globes, the subjects of it, was the work of the fourth day; so God in he new creation hath taken that light which is

diffused through his word, and hath gathered it into the hearts of his saints, to give light to a dark world. The word in the heart is as the light seated in the stars, which is called lux, and the shine of it, lumen, is the outward splendour of it; and as light in the stars is ordained for shining to others, so is the word to be held forth in obedience, that it might the more enlighten men. And unto this difference of lux and lumen, light and shining of that light, the grace in the hearts of the saints being as the light, and good works as the shine of it for which that light is ordained, Christ's speech imports (and the apostle, as some think, alludes to it), 'Ye are the light of the world: let your light so shine before men, that they, seeing your good works, may glorify' God the author of that light, and that so you 'may glorify your Father which is in heaven,' Mat. 5:16. The like expression we have, James 3:13, 'If any man be endued with knowledge, let him shew out of a good conversation his works.' A good conversation, full of good works, is the best demonstration of knowledge; it is a knowledge shewn forth, and therefore it hath the same effects that preaching the word hath: 1 Pet. 3:1, if not 'won by the word,' they may be 'won by their good conversation.' So God tells us also, Isa. 29:23, 24, 'When they see my children, the work of my hands' (God's workmanship in them created to good works), 'they that erred shall learn doctrine, shall come to understanding by it.' The end of the word is, not to fill men's brains with knowledge or speculations, but it is altogether practical. It gives rules for all actions of men, 2 Tim. 3:17. The Scripture was written 'that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished to all good works.' The Scripture is not like a philosopher's lecture, that discourseth of the heaven, and the earth, and nature of all things; but it is a school of action, that gives directions and rules for all sorts of life, and motives enforcing them. God in his word hath condescended to give directions and prescriptions about the meanest, lowest actions of man's life; and to what end? Because the religion it teacheth consists in doing: 'that you may hear and do,' Deut. 30:12. And God singleth out the ignorant and foolish or the world for his scholars, and hath revealed this mystery unto babes, and concealed it from the prudent. Had he intended only to teach matters of knowledge

and speculation, he would have singled out the rarest wits of the world, and have poured out all sorts of knowledge to fill them; but he hath stuffed his whole word with exhortations, directions to practice, and made all knowledge and mysteries in it but subserve to it; and he hath scholars answerable, the foolish of the world. And why? Because they are capable of doing his will as the wisest. They can love, fear, and obey him as well as the wisest. It is therefore practice he aimed at in all the word he hath delivered; and 'he,' says Christ, Mat. 12:50, 'is my mother, brother, and sister, that doth the will of my Father.'

2dly. To do, and to be active in God's word and law, is the end and perfection of the reasonable creature, and of all the abilities God hath given man: Eccles. 12:13, 'To keep the commandments is the whole of man.' So it is in the original, which is more emphatical than to say, 'the whole duty of man.' It imports that this is the adequate end and perfection of man, all he serves for, all he was made for. Man's soul is an active spirit, made for doing and action, and never doth nor can lie still from that instant it first began to think or desire. As the heart in the body sleeping and waking never ceaseth motion, the soul much less, but the pulses of its thoughts and desires are always beating. God himself is pure act: John 5:17, 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.' And the nearer any creature comes in its degree and rank of being to God, the more active we see it to be. Heavenly bodies that are in place nearer to God, the third heavens being his throne, how active are they; they never cease moving: the sun 'rejoiceth as a giant to run his race.' Now the perfection of the activity of all these lies in this, that they all are in their actions subject to a law, an ordinance, a statute of God, which they keep; and from this consideration concerning them and other fellow-creatures doth David raise himself and others unto obedience, Ps. 119:89–91. His scope is in that psalm, and round about those verses, to shew that himself, a king, and all that are truly righteous, do live and act by the law and word; and he confirms himself and them in their obedience and allegiance, by what is common with them to the whole creation. God hath not

(says he) given a word, a law and ordinances, and institutions only to men, but his word is established in heaven, and all the stars observe his ordinances, and are his servants; and which is the wonder of it, they continue to this day according to his ordinance. These heavenly peers, from the sun to the least star, never transgressed the least constitution of his during three thousand years (as this place gives testimony in David's time) nor during two thousand and an half to our times. There is not a star hath crept an hair's-breadth out of the stage and course God set it in to run; the sun nor moon never failed (but when God once or twice extraordinarily commanded them in Joshua and Hezekiah's time) of the minute appointed them for their going down. It knows its going down, Ps. 104:19, it moves, it winds about from one end of the heavens to the other, from south to north in a peer;\* and yet when it comes to the tropic, twenty-three degrees from the equinoctial, which is twice in the year, in summer when at the highest, and in winter when at lowest, it stirs not an hair's-breadth further, but returns back again (as a servant or confined person that is limited in his walk and pale), though it hath the whole heaven before it to expatiate in; yea, and though it walks about the world in a day. David gives the reason of it; it is God's servant. And the souls of men—as they are more active and more noble, so they needed more rules and laws to regulate their actions. The soul hath as spacious a course as the sun in the heavens. 'The law of God is exceeding broad,' says David, to sport and delight ourselves therein, as the great waters are to the whales to play, and tumble up and down in them; and yet this noble creature, which in activity exceeds all other of this world, is not lawless; but its perfection lies in this, that all its activity be exercised in the law and word of God, as the rule of it.

3dly. It is the end of inherent grace in the soul, and of our union with God, that we should be doers of the word, as needles are touched with a loadstone, that they may point due north. Sin is a weakener, and yet we see how active it is. How mad are men of their sports; they sleep not if they have not done mischief, and 'commit uncleanness with greediness,' Eph. 4:19; and yet the life of sin is but

deadness. But grace is life: 'You hath he quickened,' Eph. 2:1; it is strength: 'Strength in the inward man,' Eph. 4; a likeness to God, and therefore active: 'A workmanship created to good works which he before ordained we should walk in,' Eph. 2:10.

4thly. As an holy activity is the nature of grace, and the soul of it, so the perfection of it; as it is the health of the body to act and stir according to the laws of nature, as to eat, drink, &c. Grace is called 'the perfect law of liberty,' James 1:25, and it makes the man of God [perfect], so that he who continues in it is blessed in his deed: Prov. 16:17, 'He that keeps his way keeps his soul;' he that goes out of it is robbed of it. His fruit is in holiness, and 'in keeping the commands is his great reward.' Yea, the word itself, so far as you receive it into your hearts, is an active thing. If you have it but in your consciences, you cannot be quiet for it, it will put you upon doing, and it will accuse and excuse accordingly, as you obey or disobey it: Rom. 2:15, It 'shews the work of the law written in their hearts,' and it works there, and all truth would break out in practice, if men did not 'imprison it' (so Rom. 1:18, the word imports). But if it have a place in the heart and the affections, it shews itself to be 'the word of life' indeed, Philip. 2:16, that would break out into the life. It is quick and powerful; 'Thy word was as fire in my bones,' says the prophet, Jer. 20:9, 'and I was weary of forbearing, and could not stay.' You carry fire in your bosoms, and fire will not be smothered.

## **BOOK IV: The danger of a loose, careless, and unfruitful profession**

The danger of a loose, careless, and unfruitful profession; or the danger of men's living under the dispensation and enjoyment of the ordinances of the gospel; viz., the preaching of the word, the



sacrament of the Lord's supper, and church communion, if they live in sin, indulge their lusts, or be unfruitful.—Two cases resolved: 1. How far a regenerate man is capable of sinning against knowledge; 2. Wherein the sin against the Holy Ghost differs from other sins against knowledge.

## CHAPTER I

The text in Heb. 6:7, 8, explained, with some observations from it.

For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: but that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose and is to be burned.—HEB. 6:7, 8.

MY design is to convince men of what great moment and consequence the ordinances of God are to the souls of them that live under the dispensation of them, for a blessing or a curse, according as they are fruitful and obedient under them and improving of them, or remiss and negligent; and by this consideration, to move them to all strictness and holiness of conversation. To this end I have taken this text.

1. The apostle speaks to professors that had long lived under the doctrine and means of salvation, who yet had made but small proficiency. Thus he speaks in the foregoing chapter, ver. 12, 'Whenas for the time ye ought to be teachers, you have need of one to teach you again which be the first principles.' Yea, and they were fallen back to this (as those words imply), to become 'such as have need of milk.' Whereupon he exhorts them, chap. 6:1, to 'go on to perfection,' namely, both in knowledge and holiness.

2. And he lays before them the danger that professors are in, if the means of grace have not their due effect; and this danger he sets

before them in the example of many that have been enlightened and fall away, and are never renewed again to repentance.

3. He represents the condition of men under a similitude of the earth (to which he compares men's hearts), when it either proves fruitful or barren. Those hearts that drink in the rain and bring forth fruit, have a blessing to bring forth more fruit; and, on the contrary, that earth or those hearts that bring forth thorns upon often drinking in that rain, are rejected and then cursed. The equity of this proceeding is taken from the same and like law, that by the same reason the fruitful should receive a blessing, by the same the unfruitful should have a rejection, for so both God and man use to do with the earth in like cases. When man hath bestowed his pains to till it, and God seconding man's labour hath sent his rain upon it, and it brings forth nothing but thorns, then it comes to pass, and that deservedly, that man rejects it (as the word is) and God curseth it; and the end or issue of it, is to be burned, together with its thorns.

I shall now open the particulars of this similitude, and unto what the allusion thereof should refer. Here is earth bringing forth of thorns, upon having the rain falling on it, rejected, cursed, and whose end is to be burnt, and the estate of men that fall away compared thereunto. What is there in other scriptures?

No one place will help us to understand all of these jointly, but some places will give light unto the one, some unto the other.

More immediately Paul had in his eye the parable of our Saviour concerning the thorny ground: Mat. 13:22, 23, 'He also that received seed amongst the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.' The thorny ground, the third ground, as it is

termed, notes out the highest sort of those temporaries that fall away; and answerably, it is the highest sort of those temporaries, and the eminentest gifts of them, Paul had been speaking of: ver. 4, 'For it is impossible that those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,' &c. And as Christ there differenceth a good hearer's heart (the fourth ground) from this thorny ground, that the good earth receives the word, brings forth fruit sixty and an hundredfold, so answerably in this place, the earth that is fruitful is said to be blessed, that is, to bring forth more fruit, but that which doth not is cursed and rejected. And again, as in the parable of the thorny ground this is added, that 'they bring not fruit to perfection,' that is, mature, kindly ripe, Luke 8:14, so upon this place interpreters have generally made the like observations, that of the good earth it is here said, *τίκτουσα*, it begets its fruits, brings them forth as a mature birth; of the other, the thorny, it is said, *ἐκφέρουσα*, it casts them out as abortive; so Grotius. And the different cause of these events in both places is in like manner resolved into the difference of the soil itself; for in all these sorts of grounds the seed sown is the same, the rain that falls the same; but there are said to be thorns in the one, that is, the roots of lusts remaining unpulled up, and these grow up again after the tops have been cut off, and insensibly draw away the sap, and so their hearts are never regenerated. The other is a good ground or soil, where lusts are parted with, and the heart changed, 2 Peter 1:14, and 'made partaker of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.' And thus Paul distinguisheth of these here, declaring professedly, that those that fall away never had true and saving graces: 'We hope better things of you, and things that accompany salvation,' instancing in their 'labour of love,' which the enlightenings in those other had not. Paul's hope of these hearers, that the issue of them would be different from the other, lay in this, that although their standing at a stay and not thriving was a shrewd, ill sign, yet notwithstanding that, he believed that they should never so apostatise as those others had done, because this apostasy befalls only those that never had honest and changed hearts, nor a work

that had salvation in it; but he hopes better things of them, and to have been wrought in them, and things that have salvation annexed to them; as if he had said, When I consider that first work upon you, how sound and thorough it was: Heb. 10:32–34, 'When I but call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; partly, whilst ye were made a gazing-stock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. For ye had compassion of me in bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.' He knew God would certainly revive them again; but yet in the mean time, to quicken them, he lays before them, and minds them of the example of those that fall away.

2. That other part of the similitude, 'the earth that brings forth thorns is nigh unto cursing,' alludes manifestly to the state of the earth before the fall, and after the fall, compared together. Before the fall, the earth was so blessed of God, that it was fruitful with very small pains, by virtue of that first word of blessing, Gen. 1. Paradise is termed the garden of God, because so eminently blessed of God. And thus it is with man's heart: his soul was planted, in the original constitution of it, a paradise unto God, planted with a right seed, out of which all graces rose up and grew, and man so long inherited a blessing from God; but falling from God, then, on the contrary, to shew how cursed man himself was, God cursed the very earth itself to bring forth thorns. Now as Adam was a type of Christ, and his world of Christ's world, so even this instance also represents what falls out under the dispensation of the gospel. Although man be fallen in Adam, yet to them that live under the gospel God sends his word and Spirit to manure them once more, and try if they will be fruitful (so you have it both in Isa. 5 and in the parable of the vineyard) God sends messengers and dressers early and late; and now the second time of itself it brings forth thorns, then (as of trees, Jude says, ver. 12) it is 'twice dead,' and so twice cursed, first in Adam through his fall, then by their falling from a second work which they have lost.

3. For that other piece of the similitude, 'whose end is to be burnt.' It may be an allusion to the condition of the earth in Sodom and Gomorrah; for as the inhabitants of those cities are made types of men under the gospel, Jude 7, so here their land or earth may also be supposed to be so. Now, Gen. 13:10, it is said of that land for the fruitfulness of it, that it was 'watered as the garden of God.' So then, as the inhabitants of that land, the men of Sodom, are in Jude made 'examples of the vengeance of hell fire,' so the curse that befell that earth for their sakes, that was once the nearest resemblance of the earth in the state of innocency, may be considered to have been singled out by God to make it the shadow of the hearts of those most eminent professors, whom proving unfruitful, God above all other curseth. For, lo, this place and soil is not only turned into a barren wilderness, as the psalmist threatens, but into a lake (as hell is called) of brimstone. The vapours which arise out of it do kill all the birds that fly over it; and the apples that grow on the banks thereof to this day are a proverb, 'apples of Sodom,' looking fair, but falling to dust when touched, and all things burnt and blasted. And unto this earth, thus cursed and burnt up, doth the apostle here compare the hearts of the apostates cursed for being unfruitful and unworthy, abusing the means of grace.

4. There is one thing yet more that, in prosecution of this similitude, he compares the means of grace which these enjoy unto: (1.) rain; (2.) the tillage or manurement of it, 'the earth that oft drinks in the rain, and is dressed.' This of the rain I know some apply to the preaching of the word, which is compared by Moses to the rain, Deut. 32:2, and Isa. 55:10; yet I rather take it, that here the apostle doth in this intend two sorts of means vouchsafed to men's spirits, whereof the one he compares to the rain which comes immediately from heaven, the other to that of man's work in manuring and tilling the earth—so noting out distinctly inward influences, illapses, and dews of the Spirit by the rain; and denoting means outward dispensed by man's ministry by the other, as sacraments, preaching, admonition, or the like. And my reason is, because look as the things themselves in the similitude itself are different, the rain is

from heaven, which God alone can give (who is thereby distinguished from the idol gods that cannot give rain), whereas the dressing, planting, yea, watering with waterpots,—Paul plants, Apollos waters,—are the works of man, and so a different means from that of the rain which God gives immediately; so answerably, in the means or dispensations vouchsafed by God, signified by these unto men living under the gospel, I observe how Paul doth as distinctly mention two sorts of them in the former part of his discourse: 1. Inward, a being enlightened, a partaking of the heavenly gift, and of the Holy Ghost. 2. Outward, teachings by men, Heb. 5:12, which also that passage, having 'tasted of the good word of God,' that is, of the gospel as preached by men, implies. And so the two parts of the similitude of my text (verses 7, 8) correspond fitly with those two parts of dispensations by God vouchsafed (verses 4–6), for even unregenerate men partake of the Holy Ghost, as rain and water from heaven, and it falls as the rain both on the hearts of bad as well as good.

I shall now add two sorts of observations, whereof the one concerns the ground that is cursed, the other the good ground, where true grace accompanying salvation is wrought.

Obs. 1. First concerning the bad ground that is cursed, observe, that in carnal hearts all influences from heaven and means outward administered, do but nourish self, and in the end their lusts, although by accident, as Paul speaks of the law's causing sin, Rom. 7:7. The rain causeth briars to grow as well as corn and fruits, and a poisoned plant turns the rain into poison. Thus men turn grace into wantonness and presumption, and the power of men's lusts prevail over all such enlightenings. The thorns did not only overtop, outgrow, and choke the gifts and graces given, but did convert and turn the actings of those gifts into thorns. The rain rots dead oaks in the end, and so do the means these.

Obs. 2. That God, in rejecting such as are more deeply enlightened, proceedeth by degrees, and not until they have oft drunk in much

means. So also the parable of the fig-tree holds forth, Luke 13:8; he first stayed two years, then afterwards one year longer, and digged and dunged it. He goes on by degrees: as, 1, he deserts it, which is here intimated by being nigh to cursing, that is, by withdrawments, in comparison unto what he once afforded in drawing nigh to them; then, 2, he curseth with final rejection, if they become such as God hath no pleasure in, which he shews by being more strange to them; yet he doth not presently curse them, though they are next door to it, as the word nigh here implies, and as it is elsewhere taken, Luke 21:30, 31.

Obs. 3. That in this life God may curse such men, when it is along while after that they are burnt and cast to hell. That indeed is the end of all, but it may come long after cursing. Thus the fig-tree, Mat. 21:19, stood above ground after it was cursed; and thus God aware against the Israelites in the wilderness long afore they died, 'that they should not enter into his rest.'

The second sort of observations are concerning the elect, those that here are supposed to have good hearts.

Obs. 1. That although they may stand long at a stay, and seem to go backward, yet God will not take the like advantage of them in the end. This is evident from this instance here. Many of these Hebrews that still professed were such, as 'for the time they might have been teachers;' and yet they still needed milk, the lowest nourishment, they needed even the first principles to be taught them. Yea, it is added in that 12th verse, that they 'were become such as needed milk.' Even as old men that are decayed come to live most on milk again, their stomachs are so weak, and so are these too decayed in strength and appetite to things holy. These deserved that cursing that was executed upon those others, that by such degrees fell off; but yet the apostle says, 'We hope better things of you,' for 'God is not unmindful of your labour of love,' &c., which they formerly had. They had such a work, which (as he loved\*) would again revive, and yet he sets this severe dealing of God's with others before them to

quicken them, this being in itself an ill sign in any, and shewed they were nigh unto cursing, and had best look to it. Solomon committed the same sin against Jeroboam, whom God set up, that Saul did against David, and yet God pardoned the one and cast off the other. And the reason is, because God treats in his dispensations of grace to the one according to the tenor of a covenant of works, but with the other according to the covenant of grace, which, Heb. 8:9, 10, is differenced thus, 'Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.'

Obs. 2. That even to good hearts the blessing of much fruit is not at first or presently vouchsafed, until they have oft drunk in the rain, and then a blessing from God comes, as it is said, Heb. 12:11, of affliction, that 'afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.' It is afterwards, not presently, and after having been exercised thereby long.

Obs. 3. That the heavenly influence by ordinances compared here to the rain, is not always violent or sudden, but gentle and sweet. It sends down τὸ ὑετὸν, molliores et minores guttas (so Hyperius observes the word here used is), signifying that smaller rain that falls softly, wets and soaks in by degrees, as Moses in Deuteronomy compares the word: 'Deut. 32:2, 'My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew; as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass.' And in Isa. 55:10, the word is compared both to the snow and the rain; the snow always falls gently and so soft, that if a man were blind he would scarce discern its falling. The rain sometimes falls more violently; and the snow lies often long upon the ground unmelted as it fell; but then a thaw



comes and melts it, and it soaks by degrees into the earth, and serves to make it fruitful as well as the rain. So ordinances work often not so much by violent but still impressions, as they after the habit of the mind, as a diet drink doth that of the body, and work not as vomits, purges, or such like violent physic. For impressions that are violent have their violence from the stirring of self in men's hearts (which is an impetuous principle when once raised), and not from grace.

## CHAPTER II

That our worthy and suitable living under the ordinances of the gospel brings a blessing, but the contrary a curse on our souls.—The danger of those who, living under the preaching of the word of God, indulge their lusts, or are unfruitful.

The last and main observation is this, that our worthy or unworthy living under the outward ordinances of the gospel, and those dews that accompany them, especially the word of God, is of infinite moment and consequence for blessing, or a curse unto men's souls; and therefore men should be wary how they deal with them.

I take in both sorts of means: 1. The rain; 2. The labour of the husbandman; and add especially the word, for he speaks there especially of the doctrine of salvation. There are those that look for rain immediately and alone from heaven, but they shall never have the benefit of it, if they neglect or despise the means that are needful to make the ground fertile. Paul plants, Apollos waters, God gives the increase, but by their watering and planting; and therefore they are said to be co-workers with God, 1 Cor. 3:9.

To make the main observation good, I shall go over the instances of all outward ordinances of the gospel, and shew the danger of neglect in making due improvement of any of them.

1. In the beginning of the gospel and the first dawning of it, when the kingdom of heaven was but at hand, John Baptist came preaching and baptizing. 'The law and the prophets were until John, but now the gospel is preached,' says Christ, Luke 16:16, and one seal thereof, and but one, viz., baptism, was administered together with it. Now see and consider what a more severe warning John gives thereupon, both to the receivers or the rejecters of it. Now 'bring forth,' says he, 'fruits worthy of repentance.' Now nothing will do but fruits worthy, that is, suitable, answerable to the profession of repentance, which by so powerful a means and ordinance God called for and required. By fruits worthy is meant, that they should behave themselves like to true penitents (as, Luke 12:36, the phrase is), like unto men that wait. The words here in the text, 'fruits meet,' help to expound it. Fruits meet are such that are proportioned to the cost; as when he elsewhere says, Walk worthy of the gospel, because now God will not bear so long as formerly, for 'now the axe is laid to the root.' If before, when you sinned against the dispensation of the law and the institutions of it, God punished with temporal punishments, and did only lop off the branches, and did not smite the root, the spirit, but the outward man was then perhaps smitten, and it may be it was long first too; yet now the axe is laid to the root, that is (as I take it), to men's souls; for he compares the persons of men to trees, and the soul is the fountain of life, as the root is to the body of the tree. In the old law men were caused in the field, and in the bushel; but now they are cursed in the church, at a sacrament or sermon. And he says now, to shew that God will not stay long with the most of men, ere he strike their souls with hardness and impenitency. Every word is in the present, the axe is laid, not shall be; every blow, inward check, and motion tends to ruin, if there be not fruitfulness. The unfruitful tree is cut down, is cast into the fire, as elsewhere it is said, 'He that believes not is damned already,' John 3:18. God takes less time to despatch men's souls, makes quick work with them, and either hardens or softens them. These threatenings (I take it) are not spoken of Jerusalem's destruction, and rooting up the nation; that was forty years after; but this here is threatened more speedily to the persons he speaks to. 'Every tree in

particular shall be cut down, and cast into the fire, even to hell.' All this John says of his baptism, and the doctrine that accompanied it, to forewarn them that if they took that engagement upon them, they should consider what they did. But then the Pharisees thought with themselves, if your baptism be such an edge-tool to cut to the roots, we will not meddle with it, and so avoid the curse you threaten. Hear what he says of them, and let all learn to fear and tremble; Christ says of the Pharisees, Luke 7:30, that 'they rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of John.' This baptism, thus requiring and obliging unto true repentance and regeneration those that received it, was called 'the counsel of God,' because it was that which by God's counsel or institution was appointed for their salvation. But seeing that in the end and intent of it as appointed by God, it required repentance and fruits worthy of amendment of life, they chose to reject it, they slighted or rejected it, it was against themselves they did this, and to their own ruin; and so their rejecting of it God took more heinously at their hands than others' unfruitfulness and impenitence that received it.

2. Of Christ's ministry, that followed upon John's, Luke 3:16, 17, it is said, 'He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner,' &c. That fanning there is in this life, for it is of the corn whilst in the floor (if you mark it), afore it be laid up in the garner, heaven; and by it is meant the speedy discovery and separation that Christ makes by his Spirit of the spirits of men by spiritual judgments for neglecting the means, and thereby severing temporary believers from true, leading them forth with the workers of iniquity. Others take this fanning for that discovery which shall be made at the day of judgment; but to me it seems clear to be in this life, whilst the corn is in the floor, as the several degrees of this comparison do shew. The first whereof is the bringing in the corn into the visible church or outward profession, which in the analogy of this comparison is as the harvest. Answerable is that speech of Christ, 'The harvest is great'—that is, many are to be brought in—'but the labourers are few.' 'The regions,'

saith he, 'are white to the harvest:' this was spoken when men yet stood as corn in the field, not reaped, but ripe for it; and the harvest was the bringing them in. The next to this is that fanning here spoken of, and the thrashing and fanning in the floor are the means used after they are come in. Then the third and last thing is the laying them up safe in heaven till the latter day, which is called 'gathering them into his garner.' Now, this fanning or severing here in the floor is more expressly intended of temporaries than of men loose or worldly; for it is the chaff whom the fan is said to deal withal, not the tares. And the harvest to which the preaching the word is compared, calls men out from the world; but this fanning is of the chaff brought in by the harvest, and it is severing it from the corn. So then Christ prepares in this life for the day of judgment, severs, discovers men here; and he does it by the fan in his hand, the Spirit accompanying his outward administrations. I shall close this of Christ's ministry with that dreadful prophecy of Malachi, prophesying of the ministry of John Baptist that foreran, and also of Christ that followed. How terribly doth he speak of both as of a day of judgment! 'Who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and the fuller's soap,' Mal. 3:2. And in verse 5 saith he, 'I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against the false swearers.' And chap. 4:1 he says, 'Behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall be stubble.' This bright and hot season of the gospel ministry and ordinances concluded the rejecters under a state of hardness and condemnation more than ages before had done.

3. As to hearing the word preached by ministers to the end of the world, Christ in many parables gave great warnings concerning it, but more eminently in Luke 8:18, 'Take heed therefore how ye hear, for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken, even that which he seemeth to have.' Compare this with Mark 4:24, 'Take heed what you hear, with what measure you mete it shall be measured to you, and unto you that

hear shall more be given.' He had shewed in the foregoing parable (as here in the text) the state of the stony and thorny-ground hearers and professors, and his conclusion or inference from thence is, Therefore take heed how and what you hear. I may add, from the drift and connection, take heed what kind of hearers you be.

(1.) What kind, for of four sorts but one is good; and therefore be solicitous that you have good and honest hearts, such as the fourth ground had.

(2.) Take heed what you hear, Mark 4:24; that is, take heed to give answerable attendance to the weight of the matter, according as it falls out to be delivered, for these are the 'great things of the law.' And he adds a reason, 'with what measure,' &c. God deals in a proportion; look what from a sermon one gets and brings again with him to the next, that will cause an increase by the next, else there is danger of a decrease.

(3.) Take heed how ye hear; and Christ's reason in Luke is, 'To him that hath' (that is, useth that which he hath received by hearing well), 'to him shall be given.' For so Matthew, speaking of the talents, warrants us to interpret it: 'Whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away what he hath,' Mat. 25:28, 29. He that used not his talents is said not to have it, which is thereupon given to others, even what thou shouldst have had, but through careless neglect hast missed it.

Unto this so grave and solemn a caveat of our Lord and Saviour, add the consideration of these dreadful properties and efficacies and operations of the word set before us by the apostle, on purpose to make us know and understand of what moment and consequence it is unto us, how we shall have to do therewith; Heb. 4:12, 'For the word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discoverer of the thoughts and intents of the heart.' In the 2d and 3d chapters and beginning of

this, he had given abundant warning to take heed of neglecting the word that was preached to them, and to enforce it in this verse, bids them consider what a word they had to do withal; it is a living word, it is a quick word, and an eternal word. And therefore, as the apostle says, chap. 10:31, 'It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God;' so say I of the living word, it revived the sense of sin; when the light of it came into Paul's conscience, 'then I died,' says he, Rom. 7. As some metals will not melt till some other metal be put to them, so nor will sins melt or dissolve into the conscience till the word comes as fire and mingles with them; and when God sets it on work again, then it runs through the soul like hail shot, or like quicksilver.

It is a living word also in this respect, that it is eternal. You may think it vanisheth with our breath, but it lives for ever, and your thoughts will have to do with it for ever: 1 Peter 1:23, 'The word of God abides for ever.' And if you ask what word it is, even that, says Peter, which we preach to you. What if the word is conveyed and set on in that ordinance of preaching, if it is written in the heart, it goes to heaven with you; if it is neglected, yet the Holy Ghost will bring it to your remembrance, and so it will abide and go to hell with you. You shall repeat sermons enough there, and the sermons will be the doctrine, and all your sins will serve for matter of uses of terror and dread for ever; Isa. 55, 'His word shall not return empty or in vain.'

2. The apostle adds in Heb. 4, that the word is mighty in operation; as in its own nature it is all life and spirit, so it is in operation. It will exquisitely torture, and become an executioner of men in hell: 'it divides,' says he, 'between the marrow and the bones,' which expresseth the most exquisite pains. God's wrath and his word do torment men for ever in hell: 2 Cor. 10:6, 'It hath in a readiness to avenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.' He compares it there to an armoury of weapons and instruments of death of all sorts, that are made ready (as the Psalmist speaks) and laid up to be brought forth. And the apostle there suggests to men's consideration what mighty effects it will at last have in avenging all

disobedience, by what in the mean time it hath in converting and bringing the godly into obedience, and in subduing their lusts. 'It is mighty, 'says he there, 'in casting down strongholds, and high towering imaginations.' Have you seen hurricane winds or earthquakes as they are in some parts of the world, that overthrow towers to the very foundations, tear up hills by the roots and throw them into the sea, toss up ships riding at anchor like tennis balls, and hurl them upon the dry land? Or have you considered the power of lightning, when it breaks the bottles that hold it, or thunder when it roars in the midst of heaven, blasting every green thing where it lights, and withering them to a deadness in an instant, shivering the mightiest trees to splinters, disheveling and tearing off the bark, drinking up the vital sap? Such and so great (though not so visible to the outward view or present sense) is the power of the word. 'The voice of the crier cries, 'All flesh is grass,' and instantly 'the Spirit of the Lord blows upon it,' withers all the glory of the world to a believing soul, and 'every valley is filled, every mountain is brought low.' It tears men's hearts rooted in evil (as low as the centre of them) from their dearest lusts; it makes their consciences to boil as a pot, and the waves thereof to roar, and then with one word stills them, and calms the winds and the waves, and they obey it, and the heart is pacified. As an hammer it breaks the rocks, and as fire it melts the elements with fervent heat, melts and dissolves the most rocky, stony, and stubborn heart to water, and works it to such a softness as fits it to take any impression. Now the apostle from hence argues (as you see) the operations upon the godly in this world, in their conversions, to bring them to obedience; and the same word will be as mighty to revenge when your obedience is fulfilled, the word hath had its full work upon all the saints; until then, these energies of it upon the hearts of wicked men are suspended; but then it will work as powerfully another way, yea, more powerfully, in avenging, because it will take hold of the whole that is in them, which is nothing but matter for it to work upon; and it will work at once, whereas on the godly it works gently and but by degrees. Look, as strong physic, if it works not to purging out humours, works out to death and tortures, so in the godly, their

lusts are purged by the word here, but in the souls of others it works pain and anguish. 'He shall slay the wicked by the breath of his mouth.' This sword which comes out of Christ's mouth (Rev., chap. 1 and chap. 19) will cut (Acts 7:54) to the heart, and divide between the marrow and bones, and will be directed by his skill that gave it, and that knows how to torture exquisitely by it, and who knows what parts are most sensible, and who will apply it to them. Both the word of God and the wrath of God are compared to fire: Jer. 5:14, 'I will make the words of thy mouth as fire, and this people as stubble, and they shall devour them.' Fire came out of the witnesses' mouths, Rev. 11:5, the word spoken by them, which kindles the fire of hell in men's souls, and devours the adversaries; and therefore take heed how ye hear. If you were to take some desperate remedy that hath a danger in it, ends or mends (as quicksilver in some cases), how wary would you be to take it right! Such if this word, and every portion of it; therefore take heed how ye hear. Men feel not this now, nor do they imagine what a design God hath upon men in this disposition of hearing and preaching. He prepares and lays a train for the other world; yea, and this instrumentality serves to all his designs upon the ungodly that obey not his word.

1. It prepares for the great assize at the last day, by sending out hue and cry after wicked men, whose damnation pronounced slumbers not nor lingers, 2 Peter 2:3. It also makes inquisition for blood, adultery, and all other sins, finds them out, and in God's name arrests the offender: these things hast thou done, and thinkest thou to escape? It is a swift witness against the adulterer and forswearer, Mal. 3, because when they go to commit these sins, it comes in and says, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery,' &c. Also, it serves to bind men over to hell even whilst in this life. As the truth of the gospel makes the believers free indeed, as Christ says, John 8:32, so it claps irons upon others, and binds them over to the great assize. It is as the coroner's inquest that prepares the indictment for that day; as the devils are reserved in chains (as Jude speaks), so wicked men by the cords of this word; for whose sins we bind (if they repent not) they are bound in heaven. The word makes men's mittimus



for hell, that prison Peter speaks of, and wicked men resent this sufficiently, which causeth their opposition against it. It is to them the savour of death unto death, which strikes them dead even here, as many poisonous vapours in caves and caverns use to do.

2. At the latter day the word will do its office yet farther.

(1.) Then the word will be the discoverer of all sins known and unknown. It searcheth the heart and reins, Heb. 4. It penetrates the thoughts and intents of the heart; and as a searching drug gathers all the humours into the stomach, so will this word gather the sad remembrance of all sins into the conscience; or as angels will gather together men's persons, so will the word gather thy sins from all the four corners of the world, in what place soever committed.

(2.) It will be men's judge: John 12:48, 'He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him at the last day.' As if Christ had said, I shall not need to judge, my word will do it.

## CHAPTER III

The danger of those who, being partakers of the sacrament of the Lord's supper, do by ungodly or unfruitful lives act contrary to the institution and design of that ordinance.

Moreover, brethren, I would not that you should be ignorant, how that our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink (for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ): but with many of them God was not well pleased; for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were

some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.—  
1 COR. 10:1–12.

The proper scope of this scripture is to set forth the high provocation and extremity of danger for men to live in their lusts, while they profess and partake of those two great ordinances, baptism and the Lord's supper. The coherence and carrying on of his discourse was this: In the 6th and 8th chapters, he had setly by many arguments dehorted them, both from corporal and spiritual fornication; the spiritual was the eating in the idol's temple. Then, making a digression in the 7th chapter, to decide cases about marriage (which was appointed as the remedy against fornication), in the 9th chapter he also closeth with a vehement exhortation unto the subduing and keeping under of every lust; ver. 25–27, 'Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.' And this is (as you read) or necessity unto the partaking of salvation. Now then, to enforce both those particular exhortations against those two sins, as also this general exhortation occasioned thereby unto an universal strictness and watchfulness, he lays before them (and insists upon it) the great and solemn obligation which their profession or having been baptized, and their usual partaking and communication of the body and blood of Christ, did put upon them; yea, and he prosecutes this up and down, and leaves it not till unto the end of the 11th chapter.

And he enforceth the obligation which lies upon us Christians from the evident example of the Israelitish church in the wilderness. And here I observe how throughout the epistles of Paul, Jude, and Peter, the state of that church, when in the wilderness, is more eminently set out, as the most lively shadow and type of the condition and state of the people of God under the gospel, because the whole time of our lives after conversion is a passage from out of the state of nature to the heavenly Canaan. Now these Israelites enjoyed for substance the like ordinances unto those two of ours, baptism and the Lord's supper, and yet indulged their lusts, yea, those very lusts from which he had in those fore-mentioned chapters so earnestly dehorted these Corinthians, namely, idolatry, ver. 7, fornication, ver. 8, remonstrating how God had in wrath, upon that very consideration of their living under such ordinances, broken forth upon them, had overthrown and destroyed them, and that therefore, under the gospel, the neglecters and profaners of these gospel ordinances must proportionably expect a sorer and severer punishment, by how much our ordinances exceed theirs in glory, evidence, and spiritualness. This scripture therefore is punctual to this argument in hand, and is indeed here handled tanquam in propriâ sede, as all other truths of concernment for the most part are in some one designed scripture or other.

I shall draw forth all the several particulars therein, unto these five ranks or heads.

1. That the Jewish church in the wilderness did enjoy, for the pith and kernel of them (although the fleshly rind or shell was thicker and more gross, and of a larger bigness than ours), the same ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper as we do now under the gospel; for he terms them twice the same in substance: ver. 3, 'They all did eat of the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink,' ver. 4. This sameness of them was then represented in a near outward likeness and distinct resemblance, even of the very two parts of our Lord's supper, as well as in a resemblance of that of baptism. Our Lord's supper hath two parts,

or rather a distinct reiterated representation of Christ, in his body as food, in his blood as drink, 1 Cor. 11:24, 25. So, in like manner, he finds out both these as distinct in their dispensations then; for the manna, the type of Christ's body, who is the man from heaven, was their food, and their drink was the water out of the rock, the type of that water and blood which came forth of Christ's side, as John for the history of it avers with a great solemn note of observancy in his gospel, and interprets it for the mystery of it in his Epistle. And you may observe again here, how that to the end he might thus more evidently hold forth this sameness, and the parallel of their sacraments to ours, he omitteth the mention of circumcision and the passover (which yet were the standing ordinances of that church, both in the wilderness and afterwards), because these, though the preceding types of our sacraments, yet in respect of an outward likeness were more dark and cloudy. And he chooseth rather those which were but occasionally and extraordinary, and only in the wilderness. For as I said afore, that the estate of that church, whilst in the wilderness, was the liveliest and most momentary\* type of the gospel times, so also those sacraments extraordinarily and peculiarly to them administered, were types of these of ours. They came near the life, both in the distinction of the parts of them, and outward resemblances to every common eye and first view. The sprinkling or mizzling of the rain in the cloud, and going through the water of the Red Sea, was even to the vulgar view a visible baptizing. It had the resemblance and appearance which circumcision had not, unless to a more spiritual artist's eye, that could discern the proportions of the one and other. And again, their eating manna as bread from heaven, and their drinking of that rock, doth bear and carry more of likeness to our bread broken, and cup we drink of, in the outward appearance thereof. And it is an argument of no small weight against the papist, both for the number of sacraments, that there are but two (because the Jews had but of these two sorts answering to our two, but all, whether ordinary or extraordinary, are reduced unto two), as also for the cup or communication of this spiritual drink as well to all the people of God, without confining it to the priests or Levites, as of the bread,

for so in their dispensation of it it was typified. 'They did all eat the same spiritual meat, and they did all drink the same spiritual drink, even as well as all were baptized,' &c., which ingenious Estius seems to acknowledge to be the mind of that ensuing passage, 1 Cor. 12:13, 'By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, and have been all made to drink into one spirit.' It alludes, says he, to the cup in the sacrament.

2. The apostle sets before these Corinthians, how greatly God was displeased with these Israelites that lived and continued in those sins, aggravated and made far more sinful by the participation of such ordinances: ver. 5, 'With many of them God was not well pleased.' He says indeed no more, but thereby means to express the highest displeasure; as in like phrase he speaks of apostates from God and Christ: Heb. 10:38, 39, 'If any man withdraw, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.' But is that all? No; but of all other men in the world, God's wrath and fury doth smoke against such a man, Deut. 29, as of all men an apostate is most hated by him. And as the reason of this so sore a displeasure, he insinuates withal that one speech, that that manna and rock, &c., were Christ: ver. 4, 'That Rock was Christ;' that is, it signified, represented, and exhibited our Christ to them, and it is therefore called a spiritual rock. As our sacraments are not Christ bodily or personally, but spiritually, that is, mysteriously in signification and representation to our faith, as was also the brazen serpent. Jesus in the heavens, and that hung on the cross, is Christ personally; the church, his body, of which he is the head, 1 Cor. 12, is Christ mystically; the sacraments are Christ mysteriously or spiritually, so as in them we see and behold Christ really and spiritually, partake of him, and have to do with him as if we were present with him: Gal. 3:1, 'Before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth crucified among you;' that is, as really as if he had been crucified among them, as he was once at Jerusalem. One would wonder that so plain and express a saying, 'That Rock was Christ,' should not have decided Christ's meaning in that like speech of his touching the same thing, 'This is my body, this is my blood,' both being spoken in the same sense, and no

other. Now that rock was Christ significantly and mysteriously, and the papists themselves dare not say the rock was the flesh and blood of Christ transubstantiated. Hence then it was that the Israelites in all their sinnings offered an open affront and contempt to that Christ, whom sacramentally they did eat and drink every day, and discerned not the Lord's body in it; and therefore, ver. 9, they are said to have tempted Christ, so as hereby it came to pass their sins were not barely transgressions of the law which was given them, but they were aggravated by this, that they therein undervalued that Christ, who was held forth to them, though but in those shadows.

3. He sets before them the severity of the punishments that befell them, which he alleged as tokens how highly God was displeased with them. For in those days God shewed and manifested the proportions or degrees of his wrath upon men's sinning, by the visible and extraordinary punishments he executed. His expressions of those punishments are, 'they fell,' ver. 8, 'they were overthrown,' ver. 5; both do import violent deaths, as of twenty-three thousand in one day. They died not as other men, but were taken away in heaps by the immediate hand of God. Then again it is said, 'For murmuring they were destroyed of the destroyer,' ver. 10. Now Heb. 11:28 compared with this tells us that the destroyers were some of the angels (whether good or had I dispute not) who killed the Egyptians outright at the passover; you find it also Exod. 12:23; and thus in like manner is this to be understood.

4. He plainly applies and bringeth all this home to the Corinthians, as living under the same and more spiritual sacraments that represented Christ.

(1.) That he applies all this to them his preface imports: ver. 1, 'Moreover, brethren, I would not have you ignorant, how that all our fathers were baptized,' &c.; that is, moreover, or over and above other considerations afore delivered to move you to strictness, I would have you lay to heart deeply the examples of God's former

dealings with others, yea, of those that were therein your fathers, and you their children, in whose sins therefore if you tread, you, as their children, shall be sure to reap from God punishments answerable; as the threatening in the second commandment given about ordinances runs, 'I will visit the sins of the fathers on their children.' And then in prosecution of this he further urgeth, that they and these Israelites had the same, the very same, ordinances for substance which he inculcates twice, ver. 3, 4. And indeed the whole discourse is bottomed upon that supposition, and had otherwise not been to the purpose, his scope being that they therefore must expect the same or sorer punishments, committing the same sins, aggravated by this, that they lived under the same ordinances. But yet, moreover, he brings all home to them: ver. 6, 'Now these things were our examples,' or types of us, 'to the intent we should not lust after evil things.' This nail driven thus home fastens an upon them. These things ταῦτα, were τύποι ἡμῶν, types [of us].

[1.] Prophetical, for types have the nature of prophecies to be fulfilled (as Adam was a type of Christ, Rom. 5:14), and so did foretell, that under the gospel many professing strictness of religion and conversion, which was as a coming out of Egypt, and boasting in their privileges in these ordinances, should fall into the like sin, and so incur like punishments. To which sense that first part of verse 11 strongly leans: 'All these happened unto them for examples;' that is, God brought them upon them as types to us, he aiming therein at what should be again acted over, and more fully, under gospel times afterwards to come.

[2.] They were types monitory, that is, for admonition or warning, which the apostle expressly urgeth on that other part of verse 11, 'And they were written for our admonition,' as buoys or sea-marks to warn us that we dash not upon the same rock, Christ, manifested to us under like and far more glorious ordinances.

5. He insinuates that God will be far more severe towards them that live under gospel ordinances.

(1.) Those, he says, were but types, which word is twice used; that is, all these things that befell them were rudiores imagines perfectionis, such as a draught with a coal is to a picture embellished and drawn to the life, ὡς ἐν τύπῳ, as Aristotle's phrase is.

(2.) These their sacraments he speaks of, though for substance the same with ours, yet for their manner of administration were enclosed about with an husk or rind of a fleshly dispensation, which made them but shadows of ours in comparison. They drank of the rock which was Christ, but their beasts drank of the same, and so it served to another purpose besides that of representing Christ. Their baptism was cloudy, it was in a cloud; and instead of its being said to be into Christ (as the gospel runs, Rom. 6:3), the apostle says, they were baptized visibly but into Moses, ver. 1, and so into Christ but as at a second remote hand, typified forth by that Moses. In like manner their passover primâ intentione, and nextly and immediately, signified to them their deliverance out of Egypt; but that being the type of our conversion from Satan to God, spiritual deliverance came therefore to be thus signified thereby at second hand, secundâ intentione, and remotely (though yet mainly and in its primary intention designed), but yet that out of Egypt was the next and immediate deliverance signified. Now as their ordinances, as enclosed in this rind, were more outward and fleshly than ours, which have that rind now shaled off, and Christ is thereby immediately and only held forth, so,

(3.) The punishments for neglects or profane sinnings under them were but outward and temporary, as by bodily death, &c., which is but the breaking the shell, the outward man; but our gospel ordinances being more spiritual, have answerably punishments that are so. As God blesseth in spiritual things now, so he curseth in spirituals also, and they are the curse in solido. 'Of how much sorer



punishment shall he be thought worthy' (says the apostle, Heb. 10:29), that profanes Christ as revealed in the gospel? For example, were they 'stung with serpents, ver. 9, and 'destroyed of the destroyer,' ver. 10, by a bodily death inflicted? We under the gospel that live in such sins are given up to Satan, 1 Cor. 5, either by terrors to drive the elect to Christ, or by seduction and a curse to drive reprobates to hell, as the devil entered into Judas whilst he received the sop. I cannot say he received the Lord's supper, but the passover he did, and Christ sealed up his rejection at that ordinance.

(4.) The apostle having spread these things before them, his conclusive inference is, 'Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall'. Men use in their thoughts and speeches to boast themselves of their enjoyment of such privileges as these, and do bolster themselves up in them; but know that they will not guard you from the curse, nor privilege you at all in that respect. Yea, let every such man know that this sacramental holy ground is the most slippery ground that men can stand on, as ice is; and therefore if he falls, he falls most dangerously, he falls upon the rock Christ, and 'he that falls on this stone shall be broken,' Luke 20:18. And also together therewith all the sermons he hath heard, and sacraments he hath received, fall upon him. 'The fall of that house was great' (says Christ also, Mat. 7:27), therefore 'let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall,' that is, fall under the participation of such ordinances. And this coherence of these words with the former discourse is manifest, and the proper drift of them. Nay, and the apostle judgeth not this one caution enough, but seconds it with another: ver. 15, 'I speak to wise men,' that is, men that know how to apply all this, and how fully it suits your case and condition; and βλέπετε, see to it, consider or take heed unto what I say. Neither hath he done with this exhortation, but heaps on another: 'The cup we bless is the communion of the blood of Christ; the bread we break is the communion of the body of Christ. And ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: and ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and the table of devils,' vers. 19, 20; which speech or reasoning, I know, is more particularly intended

against that idolatrous practice of sitting in the idols' temple (which he had discoursed against, chap. 8, and which was one particular sin he gave instance for in the Israelites, ver. 7, for which God had punished them), yet for the ground and extent of it, it doth by way of application come home against fornication, or indulgence to any other lusts, feeding on the objects of them as animæ pabulum, and worshipping them as God, and sacrificing the dearest of our intentions to them. These are idolatry, says the apostle, as some copies have it: Col. 3:5, 'Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, these are idolatry.' A man hath therein fellowship with devils, for they are the devil's dainties. They that feed on these husks eat of the table of devils, have fellowship with devils, whose works these are, 1 John 3. 'I would not,' says Paul, 'you should have fellowship with devils;' it is an utter inconsistency, and will overthrow your profession and religion, and eat it out. 'Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils.' Well, the apostle prosecutes it yet further, for his close is, ver. 22. 'Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?' 'Jealousy is the rage of a man,' says Solomon, Prov. 6:34. And it is the height of anger and displeasure in God, and if anything put him into it, it will be to find thee, that professest to lie in his bed of love, in his bosom—such is the Lord's supper—then going from it to lie in bed with the devil, engendering lust, malice, and mischief. If the veil could be taken away, men would see that whilst their souls brood upon their lusts, they are entwined close and coupling with serpents, yea, with devils. 'Do you provoke the Lord to jealousy?' You may observe that God doth only (at least above all other) profess himself a jealous God, when he gave forth the second command, that is, the ordinances of his worship forbidding the contrary. Now the Lord's supper being the top ordinance of the second commandment under the gospel, to profane it by nourishing lusts, provoketh God to the greatest jealousy, and sets God at defiance; and therefore those words are added, 'Are you stronger than he?' that is, can you encounter him? which you must make account to do if you go thus on.

## CHAPTER IV

Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, &c.—1 COR. 10:1–13.

Concerning the danger of unworthy receiving the Lord's supper, either in being unfruitful, or living in lusts under the participation of it, I shall add some considerations that both aggravate the sinfulness hereof, and so heighten the danger of it; both which will appear if we consider the nature and intent of this ordinance in the institution thereof, either on God's part, or what is to be done by us on ours.

1st, On God's part, it is to represent and exhibit the whole of Christ as crucified for us, in the most direct, immediate, adequate, and expressive manner.

2dly, On our parts it is publicly to solemnise and shew forth his death, and erect a fresh memorial of it, with profession of our interest in his person, his death, and all the benefits thereof. Now, to sin against so great obligations arising from both, how much must it aggravate our sin!

1. On God's part, in the institution of it, it represents these things to us.

(1.) It represents Christ in the most immediate and expressive manner, which will appear if we compare it with the other ordinance of the word read or preached. In the word read or heard, we have directly and first to do but with some truth, and so with Christ considered but either as the author and deliverer of that truth, or at most but as that particular truth concerneth him and treats of him, or of some particular benefit of his, or some

excellency of his, or some action of his for us. And these are singled out to be treated on by piece-meal, unto which our thoughts are required immediately to be intent, according as the matter thereof is; yea, further, often some point of duty on our part; yea, some discovery of some sin by the law, and our sinfulness, with the threatening annexed thereto, are treated of. All which are remote from Christ, and but as a schoolmaster to drive us, and that too upon second thoughts, rising up unto him and his person; even as the sick thinks of the physician upon a second thought, after the sad apprehension, and a long and deep consideration of his own malady. But in this ordinance of the Lord's supper we have to do with Christ himself, his person, &c. We are put upon him, let into him immediately and directly, and are to converse with him, as a spouse with her husband, in the nearest intimacies. He is the image in that glass, and not a glimmering collateral beam of him only which casteth a shine; but the sun of righteousness itself is the direct and adequate subject of that representation, and our eyes are called to view him with open face. The word preached is termed the word of Christ, Col. 3 and elsewhere, but it is nowhere termed Christ; no, nor is prayer or any other ordinance so named, but the rock was Christ, the bread is Christ, of which he says, 'This is my body,' and of the wine, 'This is my blood;' yea, and it is Christ entire, whole Christ. We have to deal with the whole of his person, the whole of his death, the whole of his benefits, promises; yea, all that was purchased or procured by him. Yea, and we have to deal with all this in the most expressive, real manner; it is whole Christ represented as to the eye; whereas a sermon, if it did represent whole Christ, yet it would be but to the ear; and you know things by the ear strike more dully and slowly, but by sight more really, and make a lasting impression: 'Mine eye affects my heart,' as the psalmist speaks.

(2.) It represents Christ also as crucified, which is the top and eminent subject of the gospel, 1 Cor. 2:2; we see Christ glorious, and sitting at God's right hand in heaven, and yet we see him too as one dying and crucified. Yea, and it is that Christ who is now in glory who is represented as crucified. It is his death that is shewn forth

herein, 1 Cor. 11; his body broken and his blood shed. Whilst one eye of faith is called to look up to his person as now in heaven glorious, and 'we see Jesus crowned with glory,' &c., Heb. 2 (which is necessary, for where else can the soul find his person as existing, and so make an address unto heaven, but where he now is alive in heaven?), with another eye we look back upon him as formerly hanging on a tree, bearing our sins in his body, bearing, and representing, and undertaking for our persons. Now, what a sight is this! and what a strong mixture of affections must needs accompany a sight so strange!

Now, to raise up your thoughts a little, let me speak unto you in that language wherein Christ spake to the people concerning their going forth in troops to see John the Baptist as a sight of novelty, Mat. 11:7, 9, thereby at once to reprove their common slight esteem of him, as also to raise them up to a true value of him. When you come to a sacrament, consider, 'What do you go forth to see?' a thing of small value, a trifle, a reed shaken with the wind? or that which is of some more moment, as you would go to see an ambassador or gaudy courtier making his entrance in state and splendid apparel? No, says Christ; I tell you, you saw a prophet; yea, more than a prophet. But this here is a sight of more than all prophets, than that of all angels and saints (which we shall have of them as assembled together at the latter day), if we could suppose it without them; yea, than of the glory of millions of worlds, if that could be represented in the twinkling of an eye.

Let me say further, men use to flock to other sights, either that are real, as to an ordinary execution, or some rare invention of men's art, or else that are in show, as the acting over of some story that hath some deep plot in it, or of some noble and heroic person; the sum and height whereof comes to this, that such an one passeth through the lowest debasement, leaving\* it and despising it with an unheard-of greatness of mind, to the end to save his country, and to rescue his contracted spouse, fallen into the utmost gulfs of dangers and miseries, and then after that himself riseth up to that glory

which as a king or lord was his inheritance originally; and then to the participation thereof he pulls up his spouse, and crowns her with glory and honour in the sight of all the world. How are men's fancies tickled and filled with the bare show, outward and empty appearance of such a story acted to the life! How long do they stick therein! How are their thoughts and discourses taken up therewith a long while after! Yea, and this where all that is presented concerning such a person doth nothing concern themselves. The person had no relation, by race or country, or any way, to them; yea, it is but a very fiction. But here behold the greatest act or thing that ever the great God did, or means to do for ever, set forth but once in this world, actually performed in a few hours' space, containing in it the deepest mystery, plot, and contrivement that ever lay in the breast of God, or that his wisdom can bring forth, and in which all his other counsels are bottomed and centred; wherein also you have represented the King of kings, the Lord of glory coming disguised in the likeness of sinful flesh from heaven to redeem his church, his spouse, from sin, death, hell, and wrath, hanging on a tree, sustaining her person, bearing her crimes and miseries, and for her sake encountering with and conquering thereby all his and her enemies, and triumphing over and making an open show of devils led captive, because they were her enemies and great seducers; and then flinging off that form of frail flesh, and in an instant appearing in the form of God, sitting down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, in so great a glory, as only the only begotten Son of God and Lord of glory was capable to be arrayed withal, at the sight of which, and his first taking that place in heaven, all the angels of God fall down and worship him. Is there any such sight elsewhere to be seen on earth? Yea, doth heaven itself afford such another, unless it be of him? And is this a bare sight, an outward show, made to strike thy fancy? Yea, is it not over and above of the greatest concernment to thee? This person who fills this scene, and whose story it is, is of the nearest relation unto thee that ever any was, thy Saviour, head, and husband. Yea, and these actings of his that are therein presented, are of the highest moment to thee. Is not thine eternal redemption, the cancelling the fatal sentence of thy condemnation, the taking

away thy sins by his bearing of them, acted over before thee in thine own view? *Tua res agitur*. Thou committest new sins every day, and still seest anew how the book is crossed by the lines of his blood drawn over them; but these cross lines are like to those which are drawn with the juice of onions or lemons, not appearing until they are brought to this light of the word, and then upon this occasion they rise up either more dimly or more conspicuously unto faith's view. Either these things are true, and true of thy soul, or thou art undone, thou art lost for ever, for thou hast an heart like to Gallio, Acts 18:17, and regardest none of these things, and wilt not go over the threshold to see a thousand of such sights.

But take a farther prospect, and consider, Is all this, in the intendment and institution of it, a mere presentation to the fancy and memory, as those of other stories are? No; they are real, and the most real unto faith, as much as any sight thou seest of a thing when it is first done. The Holy Ghost is the presenter of this scene, and to a believing soul makes substantial and subsisting demonstrations of all these, and a thousand more concerning him; for 'faith is the subsistence of things not seen,' Heb. 11:1. See how the apostle speaks: Gal. 3:1, 'Before whose eyes Christ hath been evidently set forth crucified among you,' as if you had indeed stood and seen it. There is such an emphasis in those words, 'crucified among you,' that some have interpreted this scripture to mean their crucifying Christ by their apostasy, answerably to what he says Heb. 6:5. But it is spoken of the reality of the representation which the Holy Ghost makes. And Christ tells us as much concerning this ordinance of the Lord's supper: John 6:55, 'My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.' It is not fancy only, as when a man dreams he eats; but if ever thou hast found a reality, a solidity, a subsistence in any meat thou hast ever eaten and digested, there is (according to Christ's institution) a greater reality unto faith in this sacrament. The apostle also calls faith 'a discerning the Lord's body,' 1 Cor. 11:29.

Tell me then now, canst thou come to, and daily live under such a sight as this (which was on purpose appointed by God to renew the impression often, and to draw all men's hearts unto him, John 12:32, and chap. 3:14, 15, compared), and then go away and sin, and live in thy lusts? Or if thou dost, is it not an infinite aggravation of thy sins, if they be willingly indulged unto, and can the danger be other than answerably great? I shall but urge upon you that which Paul doth, Gal. 3:1: 'Who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Christ hath been evidently set forth crucified among you?' He aggravates all by this, that it was a representation (or lively picturing, as the word signifies) of Christ, and him as crucified; and that so to the life, as it ought to affect them. Yea, the thing in the nature of it was such and so great, as should have made an impression never to be impaired. Paul stands wondering and aghast at it, looking on them as men that had not their common senses: 'Who hath bewitched you?' says he; your stupidity must be from the super-addition of some evil spirit more than ordinary. Suppose thou hadst been an ocular witness and spectator of Christ's being crucified at Jerusalem, as Mary and John were, and thou hadst withal then known what had been the intent and purpose of God and Christ in his being crucified; yea, and thou hast believed it had been to take away thy sins and to save thy soul, or it could never be saved; and thou hadst known all this, and meditated so on it upon the place all the while it was a-doing, and hadst seen the nails knocked in, and thoughtest withal, Such a sin which I have so often committed, is the hammer that reiterates these strokes till they are driven unto the head; and suppose Christ had said unto thee then,—as he did to his mother, 'Woman, behold thy son,'—Sinner, behold thy Saviour: all this is for thy sake and sins; I hang here bearing thy person, and thy body of sin is with mine nailed to the cross, and is crucifying together with it. Couldst thou have gone away from this sight, and sinned again as formerly? Yea, would not this sight have so stuck with thee, as whenever thou wert about to sin, the thought and impression of it would still have risen up, and quelled it more than all the prohibitions and the threatenings of the law? Let me now make an home push upon



thee. Hast thou been at a sacrament? and hadst thou true and real faith? That faith did or would have set thee down by the cross, as Mary was; and thou mightest stand by and behold all, and not only go over it in a way of fancy as over any other story, but in a way of subsistence of things not seen, as well past as present or to come. Conclude therefore (as Paul doth, Gal. 3:1) that it is some extraordinary spirit of wickedness and fascination, which hurries thee to go afterwards and sin again.

2. Let us consider the sacrament of the Lord's supper, as on our part celebrated. It is a public shewing forth by us his death, one to another, that partake in it; and it is doing it before all others, 'in remembrance of him,' with profession that we hope and believe we are the persons for whom he hath done all this. This you have, 1 Cor. 11:24–26, 'And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat of this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.' We do therefore avowedly give ourselves up to him, as his professed followers and disciples; 'who thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they who live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again.' This is the nature of your act in it. His giving himself to death was his own act, but this is yours, viz., to celebrate and perpetuate the memorial of it. Compare this a little with the passover instituted upon their coming forth out of Egypt: Exod. 13:8, 'Thou shalt shew thy son in that day, saying, This is done because of that which the Lord did to me when I came forth out of Egypt' (commemorating all the deliverance), 'and it shall be a sign upon thine hand, and a memorial before thine eyes, that the law of God may be in thy mouth,' &c. And when a Jew had taken a passover, and understood this to be the intent of it, and then looked but upon his ten commandments (the preface whereto is this, 'I am the Lord that brought thee out of

Egypt,' and so in the force thereof sets on every command, both against sin and for duty), what a renewal of solemn obligation did that ordinance of the passover, the seal and memorial hereof, rise unto! Now then, a Christian who joins in celebrating the Lord's supper (and therein, in a clearer manner than the passover, shews forth the Lord's death), cannot but discern that the action and intent of it speaks, that this is done because of that which the Lord did to Christ for me; and this is a sign and a memorial I am to carry with me ever in my eye, that the love of God may be in my heart, and held forth in my life in suitable obedience. This is, and ought to be, the preface writ over every duty, or prohibition of every sin; and thy conscience necessarily dictates to thee, I must carry the memorial of this in my hand, lest I put forth that to wickedness which I stretch forth to lay hold on that sacramental Christ. This is to be continually in mine eyes as a remembrancer, that look as if a dead father, who at his death had given such and such instructions and commands to his son, should often appear to him, or appoint a glass in which, when he looked, he presently would appear to him therein, on purpose to mind him of his commands, and oblige him to them; this is the nature of that ordinance concerning Christ to me. What says Christ? John 15:14, 'If you be my friends, keep my commandments'; and it is edged with this, 'No man hath greater love than this, to lay down his life for his friends.' Oh how would we carry in our eye the apparitions Christ makes and gives at a sacrament, or offers to give unto us if we brought faith! And if we are about to sin, the thoughts of Christ crucified, as renewed at such a sacrament, do or should come in and haunt us. And if we should notwithstanding indulge sin, and not divert from it, how do we aggravate thereby our sins against him, and provoke and tempt him! For if Christ crucified thus so oft appears and stands in our way, and yet we go on to sin, it is worse than what the dumb ass did at the apparition of an angel, and as had as Balaam's course was, who was reprov'd. This we are too apt to do, and therefore he bids us to renew often this remembrance of him: 'As oft as ye do this,' 1 Cor. 11:27. As the apparitions made to the patriarchs, all the ordinances of the Old Testament, and the obligations of them, are nothing unto

this in comparison, by reason of the knowledge we have of Christ that accompanies this sacrament. And yet you read how heinously God took the sinnings of Solomon, 'that had appeared to him twice,' 1 Kings 11:9. And what sad punishment for transgressings after ordinances or obligations for temporal mercies held forth thereby, did the Israelites incur! But now all the wondrous works and deliverances out of Egypt are but trifles unto this our salvation by Christ, commemorated in this sacrament.

2. Add to this, that on our parts we take an oath of fidelity to Jesus Christ in the most solemn manner, and we do it upon these considerations and obligations specified. You know the name of sacrament was given to this ordinance by the ancients upon this account; and (as I think) there is some aspect from Scripture that looks that way; for Paul having discoursed of baptism, and the import of it as an obligation to holiness and obedience, Rom. 6:3–13, he then subjoins thereto as the consequent thereof, how every such Christian had, as a soldier and servant, yielded up himself and his weapons or arms (so he calls his members, ver. 13), as weapons of righteousness unto God and Christ as his captain. You know what was the law of a soldier, 2 Tim. 2:4; he gave himself up, and that by oath, to please him that had chosen him to be a soldier. You know the severity and danger of martial law in the case of running away or stepping aside. Now at every sacrament thou art drawn into an oath to Christ, thou avouchest him to be thy Saviour, as they, Deut. 26:17, 18, are said to do at the offering the first-fruits: 'Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice: and the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments.' Thou forswearst all thy sins, and you know the danger of perjury, especially when it is the breach of such an oath, so oft renewed, and upon so solemn occasions.

3. I shall now spread the danger before you, as the apostle hath set it forth, 1 Cor. 11. By going on in thy lusts thou becomest 'guilty of the body and blood of Christ,' 1 Cor. 11:27; that is, thou dost in effect do that which the Jews did in crucifying him; and how heavy a sin that was to that nation, the curse ever since shews. What an heavy imprecation was that! 'His blood be upon us and our children.' The blood of any man is valuable, the blood of a saint is much more precious to God, Ps. 116; but the blood of Christ, by which God redeemed us all as with a sufficient price, is much more precious. Now to have the guilt of this lie on thee, Oh think what it is! By this thou becomest guilty of his blood, both by evacuating the shedding of it (as Paul says, 'then Christ died in vain'), and also by fostering that which was the cause of his crucifying, viz., thy sins, whereby thou makest thyself an abetter of that barbarous murder; also by profaning that blood in undervaluing it, by preferring thy lust before it thou 'puttest Christ again to open shame,' Heb. 6:6, 10:29; for as by thy joining in the sacrament thou didst undertake publicly to shew forth his death as undergone for thee and thy sins, so by scandalous sins thou dost as publicly contradict thine own act, and shamest him by doing the contrary unto what that death was intended for by him, and unto what thy celebration of the ordinance tended on thy part; thou defilest not only the temple of God on earth, the church of Christ, and body of saints (and such an offender will God destroy, 1 Cor. 3:17), but thou disgracest the person of Christ, in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily, and who is the tabernacle of God in heaven, Heb. 9:11. This is the height of popish blasphemy, Rev. 13:6. The blood of the sacrifices under the old law, which were in their signification an holy thing, were made by men's sinnings that offered them but as the cutting off a dog's neck, and so but as dogs' blood (as Isaiah says). But now in the New Testament the blood which thou dishonourest is Christ's blood, that hath been sacrificed first for thee, and by living in thy lusts thou dost shew that thou accountest it but as dogs' blood. Thou art guilty of that blood also, by making that ordinance (appointed to so high ends) to represent a mere nullity, and of none effect. For in the like case says Paul, 1 Cor. 11:20, this is not to eat the Lord's supper; and

ver. 27, it is termed but eating of bread, not the body of Christ, for it is but bare common bread to such an one; even as he accounted that body and blood but as a common thing, in still preferring his lusts thereto.

Yea, such a man 'eats and drinks damnation to himself,' ver. 28 of that chapter. Temporal judgments are often inflicted on the godly, and on the wicked eternal. 'I will curse your blessings,' says God in the prophet; and it is a certain truth that what is intended as the greatest blessing, if abused, is turned into the greatest curse. And to have the fulness of the blessing of the gospel, which Christ by being made a curse purchased, turned into a curse, how great a curse must that be! Thou eatest and drinkest poison if thou comest in thy sins, or if thy participation of the ordinance doth thee no good against thy sins; and so thou art guilty of thine own death and soul's blood also, as well as of Christ's death. It will rot thy soul, as the water the woman drank did her, Num. 5:27, 28. So shall thy soul be cursed if thou returnest not. And whereas thou professest to come to remember Christ, and his death and suffering, God is provoked thereby to remember all thy sins: Hosea 8:13, 'At their sacrifices now will he remember their iniquity.'

## **CHAPTER V**

The danger of those who being in church fellowship and communion, yet their lives are inconsistent with such a relation.

The fourth ordinance of the gospel is the public censures of the church, consisting of admonition, rebuke, and excommunication. There is a great danger of a man living in lusts, having put himself under the capacity of these; for God is engaged the sooner to bring thy sins to light, 1 Tim. 5:19, 20. He had given directions to Timothy to deal impartially in church-censures, ver. 19, 20, and not to be rash in laying on of hands; and then he concludes of both, ver. 24, 25, 'Some men's sins are open aforehand to judgment:' aforehand,

going before to judgment; and some men's sins follow after, namely, εἰς κρίσιν, unto judgment: ver 25, 'Those that are otherwise cannot be hid.' As I take it, it is spoken not of the day of judgment, but of that judgment that is made at receiving in an elder, or a member, which was anciently done by laying on of hands. Whoso sins, though they have escaped the cognizance of the church, yet because they have adventured to take upon them so great and sacred an office, they cannot be long hid, if they repent not and forsake them. In like manner, men living under the peril of the censure of the church (which he had spoken of, ver. 19, 20), if they will venture to go on to sin, and think still to escape the knowledge of man, yet because they live and have put themselves under so great an ordinance, as is the judgment of the church (which he there also speaks of), and fear not that God by his providential discovery may bring them under it, therefore, if their sins be not such as go before to judgment, for a long time through God's patience, yet God will in his providence order it so that their sins shall follow after, εἰς κρίσιν, unto judgment. And so the meaning is, that if men have lived long in a sin, and have escaped the publishing of it to a church which doth profess the exercise of exact discipline, and is accordingly heedful of miscarriages as it ought to be, God engageth himself (if the person repent not) the sooner to give him up to such sins as shall follow after to judgment, so as their iniquity, by reason of this dispensation, will find them out and cannot be hid. And upon the equity of that other coherence, namely, the respect to ordination and admission, this rule will in a proportion hold of this censure also. Now how dangerous a thing it is to be given up to the censure of the church, the apostle tells us, when he calls it a delivering up unto Satan, 1 Cor. 5. Now if any will say, We will avoid this danger, and keep ourselves out from such a bond, let them consider what follows: 1 Cor. 5, 'Those without God judgeth,' and will do it sufficiently. I take it those words do insinuate a great privilege that those within a church, who live in a subjection to a judgment, if they sin, have in comparison of those that live without, be they heathen or Christian professors. For if they be within, God forbears to judge them personally, till that means of the church hath been

used, which, if neglected, he then falls on both, 1 Cor. 11. A man is under a protection (as it were), and God takes not the matter into his court, because it is under trial in another, which is a means to reclaim him; but those that live without are immediately exposed to God's judging them, who will deal with them accordingly more severely: 'As whoremongers and adulterers God will judge,' Heb. 13, &c.; so that if any man will stay out to avoid being judged, he falls under a more severe court.

Take the last ordinance of a church, viz., church contribution and collection for the saints, it being not a civil matter (as giving alms is) but an ordinance religious. It is a ministration, λειτουργία, 2 Cor. 9:13, and it is reckoned up with prayers, and preaching, and breaking bread, Acts 2:42, for so I understand that word, which is translated fellowship, and is carried in the translation as if it were the fellowship of the apostles that were there intended. But it is κοινωνία, communication, namely, of goods, more largely mentioned in the verse after; and also in Heb. 13:16, 'Be not forgetful εὐποιᾶς καὶ κοινωνίας, of doing good, and communicating.' It is the very same word, as also in Rom. 15:26, where it is translated, contribution to the saints.

1. I say, it being thus a spiritual ordinance and sacrifice, as all church-offerings are (as Heb. 13:6, it follows, 'for with such sacrifices God is well pleased'), therefore, if men deal unworthily herein, they are in danger of having a greater curse hereby, perhaps not upon their estates, but in their spirits. If you will take an estimate how heinously God takes dealing falsely in this, because it is a matter of worship, you may see it in that first example of a judgment in those primitive times executed on Ananias and Sapphira; and thereby, as you may see how heinously God takes it, so also why it was so, not that they were bound to have given all their whole estates—ver. 4, 'Whilst it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?'—but they having dedicated the whole in an open appearance to God, to withhold part was a lying, not to man, but to God. It was not in a

matter merely human, between man and man, as the promise that makes a debt is, or as a bargain between man and man, but the Holy Ghost (ver. 3) was the person with whom in that work they dealt, and with whom in all works of that nature we also deal now. And though God inflicts not such extraordinary punishments now upon men's bodies, yet you may from thence gather how much he is displeased at the like as a sin, and in what danger men's spirits are, in such cases, of a spiritual judgment and curse, which is more usual under the gospel, and which accordingly men shall find at the latter day. Mat. 10:15, he threatens those who should contemn the gospel, not with a temporal judgment, but (as if forbearing such under this dispensation) he threatens them with a greater and worse. Sodom and Gomorrah (says he) were punished with visible judgments, though extraordinary: 'But it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah, than for these in the day of judgment.' Till when he may defer it. When therefore thou drawest near to God in this lowest duty of worship, yet because it is an offering to God, Mat. 5:23, 'ere thou bring thy gift to the altar, reconcile thyself to thy brother;' and by like reason, if thou be guilty of, or livest, in any sin, reconcile thyself to God, otherwise even this act of worship will provoke him the more.

## CHAPTER VI

Two cases concerning a regenerate man's sinning against knowledge.—The first case resolved, how far such an one is capable of sinning against knowledge; and what is the difference between his sinning against knowledge, and an unregenerate man's sinning against it.

That a regenerate man may sin against knowledge, we will take the instance of Solomon only to prove it, who sinned against his knowledge, yea, and that the experimental, clear, and tasting knowledge of God and his ways, yet remained godly. That he sinned very far against knowledge, see 1 Kings 11:4, 7–9, where we read



that his wives turned his heart away after other gods; that is, so far as to build high places for all his wives, ver. 7, 8, and this for them to sacrifice and to burn incense on to their several gods, ver. 10. And this sin of his is brought in by way of aggravation, that God had given him a special commandment against this sin, and so he had had a special light against it; yea (ver. 10), it is added, he (therein) 'turned his heart away from God, who had appeared to him twice;' that is, after he had strong revelations, and impressions, and appearances of the true God upon his heart, after he had known him, not only with a common knowledge of education, as others do, nor by faith only, as all believers do, but had superadded to it an especial appearing and drawing nigh of God to him, with a great acceptance of his person and prayers, manifested by God to him, and this twice. Thus he sinned every way against an expressive, clear, experimental knowledge, the best and purest of knowledge he could have, unless he had been took up to heaven (as Paul was), and yet he says, Eccles. 2:3, 9, that his 'wisdom remained with him,' namely, his grace and knowledge, for he speaks not of his gifts of wisdom (since that they should remain was no wonder, such common gifts remaining in the wickedest of men), but of that wisdom which in his Proverbs he so commends; yea, and he says, that 'he acquainted his heart with wisdom,' ver. 3, though 'it took hold of folly,' that is, closed with sin; and therefore, in the opposition, by wisdom he means true grace, so that he sinned against knowledge, and yet still remained a godly man. Yea, and again, when for this the prophet had appointed Jeroboam, as from God, to be king over the ten tribes, when Solomon heard this, 1 Kings 11:4, it is said, that 'therefore Solomon sought to kill him,' which was as directly against God's will revealed by a prophet as was that of Saul, when for the same cause he sought to kill David, because he was assigned his heir and successor in his kingdom. But God had established his sure mercies with David and Solomon his child, and not with Saul; and therefore God pardoned Solomon, and turned him fully again unto himself, as his book of Ecclesiastes shews, whenas he rejected Saul. Having given you this resolution of the question in the general from this one instance, I shall

endeavour more particularly to explain the truth by answers to several questions.

The questions may be made concerning either some particular acts of sins committed, or concerning a regenerate man's whole course, as either of them do relate unto sinnings against knowledge.

Quest. 1. If the question be concerning particular acts of sin, we grant,

Assert. 1. That a godly man may, against actual light and knowledge, commit particular acts of sin, and omit the performance of some acts of duties. Thus David had some light against the numbering of the people when he did it, for Joab reasoned the matter with him, and reprov'd him for it, 2 Sam. 24:2, 3; and in the 4th verse, all his captains shew'd their dislike (namely, of his pride in it), yet still he persisted and would have it done. But yet this was not such a strong smiting light as that which came upon him after he had done it; then it did strike upon his conscience, ver. 10, and although he saw it to be a sin afore, yet he saw it not in that manner; for it is said, that then his heart smote him, which shews that before it had not thus smote him; he knew it before, but minded it not much, was not attentively apprehensive or struck with the sense of it; but now his heart smites him, and he cries out, 'I have sinned greatly,' and so recalled the doing of it.

Quest. 2. But then the question will be, May he not sin, when he hath a strong pulse of conscience against a sin, a smiting light, as I may so term it?

Assert. 2. Yes, he may sin against a strong pulse of conscience. Holy Peter, without question, had a strong light to the contrary, when he denied his Master; and for the clearing of this, know that a regenerate man's conscience being sanctified but in part, there is much light in it that is not sanctifying light, all his knowledge about sin and grace is not the light of life; so as he hath a remainder of

mere natural light of conscience in him, as well as a regenerate part of conscience; and hence it may fall out, that natural conscience in him may stir strongly, and beat much against a sin in a natural way, but upon such motives and considerations as are common to him with carnal men; when yet true light is not so fully stirred up against it, it being at the good pleasure of the Holy Ghost to work in us how and as he will; it is a new and peculiar work of the will and Spirit to do that, viz., to stir the regenerate part. David had a strong working and bustling of natural conscience in him, when he lay roaring under terrors of conscience, Ps. 32, yet still it prevailed not with him to confess his sin: the natural light of conscience was then stirring in him, when yet the regenerate part of conscience was not; for if that had wrought thus strongly, as the other did, it would have made him kindly to have confessed and mourned for his sin, as it did when he confessed his sin to Nathan. By the like reason, before a godly man commits a sin, natural conscience may have a strong work, when yet true light against the sin hath not. There may be thunderings and lightnings in his conscience, which God's sanctifying Spirit is not so much in, and so he may sin against much blusterings of that common light, when yet true light, which should cause him to hate it, and strengthen him against it, is calm and down; for the light of natural conscience is as the light of straw or sedge, it makes a flame of a great blaze, and so glareth much in men's eyes, terrifies much but heats not; whereas true light, when it is kindled, is the light of solid fire, wherein there is less flame and flashing, but more heat and efficacy upon the heart to restrain it from sin. No question but the apostle Peter's conscience strongly wrought in him, his heart throbbed within him, when yet it prevailed not to keep him; but one look of Christ conveyed the Spirit to him, and so stirred up sanctified light, and broke his heart presently. So when Nathan came to David to reprove him for his murder, though his conscience had strongly wrought afore, as appears by the 32d Psalm (which is thought to be made upon that occasion), yet the Spirit of grace came not on him to stir up sanctified acknowledgment, till Nathan came to him; and then how easily did he confess it at the first! 'I have sinned,' said he.

Quest. 3. But you will farther say unto me, May not a regenerate man sin against a strong, smiting, and checking direction of sanctifying light, and of the Spirit of God moving to the contrary, and striving with him, by motives suitable to the regenerate part?

Assert. 3. I answer, Yes; why else doth the apostle say, Eph. 4:30, 'Grieve not the Spirit, whereby ye are sealed'? Now then a sin is properly against the Spirit, when against that which is his proper work, which is to excite to good, to restrain from evil; and then we grieve him when we sin against such a working of his, as wherein, like a father, and as a friend, he gives counsel and direction to the contrary. We grieve him in going against such works of his, wherein he shews himself a father to us. When wicked men sin against the common workings of the Spirit, they indeed vex him and provoke him; but when a godly man sins against those peculiar stirrings of his as a Spirit of grace, then it is that properly they are said to grieve him; and yet herein they may go so far, even his own people, that they are said to rebel and vex his Holy Spirit: Isa. 63:10, he speaks it of his own people. Now rebellion is a sin against knowledge and light, and such light wherein as a friend he sweetly admonished, them for the punishment is, he turned their enemy, and fought against them, in rebuking them in wrath.

But yet these things are to be considered in this case.

1. That then the Spirit doth not put forth an overcoming light in such cases; for though in all such acts, whereon the salvation of his people depends, as their conversion at first, and his not suffering them to depart from him, therein the Holy Ghost works overcomingly and effectually in all that shall be saved; yet he works not so in giving light or strength in every act of resisting sin, or in persuading to duty; therein the Spirit doth not always put in strength enough into our light, to prevail against the temptation, but only to bear a strong testimony against it, to the end that our weakness might so much the more appear. For as the Holy Ghost doth not sanctify you as perfectly at first, as he could do if he

pleased, but in part only; so neither doth he persuade us effectually in every act or motion of grace, as he did not Hezekiah, but left him to himself, that he might see what was in his heart. The Holy Ghost, even when he stirreth up the light of the regenerate part, yet often doth it not so effectually as to prevail; he doth sometimes suadere, but not persuadere, often movere, but not permovere; as he stirs not up all his wrath against us, so often not all his grace in us, and then we fall. In Gen. 6:3, there is a striving of the Spirit mentioned, which man's corruption overcomes: the Holy Ghost, being a free agent, putteth not always that full weight into the scale that might weigh down the other, though it moves it much; but, Gen. 9:27, there is a persuading Japheth mentioned, wherein he puts such weight into his light as it prevails with a man, whereby the Lord makes a motive an apprehension to prevail upon the mind, as he made the counsel of Hushai to prevail against the counsel of Ahithophel, 2 Sam. 17, and so preserved him.

2. The second thing to be considered is that when a regenerate man sins against such motions of the Spirit, and of true light stirred and acted, that always then he is in a passion, some strong lust and motion of sin, and law of the members, is risen suddenly up in arms in him. And though he may sin deliberately, when passion is not so much up, or when his Spirit is bound and becalmed (as I shall shew afterwards), yet if such powerful light be stirring in him, if right motions and gales of the Spirit be breathing on him, it must be a strong tide of passion then that carries him against it, which yet it may: as Asa, a holy man, after a good sermon of the prophet's (wherein it is probable that the Spirit breathed), wherein the prophet had reproved him for his sin, was in such a rage with it, his passion and choler being provoked by that reproof, that he cast the prophet in prison; and the reason is, because a strong lust or passion doth break the intention of judgment, and weakens it and so diverts it to consider in a more intimate manner the pleasure of sin, which his mind hath a present impression of, rather than to attend to the counsel of the Spirit. So *anima dispersa fit minor*, strength of the soul is dispersed and weakened, and so soon

overcome, as vapours ascending in sleep, bind up the use of reason and senses, and then fancy prevails. In like manner, a strong lust and motion of sin lays judgment asleep, that it is not fitly itself, but hath an interrupted, broken working and operation. And again, a strong lust doth after a man's judgment, as a fever doth a man's tongue. The things he knows hurtful are relished as best, whereas good and wholesome food he hath no pleasure in; and therefore, though the physician be by, and adviseth to the contrary, yet often he will have what is hurtful; for *qualis unusquisque est, talis ei finis videtur*. We judge of things as they suit with our desires; therefore, when a strong desire is up, judgment is perverted against itself; and therefore, when passion is up, though there may be light enough to discover the evil and the sin to us, yet not enough to dispel the mist and clear up the mind, and so a man errs and is misled.

3. Yet, thirdly, this is to be added in such a case, that though the passion carries it, yet that light is not in vain, but hath an answerable effect upon the heart in working an inward resistance there; and though it hath not its perfect work, yet a proportionable effect, so far as it stirs it works; so much stirring of light, so much reluctancy in the committing of it; for though that regenerate light prevails not to hinder the outward act of sins, yet it breaks the force of the blow and strength of the lusts within, it causeth a contrary lusting and reluctancy in the whole man against it, even in the act, and so hath a proportionable and good effect. So that though passion carries it, yet but by a few voices and with much ado, it finds a strong party of grace in every faculty against it, in the understanding disallowing it, in will hating it, in the affections lusting against it; a strong impression over the whole man, a strong stream running another way; so as he cannot do that evil in that full manner that others do, so as that light in the working of it avails so far, that he may still be able to say, It is not I that hath done it; so as thereby the Holy Ghost doth manifest the goodness of the heart, even in the midst of infirmity, that by their sense of that inward combat, and of a seed of God that cannot sin, the saints have as much comfort often, as discouragement in the fall.

Quest. 4. But you may further inquire, May not a regenerate man sin against light when he is out of passion, and so sin deliberately against light?

Assert. 4. I answer, Yes; David did so in the matter of Uriah, wherein he went soberly on; and though it be true he was in a great strait, being afraid of shame and scandal, which he thereby sought to hide, yet that passion had time enough to cool. It was not properly a passion, which is a subitaneous flushing,—indeed, that of his adultery was from such a flush of passion,—but this of Uriah's murder was a more continued distemper, sedately stirred, and retained and considered of. And so Isa. 57:17, one that is the child of God, is said, after God had smitten him for his covetousness, to go on frowardly in the way of his heart, and therefore without passion.

1. But then, when a godly man thus sins, it is when he hath been already disadvantaged and brought low, and into captivity by some former passion, which also was David's case. This more settled distemper began at his adultery, which was but a passion; but yet that having interrupted his communion with God, and his soul being thereby spoiled and left empty of spiritual comfort, God's Spirit was already grieved and withdrawn from him, and he left naked; and the regenerate part was knocked down with so horrible a sin, and lay under hatches manacled, and was through the deceitfulness and guilt of that sin exceedingly 'hardened from God's fear,' as a godly man may be, Isa. 63:17. And he being thus already weakened, no wonder though he be quietly carried on to further wickedness; and though a sudden passion is not, nor was not much up, yet the spiritual part being so much down, and corruption fleshed, and he put into so great straits, no wonder if he was bold to proceed to further abominations. A wise man being made suddenly drunk may be transported to do strange acts in that drunken mode, yet but whilst that drunkenness lasts; when it is over, and he comes to himself, he wonders at himself. But suppose, further, that though the drunkenness be over, yet it may leave him so inflamed as to cast him into a more violent lasting distemper of a fever, which doth

more continually distemper his brain. This was David's case indeed; the passion that cast him into this fit was over, but it left him in an universal distemper; it had weakened grace, inflamed all corrupt lusts and humours in him, and now his spirit was fit for any abomination which he should by any strong temptation be put upon.

2. Or else, though a man is not fallen into any gross act of sinning, yet by long insensible neglects he may be brought into some consumption of grace, having neglected to stir and to keep up spiritual apprehension, so as his light is as a candle burning blue, or in the socket, and he sleeps (which was the case of the five wise virgins), insomuch as though a man hath many glimmerings and actual apprehensions come into his mind (and so his sins are against knowledge), yet they are not quick, fresh, and vigorous, but wan and stale. I say, when by reason of this spiritual affections are brought very low and weak, starved, as it were, in regard of any communion with God, heavy and dull in regard of any endeavours after it; in this case also, no wonder if men deliberately steal out for comfort elsewhere. And some have understood this to be the case of the prodigal, as being meant not of one anew converted out of a profane course, but of the returning of one who hath been converted already, but whose affections, through fellowship with the pleasures of sin, have been estranged from God; and thus, he being starved in regard of comfort from God, deliberately joins himself to another for husks.

Quest. 5. Now if, in the last place, the question be concerning a regenerate man's course, whether, in regard of his whole course, he may be said to live and practise according to his knowledge?

Assert. 5. The answer is, that not only no unregenerate man lives according to his knowledge, but that no regenerate man neither doth live fully and exactly answerably thereunto, nor doth he, nor can he, fill up the measure of it with practice answerable in his whole course.



Which proposition I yet limit and explain by these four cautions:

1. That indeed it is true that he lives not (take his whole course) in any one track of sinning, or way of wickedness against his knowledge. 'There is no way of wickedness in me,' says David; it must be understood, none that he knew of; for he speaks it after he had now come from an exact and diligent search made into himself and ways. 'Search me, Lord,' says he, for he himself had searched himself and found none; which search must needs be by bringing his course of life and ways and his light together; but yet it is as true, that through his whole course and the track of his life, he doth continually fall short of what he knows in all his actions.

2. But then, when we say he falls short of, and lives not according to his knowledge, the meaning is, he falls short of doing the things he knows in that full latitude, whereto he sees the commandment, which is holy and spiritual, extends; for by knowledge in the assertion must be understood not only the knowledge whereby a man doth know, but the things themselves which are known, in the extent of their being known; and so it is used in ordinary phrase of speech, for *fides est vel quâ creditur, vel quæ creditur*, it being taken both for the faith whereby we believe, or for the things we do believe. So is knowledge taken also; and as the things believed are called faith, so we sometimes express the objects known, calling them knowledge. Now, if by living according to his knowledge be meant that he lives exactly according to all the latitude of what he knows concerning the commandments, and the utmost strictness revealed to him, which, as David says, so far as he saw into them, are exceeding broad, and broader than his life could extend to, so no godly man doth live according to his knowledge; he knows more for the object of his knowledge than he can reach in practice. Thus Paul, Rom. 7, comparing his heart and life with the law, saw a further spiritualness in the law than he could answer in his heart and life. And so Phil. 3:12–14, 'I reach,' says he, 'to the things that are before, not as if I had already attained it;' he speaks it of a Christian course, he had light which discovered still a further horizon of godliness,

mightily beyond and distant from that to which at present he had arrived, a vaster latitude before him than he was able to stretch unto, a higher pitch than he was able to reach unto; as a child may have knowledge to discern what a fair copy that is which is set before him, and be able to read it and like it, when yet he wants skill to write after it. A man knows he should love God with all his soul, and all his heart; that he should pray constantly, fervently, without distraction; but how do we fall short of all this! But if living according to his knowledge be understood of the knowledge itself by which he knows them, that axiom of divines will here take place: That so much as a man knoweth; and 'he that says he knows God, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar,' says John, 1 John 2:4.

3. But then this must be understood of true, real, practical knowledge: 'the light of life,' as Christ calls it; such knowledge as the apostle calls 'knowing as we ought to know;' for otherwise, we have much more light about the ways of grace and holiness than is sanctifying in us. Much of that light of conscience which is in a regenerate man's mind, remains in a great measure unsanctified, seeing conscience is but in part purified, as I said before, and then a regenerate man hath often a large addition of gifts of knowledge for the good of others, more than would otherwise serve his own particular only, as stewards have more money than for themselves; and therefore, if we take measure of all such knowledge as is in him of gifts and conscience, it must needs be too big and too wide for his practice.

4. And then, if practice be confined and meant of the outward performance only, then, so Rom. 7:18, Paul himself says, he was not able to perform all he knew; but if by practice be meant a continual serving of the law in the mind, more or less, as true knowledge is active in him, as he there speaks in the 25th verse, which in the same chapter is expressed by doing, and is so esteemed in God's account, so it is always true, that so much true knowledge as is stirring in the heart, so much practice is found throughout his

whole course; and though he knows more that he is able outwardly to perform, yet the best of his will is to do as much as he knows, verses 18, 19, and his will therein is as large as his knowledge, and both to keep the law exactly only. As his knowledge is intensive imperfect, though extensive and objectively much larger, as extending itself to all the commandments of God, and the utmost strictness of them, so also his will, though it be intensively imperfect, and weak, or not able to bring all he knows into performance, yet it is extensively as large as what he knows, aiming and stirring after the highest perfection. So that look how far his knowledge reacheth, so far doth his will also, which is the principle of action; and therefore his practice may be said to be likewise as large as both, though all imperfect.

And now we have explained how far a regenerate man may sin against knowledge, and fall short of it in his course; it will be needful to add some differences to all this, between his sinning thus against knowledge, and an unregenerate man's, lest wicked men be hereby encouraged, or godly men themselves made presumptuous. And herein my meaning is, not to handle all these differences which may be given in their sinning, but only their different carriage towards their knowledge; and these differences we will severally fit to the main of the foregoing assertions.

And, first, we will begin to difference this which we brought in last, concerning falling short of his knowledge in his course, which though it be common to regenerate and unregenerate men, yet with these differences:

1. That though a regenerate man fall short of his knowledge in his whole course, yet he preserves and fosters all his knowledge still in the utmost extent of it, and keeps up his assent to all that strictness he knows, and which he hath been convinced of, and labours also to wind his heart up to it; and this still he endeavours to do. As he goes on to know more, he preserves the same opinions of the strictness of God's ways, and studies to confirm himself in the truth of them,

and lets not his light to settle, keeps it as his standard, which he measures his heart and actions by. But now an unregenerate man, when he sees his heart and life cannot agree with strictness, he labours to cut the standard, and makes it even with his bushel, to bring his opinion to his own heart and ways; and what is more than he is able to do, or means to do, he reckons it too much preciseness. The former instance of a regenerate man you may see in Paul; and what he says of himself is true of all regenerate men in their measure, as it was true of him in his measure; only his measure was larger: in which respect indeed he puts a wide difference between a lower sort of Christians and himself in that same place. 'I see the mark,' says he, 'and what is before me.' Now (says he), 'I look not to what is behind, but endeavour to reach to what I want,' Philip. 3:13. 'I do stretch to the utmost;' and, verse 14, 'press to the mark.' He sets up to himself the highest pitch of strictness (he knows to be so) as his mark, and that he alters not; he moves not that to himself, but moves himself to it. 'And as many as are perfect,' says he, 'are thus minded;' that is, whose hearts are perfect with God. Now because it would be said, But some do not think God's ways so strict as you, have not so large apprehensions as you have of them, and are not so strict as you,—It may be so (says Paul), but yet two things he says:

(1.) That God will by degrees reveal it to them who are spiritual, in time, as fully as to me.

(2.) And he exhorts that nevertheless whereto we have attained, let us all walk; that is, so much knowledge more or less that thou art convinced of, proportion thy endeavour unto, and not thy knowledge to thy endeavour.

(3.) And he insinuates as much as if he had said, Whereas I may seem too strict for some of you, and to have attained to more than you, therein follow me, says he, think not to have me come back to you, but come up to me; whereas an unregenerate man now will

persuade one, that is more strict than himself, to come to his pace, or else he hates him.

2. Though a godly man falls short in many particular acts of what he knows, and so can't make his life and his knowledge adequate and even, yet take his whole course, he brings his heart to subject itself to all he knows, makes it answerable and conformable to every particular thing known, and hath a care to do so and keep it so from day to day, but especially at such times when he more solemnly reneweth his covenant with God, and sets himself to make his heart perfect with God; which perfection lies in this, in a willing subjection to all he knows. This you may see to be the fruit and effect of David's knowledge; Ps. 119:104, David says there, he had 'gotten much understanding;' by the word he knew more sins than others, had a larger insight into duties commanded than others had; and as he says in another place, 'Thy commandments are exceeding broad.' Now what was the fruit and effect of this knowledge in his heart? He says, 'Therefore do I hate every false way.' You may observe, that as his knowledge was such a knowledge as wrought hatred to the sins he knew; so he had compared particularly his heart with his knowledge, and surveyed the one and the other, and remarked all the particular sins he knew, and of them all he says in particular, 'I hate every one.' He goes over to particulars, makes his heart and his knowledge even, and brings it to a hatred of every false way, which he knew to be such; and so for duties he doth the like, verse 106. He brings his heart in subjection to every duty he knew; and though he had fallen often, yet he takes and renews often an oath of allegiance of his heart, to submit to every one: 'I have sworn,' says he, 'that I will keep thy commandments diligently;' he will not suffer his heart to stand out as a rebel against any; but, as the apostle says, 2 Cor. 10:5, 'he brings every thought into obedience to the knowledge of Christ,' and so makes his knowledge and his heart, in the subjection of it to every command, to be even of adequate extent. So that, suppose in a godly man that some duty and his heart have been strangers for some while, yet he brings them together again, renews his acquaintance, makes them friends

ever and anon; and when they are brought together, though he hath omitted a duty, and hath been a stranger to it, yet after a little conference with his heart and it, they are as good friends as ever, he finds his heart is in it again. So, on the contrary, if he hath admitted any familiarity with any sin, yet he makes his heart and every sin to break friendship, and so makes his heart and his knowledge adequate; so as he can look about them, run over all, and go through every particle of his knowledge, and can truly say there is no sin I know to be such but I hate it, and can part with it, no duty but I have a heart willing to submit to it, and is agreeable to it. And this making the heart perfect is that which should be done from day to day, when a man prays and renews his covenant with God; so David did when he came to pray, Ps. 66:18. He made a separation between his heart and every sin he knew such, and especially when he came to the altar with his offering, as you to the sacrament; so as ever and anon he doth, as at his first conversion (every new act of renewing the covenant between\* a new conversion), go over all particular sins, which either he hath lately been tempted unto or may be, and breaks his heart off from them; and so he views all duties either he is called to, or may be called to, and brings his heart into obedience to them, so as he hath a care to make all adequate, and to walk so to subscribe to all often, as I may so speak, though he hath failed in that full actual conformity required at all times and upon all occasions. But there is no wicked man in the world that keeps his heart thus, and makes it thus correspondent to his knowledge, but either he neglects to do it, or if he goes about it, he cannot get it to part with every sin, nor to submit to every duty; it stands out, and will not take the oath of allegiance to everything, at least doth not this ordinarily in his course.

3. In regard of particular acts of sinning, though a godly man may commit a sin against a smiting strong light in passion (as in the former assertions was discovered), yet these differences may be assigned:

(1.) There is much in his whole heart that takes part with his light and backs it, and speaks on its side; and though his conscience threateneth, terrifies, reproveth, and checks, yet still there is something in his heart is glad of all this, and rejoiceth in it. So says the apostle, Rom. 7:22, that he delighted in the law, and the light of it, and this as it wars and fights against his lusts; for there is a regenerate part suitable to that light, and is glad of all the buffets and blows that conscience gives the heart for the sin, for the light that is in him fights and speaks of his side; but conscience, knowledge, and light in a wicked man hath nothing to back it and uphold it: Rom. 1:28, he 'likes not to retain the knowledge of God.' Indeed, to know the truth and view it, and the beauty and harmony that is in it, may be exceeding pleasant to him, John 5:35, but when this truth, being once received, begins to be busy with him, and to intermeddle in every action, as such light will, and to tell his heart this pleasure of sin ought not to be enjoyed, and this duty ought to be done, and so applies itself and sticks in to guide him in every particular action, this reproveth light he likes not, and so desires not to retain it, nor to carry it along with him wherever he goes; though he was delighted with the bare shining of the truth, yet the reproveth of the truth in his heart he likes not. But a godly man having a heart suitable to his light, delights in all the checkings and reproofs of it, as speaking on its side, and against his enemies. Here now a wicked man, who in a particular act dares not commit the act itself against light, yet his heart is against the light itself. As Balaam, 'If thou wouldst give me this house full of gold, I would speak no other than God speaks;' yet his whole heart was against this light, would have given another message, and would have reversed his blessing, and went with such a hope and full desire, so as his whole heart was against the light and truth though he obeyed it. But now, on the contrary, a godly man, though he may commit the sin which is against his light, and the truth of the law in his conscience, yet still his heart is for the light, and says, 'the law is holy and good,' Rom. 7:14; and this not with an assent which he cannot but choose to afford it, but so as he is glad there is such a law, though it condemns him and sin. Any truth of Christ that is revealed to him,

which crosseth his aims never so much, he doth not only assent that it is true and good, but is glad it is a truth, and says it is best it should be so, and so takes part with it.

(2.) Hence ariseth a second difference between the carriage of a godly man's heart towards his light, and a wicked man's, viz., that a godly man's heart is active in using the light he hath against his sin, and in provoking and stirring up his heart to duty; but a wicked man, though he may be active in getting light, yet is passive rather in the use of it in his heart against sin or to duty. It is common, indeed, to both to have light come in against a sin, both before and after, yet so as a wicked man's heart is but rather a patient in regard of it; but a godly man's heart is an agent that endeavours to bring it in, and to use it against his sin. This you shall find John 3:19, where Christ distinguisheth a wicked and a good heart by this, by coming to the light. A wicked man comes not to the light, but the light to him. Christ puts the difference not in not having or having light, but in their coming or not coming to it, which notes out that wicked men's light comes in upon them, the other call it in, and come to it, and gladly bring their hearts, lives, and estates to it. For instance, before a wicked man commits a sin, whilst he is addressing himself to it, light of conscience may break in upon him, it being appointed as a controller and a watch over him and his ways, and not suffer him to sin securely and untaken notice of. But now a godly man, when he is tempted to sin, he himself stirs up that light which is in him to withstand it. When he hears the thief knock, he lights his candle presently, gathers his thoughts together, musters up such considerations as he can think of as weapons to resist it with, considers what motives, what arguments are against it, calls up such a place of Scripture as had lain sleeping in him, remembers such a piece of a sermon in such a corner of his heart laid up against this time; and armed with this light, all be could muster up on the sudden, he encounters his enemy. So Joseph did: 'How shall I do this, and sin against God?' He considered what God was, and what sin was, to keep him from it; whenas a wicked man, on the contrary, when he would enjoy his sin, he useth his light to find out shifts



rather than arguments against it; he would shut the windows, but that there are some crannies at which light will come in, and find him out, even as Elias found out Ahab: 'Hast thou found me, O my enemy?' Such he judgeth his light, he would imprison the light that is come in, that it might not interrupt him; and so when he had sinned, though light be brought in as a witness, and terrifies and checks, and whilst it follows him, he judgeth himself, confesseth it to God; yet otherwise he would be content to pass it over, nor would set his thoughts to consider what he had done, to the end to humble himself, but that such thoughts are set upon him as they were upon Cain and Judas, when he repented himself, and upon Darius when his thoughts troubled him; but he would not go about to trouble his thoughts about sin, but that sin troubles his thoughts, being set on by the spirit of bondage. But now when a godly man hath sinned, he stays not till his thoughts be troubled about it, but he sets his mind awake to consider his sin; he stays not till a writ be served upon him, but sues out for one, useth his light to examine it, searcheth into every corner and circumstance of it, sits as a judge on himself, judgeth himself lest he be judged, calls in his conscience as a witness, and so goes and humbles himself kindly and willingly before his Father; so they, Lam. 3:40, stir up themselves to set their light a-work, 'Come let us search and try our ways, and turn to the Lord.' They stir up the light in them, light the candle, and go down into every corner, as David did; 'Lord,' says he, 'I have searched.' He used all knowledge he had in it, and when he had done, he sets the windows and doors open, desires God to bring in light and search also.

(3.) The third difference is, that though a godly man may commit an act of sin against knowledge, and on the contrary a wicked man through knowledge and conscience abstain from sinning, yet in a godly man knowledge will overcome, and be too strong and powerful for his sinning, and not let him depart from God; but in the other, in the end his sin will be too head-strong and overpowerful for his knowledge, so as to make him to depart from God, and to go on in sin. So, 2 Peter 2:20, those who through

knowledge had escaped the defilements of the world, were again overcome. Whereas, Rom. 6:14, sin hath not dominion over a regenerate man who is under grace. Which places expound each other; for to be overcome is to yield a man's self a servant again to sin, Rom. 6:16, so as to be pleased and rest in that condition, and so to go on in it. But a slave's spirit never returns upon the child of God, but the knowledge of his former condition rescues him again, and will not suffer indentures to be drawn between them and him, to become a constant servant to it.

Now the reason of this difference is, because knowledge in an unregenerate man hath the whole frame of the heart, and all the strength of the will and affections, armed against it, so as it governs but as a tyrant, by threats, &c. But grace and sanctifying knowledge hath a great interest and party in the will and affections for to back it, so as it fights not alone; but there is a whole man to fight with it, if it be but mustered up by knowledge. And now therefore, though knowledge in the one, ruling only as a tyrant, may for a time overcome a whole country and keep them under, and so conscience in a wicked man rules the whole man, and restrains it from sin for a time, yet this cannot hold long, for the power of every king lies in the love, hearts, and agreement of his subjects, and willing obedience to his laws. Now therefore, knowledge and conscience in an unregenerate man, having none other than a tyrannical power, therefore, as all tyrants are, it is hated of all the whole, whilst it doth rule and curb unruly lusts, and in the end they rise up and overcome it, and depose it and imprison it (so Rom. 1:17), as Herod did John, though he feared him. And in the end they begin to slight his threats, and so overcome knowledge, going on in obeying the lusts of their hearts, let conscience say what it will; and by how much the more they were overawed with it, so much the more they slight it now. But knowledge in a regenerate man hath an interest in the whole heart, even as its natural prince; it hath the hearts of the chiefest and the strength of the subjects, namely, of the will and affections; and therefore, though it may be foiled in a particular combat, lose a field or two, the man carried captive, yet knowledge

in him musters up its forces again, having such a natural interest in the house, as it rescues the heart again; and therefore, though he be overcome in an act of sinning, yet he pitcheth another battle, challengeth it into the field again at new weapons, prayer and confession, and never rests till it hath overcome sin again, so as what it loseth at one time it recovers at another. If sin overcome one way, grace will overcome another, yea, and still wins ground, so as the believer never continues to go on in a sin, or is overcome of it.

3. Whereas it was said in the former assertion, that a godly man might deliberately and presumptuously sin, when he is out of passion, there are these two differences between his sinning and that of a man unregenerate.

(1.) Although a godly man may break a particular commandment again and again against knowledge, yet his knowledge never suffers him to go on so far as to venture knowingly to break the covenant of grace with God, and to depart from him; when he hath gone on so far in a sin as he comes to apprehend he must break with God, and lose him if he goes on any further, this apprehension stays him, stops and brings him back again; he may presumptuously venture (though seldom; and always to his cost) to commit an act of sin against knowledge, because he may withal think, that by one act the covenant is not broken, nor all friendship and love hazarded between God and him, nor his interest in the state of grace, nor God, quite lost by it, though he may well think he would be displeased with him; but if he should begin to allow himself in it, and to continue to go on again and again in it, then he knows the covenant would be broken, it cannot stand with grace; and when this apprehension comes, and comes in strongly, he cannot sin against it, for this were to cast away the Lord, and to depart wickedly from him, now so he doth not. So David, though he sinned highly and presumptuously, yet says he, Ps. 18:21, 'I have not departed wickedly from my God;' that is, I have not so far departed from him as though I apprehended I should utterly lose my interest in him, yet I would go on. No; for he is my God, there lies the consideration

that kept him from departing from him: so Ps. 44:17, 'We have not dealt falsely in thy covenant,' says the church there. Many acts of displeasing him may pass and be ventured, but if the holy soul thinks that the covenant lay at stake, that God and he must utterly part and break off, thus far he will never go. And hence it comes to pass that a Christian finds it often harder to deny himself in small matters than in the great trials and turnings of his life; for usually in great trials a man looks upon them as passages appointed of God on purpose to try him; and if he should fail him then, he thinks he should lose him quite, never look him in the face more, nor be owned by him; and in these cases, and when such apprehensions are set on, the heart sticks close to God, and returns from sinning, for God hath put his fear in their hearts that they should not depart from him, Jer. 32:40. But now a wicked man lying in a course of sinning, and being in the pursuit of his sin, although he apprehends he loseth God thereby by going so far and longer in it, and breaks quite with him, yet he will venture to go on still, as those that defer their repentance do, and such others; as Esau when he sold his birthright, wherein he is made a type of such. So also Saul did; he knew God would cast him off if he destroyed not the Amalekites, yet for fear of the people he ventured to spare the best of them, 1 Sam. 15, and rejected the word of the Lord, and cast God away by that act. And so many, when they have gone so far in an estate of sinning, that they apprehend and are convinced that they are in a damnable condition, yet venture still as securely to go on as ever; these sin against the very covenant and the terms of it, break the very fundamental condition of it; but this no godly man, apprehending or knowing it, can do, nor be false in the fundamental parts of the covenant, for such a violation of it would shut men out of the state of grace, for it is not compatible to it. As God keeps the believer from doing so, so his knowledge and fear doth, as Jeremiah says, Jer. 32:40. A wife that is loving may venture sometimes to do many things she knows displeasing to her husband, but if she should apprehend he would certainly divorce her and cast her off, she would not venture on them, she would not lose her husband. Now to continue in any sin a godly man knows would break the covenant,

and cause an utter divorce, this the fear of God in his heart, and the knowledge of the goodness of God, and of his interest in him, as the church reasoneth, Hosea 2:7, will not suffer him to do. So also for the performance of a duty, though a godly man may neglect to perform it, and that long against his conscience (though it is dangerous so to do), yet herein he acts as a man that hath a bond in a friend's hand, and may neglect such a day of payment, because he may hope to excuse it and humble himself; but in the end, when he shall come to apprehend, that if he takes not some order about it his bond will be sued, all his estate of grace mortgaged, an execution come out, when this is served upon his conscience, this rouseth a godly man, when an unregenerate man will go on for all this, as deferrers of repentance do.

(2.) Though a godly man may deliberately commit a particular sin against his knowledge, and therein despise the commandment of God, that is, make bold with it for that act (as David did, which is most fearful), 2 Sam. 12:9, yet he doth not reject or cast away the commandment which he thus knows, so as to forsake or renounce obedience to it as to a commandment, which he cannot nor will bring his heart to be subject unto, as a wicked man in some one commandment or other usually doth. So Saul is said to do: 1 Sam. 15:23, 'Thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, and therefore God hath rejected thee from being king;' because he cast off the government of the commandment, and would no longer be subject to God, therefore God took away his government over others. He stood out as an outlaw and a rebel in that act, and so the word intimates in that same verse, for his act is called 'rebellion and stubbornness.' Now though David made bold with the commandment, and did so much despise it, yet he stood not out as an outlaw, as one that would not come in to obey it, or that rejected it. A subject may presume in a particular act to transgress a law, and so David did, but yet intends not to shake off the yoke of obedience in anything to his prince, becomes not a rebel, an outlaw to any commandment, as every wicked man doth in regard of some command or other. Though wicked men know that the Sabbath

ought to be kept strictly, they will not only in particulars make bold with it (which is a high kind of sinning), but their hearts cannot be subject to it, yea, will not, and so stand as outlaws; they say in their hearts, 'This man shall not reign over us;' such a commandment they will not be subject unto, and so go on from day to day, not despising it only, but rejecting it, as the Jews did Christ for being king. So also did they, Luke 7:30, who are said to reject the counsel of God within themselves; they knew they ought to subject themselves to John's doctrine and be baptized, but they scorned to seem to follow a poor man. And so in the 50th Psalm, the hypocrite is said there, though he knows God's will (for he takes it into his mouth), yet to 'cast the law behind his back.' Now when a thing is cast behind a man's back, he hath no more an eye to it, but leaves it behind him; but a godly man, though in a particular act he passeth by the law, yet he sets it before him, looks to it as a mariner to the loadstone to sail by it, he turns not his back on it, but (as Paul did, Philip. 3:14) he sets this mark before him, and aims at it in a course of constant obedience; whereas those did the contrary of whom the prophet speaks, Jer. 5:5: these (saith he) 'have broke the bands and the yoke.' Every commandment which a man knows becomes a bond to tie him to God, and as a yoke to keep him in his compass and rank, and bring him into subjection. Now a wicked man breaks the bonds and yoke in pieces, will not be subject to some commandment or other; but a godly man, though he may go astray against his knowledge, and run away, yet still he hath the yoke about his neck, he hath a resolution and heart still to be subject, and doth not break the bond in pieces, and give himself a liberty and allowance to be free from any commandment, though sometimes he makes escapes; as an apprentice, though he breaks the conditions, yet tears not the indentures, as a wicked man doth.

Use 1. The first use is raised from the differences between a godly man's and an unregenerate man's sinning against knowledge; which is to exhort you to examine yourselves by them, my brethren. All here have some knowledge, all know some sins and some duties. Go and examine how thy heart carries thyself to thy knowledge; it is a

short way to convince men by, used by the apostle in Rom. 1; for though the Gentiles had lived according to knowledge, it would not have saved them, yet it might negatively demonstrate their estate naught. Dost thou not desire to grow in knowledge, to the end thou mayest know how to glorify God more? And as thou dost grow, dost thou not still desire to bring thy practice answerable to it, and to run the faster, the further off thy practice is from what thou knowest thou shouldst do? It is well with thee. But dost thou rest in a pitch and course of duties and say, This is enough to save me, and what needs more? Thy estate is naught then. Hast thou not a care to keep thy heart even with thy knowledge, to make it perfect, when thou prayest and receivest the sacraments? Hidest thou not thine eyes from any command, as it is said they in the prophet did from the Sabbath? And when thou knowest it, dost thou not rest till thy heart be loosened from thy sin, and made subject to all duty, to pray, read the word, and sanctify Sabbaths, and to examine thy heart, to confer holily, &c.? Thy heart is naught if thou dost not and wilt not be found perfect before God. Art thou afraid of any truth, and sorry that it is a truth when thou knowest it, because it crosseth thy lust? Art not glad of that busy light that is in thee? but dost thou wish thyself rid of it? Art thou overcome of any sin, and though thou knowest it to be a sin, yet in the end goest on and allowest thyself in it, let conscience say what it will? Hast thou a heart can defer repentance when thou art persuaded thy estate is naught, and go on in sinning when thou seest thou must lose God if thou dost? Thy heart is naught then. Dost thou reject any commandment and daily walk, as if there were no such thing to be minded by thee, as if it were not to be put into thy memorandum to have a care of? Dost thou pass Sabbaths thus, and praying-times over thus? Thy heart is false with God then. My brethren, believe it, at the latter day the first course God will take in his order of convincing and condemning men, will be to reckon and account what knowledge they had, and so then to examine how they walked accordingly: Rom. 2, 'Those without the law shall be judged without it;' for it will afford matter of conviction sufficient to take what sins they knew to be sins, and yet sinned in them. And therefore in the first chapter of

the Epistle to the Romans, the apostle goes no further, but instanceth in such sins as natural light taught them. Do thou so of what thou knowest, and see how thou answerest that knowledge.

And as for you that are professors, and know more, I here charge you, either leave professing to know God, leave noting sermons, and repeating them, or else make your hearts perfect and your lives answerable. For St John says plainly, 'He that says he knows God, and keeps not his commandments, is a liar,' 1 John 2:4, an hypocrite. Wherein lies the power of religion, but in ruling and moulding the heart to what you know?

Use 2. Though a regenerate man may sin so far against knowledge, yet this is not to encourage any to go so far, and presume they may still be in the state of grace. No; but as the apostle says, 'These things we write to you, that you sin not.' Nor do I speak these things so to you that you may be discouraged, presently to think all is naught, and to call all into question. I would have such as would presume on what hath been said, not to make so had a use of so true a doctrine, but consider the heinousness of sinning against knowledge, and withal the fearful consequences of making bold with the commandments of God. A sin of knowledge will stop thy mouth both to God and man. When thou goest to pray to God, it will clap a lock upon thy heart and lips; so it did on David's, as appears from Psalm 51, where after that great sin he prays to God to open his lips, for that they had been sealed up; besides, it will cause God to give thee up to terrors, to lose the comfort of all thy grace. And as thou sinnest against knowledge, so knowledge and the guilt of thy sin shall fight against thee: and though he will not give thee up to thy lusts as he gave up these Gentiles, and to a reprobate mind, for thou art his child, yet he will give thee up to a terrified mind; and as seven devils enter into one that falls after knowledge, that belongs not to God, so in thy proportion shall seven devils be let loose to terrify thee; and as their latter end is worse than the beginning, so shall a worse humiliation cease on thee than at thy first conversion. If thou wilt go to the utmost of what is compatible with the state of



grace in sinning, God will answerably bring thee to the utmost border of hell, as far as thou canst go and not go in, to the depth of that despair which may stand with faith. This often he doth; yea, happily he will shorten thy life, cut thee off before thy time; for he that sins presumptuously, Num. 15:30, 31, should be cut off. And the laws of men not now taking notice of thee, God will cut thee off, at least in thy apprehension, from the number of his people; thy own thoughts and speeches shall excommunicate thee, thou shalt lie roaring and cry out, thou art none of his. Therefore take heed of doing anything presumptuously by what hath been said, but make this use of it, that if in time past thou hast thus sinned, and art therefore now in the dungeon, and so thinkest because thou didst sin so grievously against knowledge, that therefore thou wert never truly regenerate, to comfort thee, consider what hath been said.

Use 3. Is it so heinous to sin against knowledge? This should teach us to be valiant for the truth, if evil times come. Those truths which you are now assured of, flinch not from them; remember what St Paul says to Timothy: 1 Tim. 6:12, 13, 'Fight the good fight of faith, that thou hast professed before many witnesses. And I give you charge in the sight of God, who is able to quicken you,' if you die for it, 'and of Jesus Christ, who himself witnessed a good confession before Pilate,' and denied not what he knew was truth, that you do so too, though others will say with Pilate, What is truth? and make a jest of it; but never deny it. Be ye cast in prison, the truth will make you free, John 8:32, and pay all thy charges; and therefore do not thou imprison it as the Gentiles, for the children of God can do nothing against the truth, not heartily; they cannot deny it, and stand out denying it, as the martyrs could not, it will break prison doors; for when they had subscribed, they could not be quiet till they had tom out their names again. We can do nothing against it, but for it all we can, 2 Cor. 13:8.

## **CHAPTER VII**

The other case resolved, wherein the sin against the Holy Ghost differs from other sins against knowledge.

There is yet another case or question to be answered concerning sinning against knowledge, and that is, what difference may be between any other sin against knowledge, and that great sin of all other only unpardonable, which is in an especial manner called a sin 'after receiving the truth,' and 'after enlightening,' Heb. chapters 6 and 10. And this is necessary to speak a little of, for it is homogeneal to this head, it being an essential ingredient into that sin, and a necessary circumstance of it, that it is against the greatest light; and so the apostle in both places expresseth it, as also because many poor souls that sin after enlightenings, or have fallen off from the practice of what they have professed, think therefore they have sinned that sin, because against so much clear and tasting knowledge: and indeed there is no man almost, that hath been enlightened, but those places have had a blow at him, or may come to have. Now, therefore, as I have given you differences between a regenerate man's sinning against knowledge, and an unregenerate man's, so I will also between ordinary unregenerate men's sinning against knowledge, and this, there being a peculiarity in it; for it is not simply sinning against and after tasting knowledge, for then the saints should sin it—Solomon and David had done it; nor the resisting of the Spirit in the motions of it; for then they, Isa. 63:10, who were God's people, should be guilty of it: nor is it simply hating the light as contrary to our own lusts, for then every one that doth evil should be guilty of it, as John 3:18, 19, not hating God as he is considered a judge, commanding such strict laws, for so the Gentiles should have sinned it, who never knew the gospel, Rom. 1:30, and then every unregenerate man, whose mind is enmity to God and his law, Rom. 8:17, should be guilty of it. No; nor is it speaking evil of, or injuring those we know to be saints, for then Manasses should have sinned it, who slew the prophets, and filled Jerusalem with blood, who yet was brought up well; for Hezekiah being a godly man, surely had him instructed, and he was twelve years old ere he died; and at 2 Chron. 33:10, it is said, the Lord

spake to him, so as he had notice of all. And also Herod had sinned it, who put John to death, whom he revered and knew to be a holy man; but yet he did not sin the sin against the Holy Ghost, for he was sorrowful. Therefore to clear this to you:

First, It is not sinning against any kind of knowledge of things in the word that makes this sin, for it is not sinning against the knowledge of the law, to commit adultery, or blaspheme God against knowledge, which is this sin; for, Heb. 10:28, the apostle makes it a further kind of sinning than despising any part of the law; yet to despise the law was to sin presumptuously, and to reproach the Lord therein, Num. 15:30, 31, and is opposed to sinning ignorantly: and Christ says, every blasphemy shall be forgiven but this. But it is a sinning against the light of things revealed in the gospel, the light of the offer of grace, of the Spirit accompanying that light, with tasting of the goodness of that offer: so Heb. 6, Heb. 10:29, and against the work of the Spirit in themselves and others; and it is not γνῶσις only, but ἐπιγνώσις, a conviction and evidence wrought of the truth and goodness of them.

Secondly, It is not every kind of despising the truths of the gospel, but such as is accompanied with a despiteful causeless contempt of them, and indignation against them. It is not the undervaluing of the offer of grace to the pleasures of sin: so the young man did, who yet was sorrowful. So many do who defer their repentance, prefer their lusts to Christ and mercy, who yet are converted after; for this contempt is but because they cannot enjoy Christ and their lusts: if they could have him with their lusts they would. It is but comparatively they thus contemn it, joined with some esteem of it, and desire after it. But this sin includes in it a simple contempt; therefore the Holy Ghost expresseth it, by trampling under foot Christ's blood, and esteeming it as a common thing. If they had a cup full of his blood, they would pour it on the ground, not only preferring other things before it, but trampling it as mire and dirt, as the Jews did Christ, saying that he was a devil, yet knowing him to be the Messiah (as appears, Mark 3:28, Christ speaking of that sin),

debasement in their esteem, and so also doing despite or contumely, as the word signifies, to the Spirit of grace; contemning, not resisting only, his work in themselves or others; not opposing the saints only, but having no reverence of them.

Thirdly, Their hatred to God and Christ, and the light and work of the Spirit, and his saints, is a revengeful hatred, therefore called a crucifying of Christ again, and doing despite to the Spirit; for you must know there may be a twofold hatred of God and Christ, and the saints: one primary, direct, and hating them as such; another secondary, occasioned and stirred up, because they are crossed by these and vexed by them; as Ahab hated Micaiah, not as a prophet, but because he said contrary to what he would have had him; and so Herod against John Baptist, because he preached against his lust, it was not as he was a holy man, not sub nomine.

Now all unregenerate men may come thus to hate God secondarily and indirectly, because they look on him as a judge, and to hate the saints because their light reproves them and vexeth their consciences, and they cannot be quiet for them; for it is in hatred as in love. And as a wicked man may love a godly man, yet not as godly, but for some amiableness and profitableness by his godliness to him, as Darius loved Daniel, Pharaoh loved Joseph, and Achish loved David, for the usefulness and benefit they had by their grace; so wicked men hate grace also, and they generally do it as being contrary to their lusts, and therefore speak evil of the saints. But now this revengeful hatred which is bounded primarily against the person of God and Christ, this causeless hatred (as Christ expresseth this sin, John 15:24, 25), seeing and hating causelessly all the saints he knows such, in relation to the covenant of grace established with them, because they are saints and God's children, this may seem to be the form of this sin; therefore they are said to crucify again to themselves the Lord Christ; for were it in their power they would do it; and that which is the devil's master-lust is theirs also: John 8:44, 'His lusts ye will do,' says Christ, speaking of the Pharisees who desired to kill him out of a revengeful

disposition, and so they sinned this sin. It was a revengeful hatred set them a-work, and thus they also are guilty of this great sin against the Holy Ghost, who do despite to the Spirit of grace, Heb. 10:28, and so against all saints as saints: for seeing they cannot be revenged on God, they persecute them; and so these love sin, not only secondarily for the pleasures that come in with it, but as sin, because it provokes God, because they know it will anger him; which revenge is made their bosom-lust, and all resolved into it, and is stirred up in them, by reason they apprehend God to have cast them off; therefore they are said to have ἐκδοχὴν κρίσεως, to receive judgment, Heb. 10:27, whereas others standing in terms of treaty for grace with God, have not this revengeful disposition stirred up in them, but those other malicious sinners are desperate.

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