

Monergism

GOD'S
DELIGHT IN
THE PROGRESS
OF THE
UPRIGHT

THOMAS BROOKS



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God's Delight in the Progress of the Upright

by Thomas Brooks (1608 - 1680)

NOTE

The title-page of 'God's Delight' will be found below.* The usual 'order' is prefixed as follows:—'Die Mercurii 30mo Decem. 1648. Ordered by the Commons assembled in Parliament that Sir John Bouchier do from this House give thanks to Mr Brooks for the great pains he took in his sermon preached at Margarets, Westminster, before the House of Commons, upon the day of their public Humiliation last preceding: and that he be desired to print his sermon, wherein he is to have the like privilege in printing of it, as others in the like kind usually have had.

'Henry Elsynge, Cer. Dom. Com.

'I appoint Rapha Harford and Thomas Brewster to print this sermon,

'Thomas Brooks.'

* GOD'S DELIGHT
IN THE PROGRESSE
OF THE UPRIGHT.

Especially

In Magistrates Uprightnesse and constancy in wayes of justice

and righteousnesse in these Apostatizing Times,
notwithstanding all discouragements, oppositions, &c.

Presented in a Sermon before the Honorable House of
Commons at their last monethly Fast, December 26. 1648.

By Thomas Brooks, Preacher of the Gospel at Thomas Apostles.

Job 17:8, 9.

The righteous shall hold on in his way, and he that hath clean
hands shall be stronger and stronger.

Upright men shall be astonished at this, for the innocent shall
stirre up himselfe against the Hypocrite.

Numb. 35:33.

Yee shall not pollute the Land wherein yee are; for bloud, it
defileth the Land, and the Land cannot be cleansed of the bloud
that is shed therein, but by the bloud of him that shed it.

London,

Printed by M. S. for R. Harford at the Bible in Queen's-head-alley in
Paternoster-row, and Thomas Brewster at the West end of Pauls,
1649.

[4to.—G.]

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THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY

To the Honourable HOUSE OF COMMONS in Parliament assembled.

THIS work was too high for me; and, as it is now done by so weak a hand, is too low for so many judicious eyes to look down to. Yet, according to your command, I have published these notes, which I humbly present to your Honours. They were once in your ear, they are now in your eye, and the Lord ever keep them in your hearts! Solomon bids us 'buy the truth,' but doth not tell us what it must cost, because we must get it though it be never so dear. *Multi amant veritatem lucentem, oderunt redarguentem*, We should love it both shining and scorching. The desire of my soul is, that you may deal so with those truths which here in all humbleness is presented to you. Oh that we may be all doers of the word, and not hearers only, lest we deceive our own souls! When I stood upon my watch to see what the Lord would say unto me, that I might speak unto you a word in season—or as the Hebrew has it, Prov. 25:11, עַל-אֶפְנָיו, *gnal ophnau*, upon the wheels, i.e., with a due concurrence and observation of all circumstances, of time, place, persons, &c., which are as the wheels upon which our words and speeches should run—He directed me to make this discovery of upright hearts' progress in the ways of God, notwithstanding all afflictions, &c., that do befall them; which gives me hope that God intended to send home into your hearts some light and influence from this truth, to encourage and keep up your spirits against all the opposition which you may find in the cause of God and the kingdom, and to maintain your zeal and forwardness therein, that justice and judgment may run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream. If justice do not work the salvation of sinners' souls, yet it will work to the

restraining of their sin—the measure of their wickedness will be less. That is a grave speech of Seneca's, *Ut nemo pereat, nisi quem perire etiam pereuntis intersit*, That none perish but those to whom it is an advantage to perish. And yet, Right Honourable, I desire that justice and clemency may go together. Nero's speech has great praise, who, when he was to subscribe to the death of a man condemned, would say, *Utinam nescirem literas*, I wish I did not know how to write. Right Honourable, you have the largest opportunities to honour God and to do good to his saints that ever any men had since the world began. God hath laid out works for you, fit for truly noble spirits. You have many precious saints to take care of; use them kindly, and 'the good-will of him that did dwell in the bush shall rest upon you.' Be not exasperated against any of them, by those who are so enraged, that they would have fire to come down from heaven and consume them. I hope there be a generation that will not abuse that liberty that shall be granted them according to the word, but will, in the midst of all their liberties, be faithful servants to peace and concord, according to that which Master Calvin writes to Farel, *Nos liberi servi sumus pacis et concordiae*. I hope God will arise in you, and cause you to do his work his own way. The Lord God guide your Honours, and give every one of you to act like the angels of God, cheerfully, freely, readily, sincerely, and unweariedly in your generation, that in all your ways Christ may own you, and that all the godly of the land may rise up and call you blessed; and let the blessing of him that was in the bush be upon you and yours for ever; and let all the precious sons of Zion that loves the God of heaven, who is the Saviour of this nation, say Amen.—Honoured and worthy Senators, I am, your Honours' in all humble service for Christ,

THOMAS BROOKS.

GOD'S DELIGHT IN THE PROGRESS OF THE UPRIGHT

Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy ways.—Ps. 44:18.

CURIOSITY is the spiritual adultery of the soul. Curious divisions do rather affect the ear than warm the heart: they do but rack and disjoint the sense of Scripture. And therefore, as he speaks, 2 Sam. 18:23, 'We will run by the way of the plain.'

'Our heart is not turned back,' &c.

These words look to the front and to the rear; they look forward and backward. They look forwards upon the tossed and afflicted estate in which the church was, as you may read from ver. 9–17; and they look backward to the broken and persecuted estate of the church, expressed in ver. 19–24, 'Though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death, and though we be every day as sheep accounted for the slaughter; yet we have not forsaken thee, neither have we dealt falsely in the covenant. Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy ways.'

'Our heart,' Libbenu. The Hebrew word, לבב, or Greek, καρδία, that is rendered 'heart,' both in the Old and New Testament, doth signify the understanding, mind, will, affections, conscience, the whole soul. 'Our heart is not turned back.' Our understandings and minds are the same as they were in a summer's day, though now we be in a winter's storm—though now we be afflicted, tossed, broken, and persecuted; yet notwithstanding, 'our heart is not turned back'—our mind, will, affections, and conscience, our whole soul, is the same now as before. 'Our heart is not turned backward, neither have our steps declined from thy ways.'

'Our heart is not turned back.'

This notes their progress in the ways of well-doing; for the old saying is, Non progredi est regredi, Not to go forward is to go backward. 'Neither have our steps or our goings declined from thy ways.' It notes their settled course of walking in the ways of God; and, in short, the sum of all is, though we have been afflicted, tossed, broken and persecuted, yet our hearts have held on in the ways of the Lord, and we have not departed from our God. 'Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy ways.'

Right Honourable, there is but one observation that I shall speak to this day, and that is this: that doctrine—

Upright hearts will hold on in the ways of God, and in the ways of well-doing, notwithstanding all afflictions, troubles, and discouragements they meet withal.

That is the sum and the scope of this verse here. The church was afflicted, tossed, broken, and persecuted; and yet this is still the burden of the song, 'Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy ways.'

I judge it a point seasonable in every respect. I shall only eye the scriptures that prove it, and then open it to you.

The scriptures that prove it are these: Ps. 119:23, 24; Josh. 24:15; Neh. 4:13, 17 compared; Mal. 3:13–17; 2 Cor. 11:23–30. These scriptures speak out this truth, that upright hearts will hold on in the ways of God, and in the ways of well-doing, notwithstanding all the afflictions, troubles, and discouragements they meet withal.

For the opening of the point, I shall premise these three things:—

First, I shall premise something concerning upright hearts.

Secondly, I shall premise something concerning the ways of God.
And,

Thirdly, The reasons why upright hearts will hold on in the ways of God, in the ways of well-doing, notwithstanding all the afflictions, troubles, and discouragements they meet withal.

Concerning upright hearts, I shall only premise these four things:—

1. First, An upright heart hates all sins, even those which he cannot conquer; and he loves all divine truths, even those which he cannot practise. An upright heart, he hates all sin. All sin strikes at God, at his holiness, as well as at an upright man's happiness. It strikes at God's glory, as well as at the soul's comfort; therefore the soul strikes at all. All sins, in the eye of an upright heart, are traitors to the crown and dignity of the Lord Jesus; therefore the soul riseth in arms against all. An upright heart, he looks upon sin to be malum catholicum—A catholic evil. An upright heart, he looks upon sin as that which hath thrown down the most righteous man in the world, as Noah; as that which hath thrown down the best believer in the world, as Abraham; as that which hath thrown down the best king in the world, as David; as that which hath thrown down the best apostle in the world, as Paul. It looks upon sin as that which hath thrown down the strongest, as Samson; and the wisest, as Solomon; and the meekest, as Moses; and the patientest, as Job; and so his soul riseth against it. In Ps. 119:104, 'Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.' 'Therefore I hate every false way:' sanethi, from sane. The original word, שָׂנֵא, signifies to hate with a deadly and irreconcilable hatred; to hate so as that nothing will satisfy but the destruction of the thing hated. It is the same Hebrew word that is used to express Absalom's hatred of Amnon for defiling of his sister Tamar, 'My soul hates him.'

An unsound heart, a rotten heart, strikes at some sins, and yet falls in with others; he cries down pride and ignorance, and yet falls in

with oppression and cruelty; he cries down tyranny and injustice in others, and yet plays the tyrant and unjust one himself. There are men who are blinded by Satan, and he hath them by the hand, and the Lord knows whither he will lead them.

And as an upright heart hates all sins, even those he cannot conquer, so an upright soul loves all truths, even those that he cannot practise. Every word of the Lord is just and righteous in the eye of an upright soul; he loves all truth strongly, though he can practise no truth but very weakly. Every word of grace is glorious, every line of grace is very glorious. Truth is homogeneal; where one truth is sweet, there every truth is sweet to an upright soul. In Ps. 119:127, 128, saith David there, 'I have loved thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold: I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right.' That is the first thing.

2. Secondly, Concerning upright hearts, I shall premise this: Upright hearts, they serve God, and seek God more for that internal worth and that eternal good that is in him, than for any external good they receive from him. So it was with upright Job. The devil, in Job 1, would fain charge Job that his heart was not right with God, that God had made a hedge about him, and therefore Job served him. The Lord therefore gives Satan liberty to break down that hedge, that Job's uprightness might appear, and that it might appear to all the world, that Job served God for that internal and eternal worth that was in him—viz., holiness, wisdom, and goodness. Therefore, when that hedge was down, and Job was stripped of all, yet in ver. 21, 'The Lord hath given,' saith he, 'and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.' Oh, upright Job served God for that internal and eternal worth that is in him; and therefore, though all his outward goods were lost, his soul could bless God.

But an unsound heart, a rotten heart, serves God and seeks good merely for some external good it hath from him, or expects to receive by him. That is a true saying, *Pauci quærunt Deum propter*

se, sed propter aliud, Few men seek God for himself, but for some other thing. Like those in Hosea 7:14, 'When they howled,' saith God, 'upon their beds, it was for corn, and wine, and oil, and they rebelled against me.' It was not for any internal or eternal worth in me, it was not for that holiness, wisdom, faithfulness, purity, and glory that is in me; but they seek me for loaves, for corn, and wine, and oil, and they rebelled against me.

3. A third thing I shall premise is this, Upright hearts are most exercised and most busied and taken up about the inward man, about the inside, observing that, reforming that, examining that, watching that. An upright heart knows that his soul is Christ's throne, his chamber of presence; and therefore, above all, the upright heart is most diligent to observe that none sit upon that throne but Christ, and that none come into that chamber of presence but Christ, that no sceptre be advanced there but the sceptre of Christ; he is most careful of the inside. In Ps. 86:11, 'Incline my heart to fear thy name;' Ps. 119:36, 'Let my heart be sound in thy statutes;' and so in ver. 80 and ver. 112 of the same psalm.

Now an unsound heart, a rotten heart, is most taken up about the outside,—informing that, and reforming that, and watching of that; but as for the inside, there is no eye cast to see how all stands there. The devil may bear rule; any may come into the soul and domineer and oppose the sceptre of Christ. So an unsound soul is taken up merely about the outside. That same exhortation of Solomon is strong upon an upright heart: Prov. 4:23, 'Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.' The original hath it more elegantly, 'Before all, or above all keeping, keep thy heart; for out of it is the goings forth of lives.' This duty that Solomon presseth, is a duty that an upright heart above all endeavours to practise. Above all and before all, he guards his soul; he looks to his inward parts, how he thrives and grows, how he stands God-ward, Christ-ward, heaven-ward, and holiness-ward.

4. The last thing I shall premise is, Upright hearts in their constant course are even-carriaged hearts. An upright heart in his constant course is an even-carriaged heart. All the ways of an upright soul are as commentaries one upon another; and look, 'as face answereth face,' as Solomon speaketh, so the ways of an upright heart do one answer another. Christ sits at the stern of the soul, and guides the soul into those ways that are most like to himself: 2 Chron. 34:2, 'Josiah, he walked in all the ways of the Lord, as his father David did; he turned neither to the right hand nor to the left.' In all his ways he carried himself evenly. But an unsound heart, a rotten heart, is a very uneven-carriaged heart. You shall have one way wherein he walks to speak him out an angel, another to speak him a very sinful man, and a third to speak him a devil. Now he is for God, anon against God; now for justice and righteousness, anon for injustice and unrighteousness. But an upright heart is an even-carriaged heart. Let heaven and earth meet, let trials come, temptations and afflictions come, he keeps his ground, he is an even-carriaged heart. So much concerning the first thing.

For the second, concerning the ways of God, I shall briefly premise these five things:—

1. First, The ways of God are righteous ways, the ways of God are blessed ways: Prov. 8:20, 'I lead in the way of righteousness, and in the midst of the paths of judgment;' and in the 33d verse of that same chapter, 'Hearken unto me now therefore, O ye children, for blessed are they that keep thy ways.' The ways of God are blessed ways; they bring in temporal, spiritual, and eternal blessings upon all that walk in them. They are righteous ways; they lead to righteousness, to the love of righteousness, to the practice of righteousness, to a delight in righteousness. As for the ways of profaneness, pride, hypocrisy, neutrality, formality, and apostasy, these are none of the ways of God; they are unrighteous ways, cursed ways, and they bring nothing but curses and crosses upon all that walk in them. Those that walk in these ways are

nowhere secure, but are every moment liable to the thunderbolts of divine displeasure.

2. And secondly, The ways of God are soul-refreshing ways.

Oh, they yield the soul abundance of refreshing and sweetness that walks in them. In Jer. 6:16, 'Ask for the old way, the good old way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest,'—מרגוע, margoang, 'ye shall find refreshing to your souls,' as the original hath it. If a man's soul be tired and weary, the ways of the Lord will refresh it; if it be dead and dull, the ways of the Lord will quicken it; if he be fainting, the ways of the Lord will be as a cordial to him.

3. And then, thirdly, The ways of the Lord, as they are soul-refreshing ways,

so they are transcendent ways, ways that transcend all other ways. What is darkness to light? What are pebbles to pearls? What is dross to gold? No more are the choicest ways of the creature to the ways of God: Isa. 55:8, 9, 'My ways are not as your ways, nor my thoughts as your thoughts; but as high as the heavens are above the earth, so are my thoughts above your thoughts, and my ways above your ways.' What is said of wisdom, Prov. 3:15, 'that she is more precious than rubies, and that all the things we can desire are not to be compared to her,' the same may be affirmed of the ways of God. Oh! they are more precious than rubies, and all other ways are not to be compared to them.

4. And then, fourthly, The ways of God are soul-strengthening ways,

ways that yield strength to the soul. In Prov. 10:29, 'The way of the Lord is strength to the upright,' ('magnos'): from gnazaz, the way of the Lord maketh strong. The original word, טוּב signifies to confirm, to make strong. Oh, the ways of the Lord confirm upright hearts, they make upright hearts strong, strong to withstand temptations, strong to conquer corruptions, strong to rejoice under afflictions, strong to perform the most heavenly duties, strong to improve the most spiritual mercies. The ways of the Lord make strong, they confirm such hearts as walk in them.

5. Then, fifthly and lastly, As the ways of the Lord are soul-strengthening ways, so they are afflicted, perplexed, and persecuted ways. Mat. 7:14, 'Strait is the gate,' &c. The original word, τεθλιμμένη, signifies perplexed, afflicted, persecuted; and the way is made strait by afflictions and troubles and persecutions. And so in Acts 19:9, 'This way is everywhere evil spoken of;' and in Acts 24:14, 'In the way that you call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers.' The ways of God are afflicted, persecuted, and perplexed ways. And so much for the second thing.

The third—to make haste to what I chiefly intend—for the reasons why upright hearts will hold on in the ways of God, notwithstanding all the afflictions, troubles, and discouragements that do befall them, are these:—

1. The first is drawn from the nature of a Christian's life, which is a race; and as he that runs a race, if he holds not out, notwithstanding all discouragements, till he comes to the goal, loseth the garland; and as he that faints in wrestling loseth the crown, so do those that hold not out to the end; therefore upright hearts will hold out to the end, notwithstanding all the discouragements they meet with in the ways of God: 1 Cor. 9:24, 'Know ye not that they that run in a race run all, but one receiveth the crown? So run, that ye may obtain.' So in Heb. 12:1, 'Let us with patience run the race that is set before us.'

2. A second ground of their holding out, notwithstanding all the afflictions and discouragements they meet with in the ways of God, and in the ways of well-doing, is drawn from the glorious promises of reward. For mark, as there is a comforting virtue in the promises, so there is a quickening and an encouraging virtue in all the glorious promises, as to warm the heart, so to raise and encourage the heart to run the ways of God's commandments, especially such promises as these:—Rev. 2:10, 'Satan shall cast some of you into prison: but fear not, but be faithful unto the death, and I will give thee the crown of life.' That

crown is a sure crown, a matchless crown, a glorious crown, a lasting crown: 'I will give you a crown of life;' I that am faithfulness itself, I that am truth itself, I that am goodness itself, I that am power itself, I that have all in heaven and earth at my disposing, I will give thee a crown of life. And Paul, 2 Tim. 4:8, 'Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.' The word that is rendered laid up [ἀπόκειται] signifies safely to lay up: it notes both a designation and a reservation. There is a crown designed and safely kept for me. And so such a promise as that, Rev. 3:5, 'He that overcometh shall be arrayed in white: and I will not blot his name out of the book of life, but I will confess him before my Father, and before his angels.' And in ver. 21 of the same chapter, 'He that overcometh shall sit down with me in my throne, as I overcame, and sat down with my Father in his throne.' That is another reason from the promises of reward. Promises of reward to the master and mariners, oh, how do they raise up their spirits to go through any storms, to go through many dangers! and so doth the glorious promises of reward that God makes to his; they carry them bravely through all storms.

3. A third reason is, Because of all ways the ways of God are the most honourable ways; therefore upright hearts will hold on in them, notwithstanding all the afflictions and discouragements they meet with. The most renowned and honoured saints that ever breathed on earth, and that are now triumphant in heaven, have walked in those ways of God. The ways of sin are base, reproachful ways; but the ways of God are honourable ways.

When a man doth but fancy that the way he walks in is an honourable way, alas! how is his spirit carried on in that way against all opposition that he meets with! Oh, how much more doth the testimony that God gives of his ways, and the encouragements that he gives to his people to hold on in his ways, raise up their spirits to hold on against all discouragements.

4. But fourthly, The principal reason of upright hearts holding on in the ways of well-doing against all discouragements, is, because they are carried on in the ways of well-doing, and in the ways of God, from spiritual and internal causes, from spiritual principles, from a principle of inward life and spiritual power. It is true, if upright hearts were only carried on from fleshly, carnal, and external causes, they would wheel about, and turn apostates, and be base, and what not. But upright hearts are carried on in the ways of God from inward principles, as in Jer. 32:40, 'I will put my fear in their hearts, and they shall never depart from me;' and in Ezek. 36:26, 27, 'I will take away the heart of stone, and give them a heart of flesh. I will put my Spirit in them, and cause them to observe my statutes, and to walk in my ways.' Upright hearts are carried on by an inward principle of fear, faith, and love, and this carries them bravely on against all the discouragements they meet with. In Isa. 40:31, 'They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength like the eagle; they shall run and not be weary,' because they run upon another's legs—viz., the Lord Christ's; 'and they shall walk and not faint,' because they walk in the strength of Christ. That is another reason.

5. The fifth and last reason of their holding on in the ways of God, notwithstanding all the discouragements that befall them, is drawn from the former profit and sweetness that they have found in the ways of God. Oh! upright souls have found by experience the ways of God to be profitable ways indeed, to be the most gainful way that ever souls walked in. Upright hearts can say, We went to prayer at such a time, and we met with Christ answering us. Oh! what a mercy was that! And another time, We went to the word, and we met with Jesus Christ embracing us. Oh! what a favour was that! And another time, We went to the communion of saints, and we met with Christ warming and inflaming our hearts; and oh, what a heaven was that! as they in Luke 24:32, 'Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us?' Oh! the remembrance of that former sweetness they have

found carries them aloft against all discouragements! The kiss that the king gave one, as the story speaks, was more than the golden cup he gave to the other. Oh, the spiritual kisses that the King of kings gives upright souls when he meets them in his ways, carries their souls an-end against all afflictions and oppositions that they meet withal. David saith, in Ps. 116:2, 'Because thou hast inclined thine ear to me, therefore will I call on thee as long as I live.' Therefore—wherefore? 'Because thou hast inclined thine ear to me, I will call on thee as long as I live.' In summer season and in winter season, let men smile or frown, I will call upon thee as long as I live. The sweet gain and profit that usurers and mariners have found in such and such ways, doth exceedingly carry their spirits on in those ways, notwithstanding all discouragements, reproaches, and scorns; and so doth the sweetness that upright souls have found in the ways of God. And thus much for the reasons of the point, and for the doctrinal part.

We come now to the use, which is the main thing I have my eye upon at this time.

1. And first, Is it so, that upright hearts will hold on in the ways of God and the ways of well-doing, notwithstanding all afflictions, troubles, and discouragements that may befall them? Then this, in the first place, serves to shew us that the number of upright hearts are very few; for ah! how few be there that keep close to the ways of God, and hold on in the ways of well-doing, when storms begin to rise! Right Honourable, it is nothing for a man when he hath wind and tide on his side, when there is concurrence of all secondary causes to lift a man up and carry him bravely on; it is nothing to hold on now in the ways of God and the ways of well-doing. Oh, but when a man is tossed and afflicted, broken and persecuted, now to hold on in the ways of well-doing, this is the glory of a Christian; but how few are there that hold out in these seasons! Oh! witness the treachery, witness the apostasy, witness the neutrality of men in our days, that, when storms begins,

for fleshly ends wheel about. It shews that the number of upright hearts are very few: but I will not stand on this.

2. Secondly, Is it so, that upright hearts will hold on in the ways of well-doing, notwithstanding all discouragements that befall them? Right Honourable, let me then exhort you first more particularly, and then more generally, to hold on in the ways of well-doing, notwithstanding all the afflictions, troubles, and discouragements you may meet with. You have begun to fall upon the execution of justice, which is a way wherein God delights to walk, and wherein he delights to see those that are in authority to walk impartially. I shall press this particularly, and then press the point more generally, both upon yourselves and all that hear me.

Now, Right Honourable, in this labour to hold on, you have begun in the Spirit—as to that point—do not end in the flesh, but hold on in the way of well-doing. Justice is called by Aristotle, Hesperus, the glorious star: by another, the sun of the world. Oh let this glorious sun so shine forth, that the best of men may rejoice, and the worst of men may tremble. Take to yourselves, Right Honourable, the glorious resolution of Jerome, who once expressed himself thus: 'If my father should stand before me, and my brethren press about me, and my mother hang upon me, I would throw down my father, and break through my brethren, and trample upon my mother, to cleave to Jesus Christ.' O Right Honourable, take glorious resolutions to yourselves. Though your fathers may stand before you, and your brethren and friends press about you, though your mothers should hang on you, I mean the nearest relations, throw down the one, and break through the other, and trample upon the third, that your souls may cleave to the way of God, to the ways of justice and righteousness. You know the rule is, *Fiat justitia et ruat mundus*, Let justice be done, though the world be ruined. And that is a true saying, *Odia qui nimium timet regnare nescit*. Oh that upon every worthy member's heart and forehead that which once Chrysostom spake of himself might be written, *Nil nisi peccatum timeo*, I fear nothing but sin. Oh that this were every member's motto, I fear

nothing but sin. I fear not the threats, the rage, the fury, nor the designs and plots of men that are turned into devils: I fear nothing but sin.

Right Honourable, that this may stick, give me leave to propound to your serious thoughts these few considerations:—

1. First, Consider this, when men do execute their just judgment, then God will divert and turn away his judgment from a nation. In Ps. 106:30, 31, 'Then Phinehas stood up and executed judgment, and the plague was stayed,' that not a man died after. When men stand up to execute their just judgment, the Lord will divert and turn away his. There are a company of ignorant sottish people that think that the doing of justice will undo a land, and bring all calamities upon it; whereas there is nothing of more power to divert the judgment of God from a nation than the execution of justice and judgment: Jer. 5:1, 'Go,' saith God, 'run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see and know and seek in the broad places thereof if you can find a man'—ay, but it is not every man that will do it, but such a man—'that will execute judgment and seek truth,' and I will pardon you. 'If there be but a man that executes judgment and seeks truth, I will pardon you,' saith God, 'I will turn away my wrath.' So in Ezek. 22:29–31, 'The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and vexed the poor and needy; they oppress the stranger wrongfully. And I sought for a man among you' [mark!] 'that might make up the hedge,' alluding to Moses that magistrate—'I sought for a man among you that might make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I might not destroy it; but he could not be found.' And what follows? 'Therefore I poured out my indignation on them, and consumed them with the fire of my wrath; their own way have I recompensed upon their heads,' saith the Lord.

2. Secondly, Your neglect of justice will provoke God to throw all your religious services as dung in your faces: Isa.

1:11, 'To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices? I am weary of your new moons and your burnt-offerings and your sabbaths; my soul loathes them, they are an abomination to me.' What is the reason? 'Your hands are full of blood,' ver. 15—or rather, as the Hebrew hath it, דמים מלאו, 'your hands are full of bloods.' The Hebrew word is taken from a ship under full sail: your hands are full of bloods, as the sails of a ship is full of wind. There is the father's blood and the children's blood, and there is the master's blood and the servant's blood, and there is the bond-man's blood and the free-man's blood, and the wife's blood and the widow's blood; your hands are full of blood. Therefore to what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices? God throws them as dung in their faces, because they neglected justice. You have a parallel text, Amos 5:21–24, 'I hate, I despise your feast-days, I will not smell in your solemn assemblies,' &c. What was the reason? 'Let judgment run down as water, and righteousness as a mighty stream.' Judgment did not run down, and therefore, saith God, 'I hate, I despise your fasting and prayer, and your feast-days.' Ah, Right Honourable, as you would not have your services thrown as dung in your faces, look that justice and judgment run down as a mighty stream.

3. Thirdly, Consider this, that your execution of justice and judgment will free you from the guilt of other men's sins, and the neglect of justice and judgment will wrap you up in the guilt of other men's sins. When those that are guilty shall be by you sinfully or wilfully acquitted, that shall be charged on your score. When justice is not executed, a land is defiled: Num. 35:33, 34, 'So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are; for blood defileth the land, and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it. Defile not, therefore, the land that ye shall inhabit, wherein I dwell; for I the Lord dwell among the children of Israel.' Oh! Right Honourable, have you not sins enough of your own to awaken you, to startle you, to trouble you, to amaze you, to afflict you, and to humble you? Have you not sins enough of your own to provoke God against you to strike you, to chide you, to wound you, and to lay you low; but

will you wrap yourselves up in the guilt of other men's sins? Will you wrap yourselves up in the treachery, and murder, and blood, and cruelty, and tyranny of others? The Lord forbid!

It was an ingenuous acknowledgment of an emperor, who, when one had committed murder, and he was importuned to spare his life, and he did it; suddenly after the same person committed wilful murder again; then there was complaint made to the emperor that he had committed murder twice,—No, saith the emperor, he is guilty of the former only; I am guilty of the latter.

Right Honourable, guilty persons that be by you sinfully acquitted, their sin God will charge upon your account. And therefore as you would not have the guilt of other men's sins upon you, hold on in the way of well-doing: let justice and judgment run down as mighty streams.

4. Fourthly, Right Honourable, consider this, those persons that have neglected the execution of justice upon their implacable enemies, when God has given them into their hands, those God hath left to perish basely and miserably. See it in Ahab, 1 Kings 21 compared with 22:23–37. God gives Benhadad into Ahab's hand, in ver. 40, 41, 'Because thou hast let a man go that I had appointed to destruction'—which was not signified to him by any extraordinary revelation, but by that ordinary dispensation,—'Therefore,' saith God, 'thy life shall go for his:' 22:31, 'Fight neither against small nor great, but against the king of Israel.' In which fight he lost his life at that time, and so perished miserably.

So concerning Saul in 1 Sam. 15:19, compared with the last of [first] Samuel 31:3, 4. Saul, he spares Agag, and he would shift off the command of the Lord; but for that God shifted him out of his kingdom. When he neglected to do justice upon an implacable enemy, when God had given him into his hands, God left him to perish and fall basely: ver. 26, 'Because thou hast rejected the word

of the Lord, the Lord hath rejected thee from being king.' The Hebrew word, *פָּקַד וְרָחַק*, signifies to reject, to disdain, to cast off. The Lord rejected Saul, and he rejected the Lord; Saul disdained the Lord, and the Lord disdained Saul; he cast off the Lord, and the Lord cast off him. Saul did not do justice, therefore he shall die basely, and perish miserably upon his own sword: as he did, in 1 Sam. 31:4.

5. Fifthly and lastly, Right Honourable, consider this, that your neglect of justice will exceedingly encourage wicked persons in ways of impiety, Eccles. 8:11; and discourage the godly of the nation from doing their duty. Your neglect of justice will encourage wicked persons in the ways of impiety, and hinder the saints from a cheerful and sweet discharge of their duty.

Right Honourable, if you would sit down and study which way you might most encourage the worst of men, and discourage the best, you could not fall upon such another way, as to neglect what God and the nation calls for at your hands. Right Honourable, it is cruelty to the good to spare the bad: it is cruelty to the sheep and lambs to spare the wolves and lions. You were better a thousand times to set some of those grand malefactors a-mourning, that have caused the kingdom to mourn so many years in garments rolled in blood, by the execution of justice, than by the neglect of justice to keep a kingdom still mourning in garments of blood. I shall say no more as to that particular.

But now I shall endeavour to apply the point more generally, both to your Honours and all that hears me at this time, knowing that it is a useful point for us all, especially in these times and seasons wherein God doth exercise us with afflictions and discouragements, while we are in his own ways. The exhortation that I shall press upon you all is, that you will hold on in the ways of well-doing, notwithstanding all the afflictions, troubles, and discouragements that may befall you.

Now that you may, I shall endeavour to do these two things:—

First, To lay down some motives to encourage you.

Secondly, To premise some directions to further you.

1. For the first, by way of motive to move you to hold on against all discouragements that possibly may befall you, consider, Right Honourable, these few things, and all you that hear me this day:—

(1.) First of all, Consider this, that all the afflictions and troubles that you meet withal shall never hurt nor harm you, but be very advantageous to you. All the arrows that wicked men shoot at your heads shall stick fast in their own hearts: 1 Peter 3:13, 'And who shall harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?' Interrogations are strong affirmations. It is a strong affirmation, 'none shall harm you:' devils nor men, let them roar and rage, none shall harm you. For as one speaks truly, *Nemo proprie læditur, nisi a seipso*, No man is properly hurt but by himself and his own fault. All the afflictions and troubles that you shall meet with in the ways of well-doing, they shall be advantageous to you; they shall be a means by which God will convey more of his grace and mercy, more of himself and his glory into your souls: Hosea 2:14, 'I will allure her into the wilderness, and then I will speak friendly to her'—or as the Hebrew has it, *ודברתי על-לבה*, *uedibbarti gnal-libbah*, I will earnestly speak to her heart. God will make all afflictions, even a wilderness, to be an inlet to more of his own self. All the discouragements that you meet with in the ways of well-doing shall but rub off your dross, and empty out that filth that is in you, and so make more room for more of himself and of his glory to be communicated to you. In Heb. 12:10, 'But he afflicts us for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness.' They were before partakers of his holiness. Oh, but God will make afflictions conduit-pipes, through which he will convey more of

himself and of his holiness to his children's souls. That is the first thing. All the afflictions that befall you shall not harm you, but be very advantageous to you. Who would not then hold on in the ways of well-doing, notwithstanding any trouble or affliction that may befall them?

2. Secondly, Right Honourable and beloved, let all gracious and upright hearts consider this, that Jesus Christ hath held on in a way of mercy and sweetness towards you, notwithstanding all the discouragements and all the lets that have been in his way; and will not you hold on in ways of duty to Christ, who hath held on, notwithstanding all discouragements, in a way of mercy towards you? Oh consider, consider what difficulties the Lord Jesus Christ hath gone over to come to your souls. In Cant. 2:8, it is said there, 'It is my beloved that comes leaping over the mountains and skipping over the hills.' Oh, the Lord Jesus Christ is come over mountains of wrath, and mountains of sin, and mountains of sorrow, and all that he might come to your souls. In Isa. 63:3, 'I have trod the wine-press alone; and of the people there was none with me'—or as the Hebrew has it, *Umegnamium en ish itti, ומעמים אין איש אתי*, 'and of the nations, or of the peoples, there was not a man with me.' He trod the wine-press of the wrath of his Father alone. And so in Isa. 1:5, 6, 'The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned my back. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheek to them that pluck off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.' Oh, the Lord, in a way of mercy towards you, hath come over all difficulties. Jesus Christ never pleaded, Oh this mountain of wrath, of sin, and sorrow is too high for me to go over: and these valleys of darkness are too long and too terrible for me to walk through. Oh no! but the Lord came skipping over all mountains, and all for the good of your souls. And will not you, upright hearts, hold on in ways of duty to him that hath thus carried himself in ways of mercy to you? And as he hath, so he doth still hold on in ways of mercy to you, notwithstanding all your provocations and unworthy walking of former mercies. Yet still he holds on in ways of mercy and

kindness to you. Witness all those mercies that now you enjoy, the clothes that thou wearest, and the bread that thou eatest, and the house that thou lodgest in, and the bed that thou liest on, when thousands lie down in everlasting sorrow. He hath held on in ways of mercy, and he doth. Oh, this should bespeak you to hold on in his ways, notwithstanding any difficulties that you may meet withal.

3. But then, in the third place, Let all upright hearts seriously consider this, that wicked and ungodly men do hold on in ways of impiety, notwithstanding all the discouragements that they meet with from God; and will not you that are upright, hold on in ways of piety, notwithstanding all the discouragements and afflictions that you may meet with from men? Wicked and ungodly men, they hold on in ways of wickedness, notwithstanding all the afflictions, and troubles, and discouragements that God exerciseth them with. God lasheth their consciences, and passes the sentence of death upon all their comforts. Afflictions comes upon them as Job's messengers, one upon the neck of another; and yet they remain proud still, and formal still, and treacherous still, and apostates still, and profane still. O upright hearts, will not you hold on in the ways of piety, notwithstanding the discouragements that you meet with from men? Shall wicked men hold on in the ways of wickedness, notwithstanding all discouragements, though God chide them and set his angel in the way to draw a sword upon them, and crushes their bones against the wall, as he dealt with Balaam, Num. 22:25; shall wicked men, Balaam-like, ride on though the angel of the Lord draw his sword; and will not you, when men draw their swords, hold on in the ways of well-doing?

4. Fourthly, Consider solemnly of that agreement that you made with Jesus Christ, when you first took Jesus Christ upon the day of your marriage with Christ. Oh, there is enough in that to engage you to hold on against all the discouragements you shall meet with! Oh remember, upright souls, in the day of your marriage with Jesus Christ, you indented with the

Lord Jesus Christ to keep close to him, to hold on in his ways. Then you did say in effect to Christ what Ruth said to Naomi, Ruth 1:14–16, 'Where thou goest, I will go; where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy God shall be my God; and nothing but death shall part between thee and me.' When you first gave your names to Jesus Christ, in that day your souls were really married to Christ, then you indented with the Lord Jesus Christ, and in effect said thus, 'O blessed Lord! I will follow thee wheresoever thou goest; where thou goest I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge; and thy God shall be my God; and nothing shall part between thee and my soul, between thy ways and my heart;' therefore let that bespeak you to hold on in ways of well-doing, notwithstanding all afflictions and discouragements you meet withal.

5. And then again, in the next place, Let upright hearts consider this, that God knows how to deliver from troubles by troubles; he knows how to deliver from afflictions by afflictions; and God will by lesser afflictions that befall his people deliver them from greater afflictions; and by those troubles that befall them, he will deliver them from greater troubles. That saying shall be found true, *Periissem nisi periissem*, I had perished, if I had not perished; I had been undone, if I had not been undone; I had been ruined, if I had not been ruined; I had been broken in pieces, if I had not been broken in pieces. I remember a saying of a philosopher, [*Anaxagoras*,] who seeing great possessions which he had lost, speaks thus, *Non essem ego salvus nisi istœ periissent*, Had not those things perished, saith he, I could not have been safe. God will so order all the afflictions and troubles that befall you in the ways of the Lord, that your soul shall say, Oh, had I not met with this affliction, I had been afflicted with a witness indeed; had I not been undone, I had been undone; had not these troubles and sorrows and discouragements befallen me, it had been worse with me. God will deliver his people, mark it, from spiritual afflictions and spiritual judgments, by the temporal afflictions and troubles that befall them. By those afflictions that you meet with in the ways of well-doing, God will deliver you from that security, pride,

formality, dead-heartedness, lukewarmness, and censoriousness that otherwise might fall upon you.

I remember a story of a godly man, that as he was going to take shipping for France, he broke his leg; and it pleased providence so to order it, that the ship that he should have gone in at that very time was cast away, and not a man saved; so by breaking a bone his life was saved. Thus is the dealing of the Lord with his; sometimes he exerciseth them with afflictions—it may be he breaks their bones; ay, but it is in order to the saving of their lives.

6. And then again consider, that all the afflictions, troubles, and discouragements that befall you shall never rob you of your treasure, of your jewels. They may rob you of some slight, light things; as the sword that is by your side, the stick that is in your hand, and the flower that is in your hats; but they cannot rob you, they cannot strip you of your choice jewels and treasures. The jewels and treasures of an upright heart is the spiritual presence of God, union with Christ, communion with Christ, joy that is unspeakable and glorious, peace that passeth understanding, spiritual comfort, the least drop of which is more worth than a world. Now all the afflictions and troubles that befalls you can never rob you of your jewels; your treasure is safe. They may rob you of your sword, of your stick, of your flower; but your jewel is safe. Some slight, poor, outward comforts they may rob you of. Oh, but your jewels is safe, your treasure is still safe. What an encouragement it is to a poor traveller to hold on his way, notwithstanding there be thieves and enemies, when he remembereth that all the thieves and enemies that he meets with cannot rob him of his treasures, of his jewels, that is about him! they may take away his sword, or his stick, or his hat; but his jewel is safe. O upright hearts! your jewel is safe, your treasure is safe, and all the powers of darkness can never rob you of your God, of your Christ, of your comfort, of your inward peace; therefore hold on against all discouragements and afflictions that you shall meet with.

7. Then again, in the next place, consider that your holding on in the ways of well-doing, notwithstanding all discouragements and afflictions that may befall you, is very acceptable to God; and [it] tends much to the glory and honour of God, for his people to hold on in the ways of well-doing against all discouragements that may befall them. The church of Pergamos did, and the Lord was taken with it: Rev. 2:13, 'I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou hast held fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among them where Satan dwelleth.'

The Lord here was much affected and taken with the constancy of the church, that it held on in his worship and ways, notwithstanding the discouragements and troubles that she met with. It is very honourable to God. Oh! it is an honour to the power of God, to the wisdom of God, to the goodness of God, by holding on in his ways against all oppositions; you declare to the world that there is no God like your God, and no ways like his ways; nor no encouragements like those that he gives; therefore hold on in the ways of well-doing against all discouragements.

8. But in the eighth and last place, do but consider the dangerous nature of apostasy; and if there were no other argument to move men to hold on in the ways of God, in the ways of well-doing, against all discouragements and troubles that may befall them, yet this alone may carry their hearts bravely on against all troubles and afflictions. Consider the dangerous nature of apostasy. If you would judge of the dangerous nature of apostasy aright, you may do it by these few things:—

[1.] First, Consider what you fall from by apostatising from God, from his truth, and from his ways. Oh! consider that of all falls, the falls of such apostates are the most dangerous falls. Thou that playest the apostate, and turnest from the ways of God, and from the ways of well-doing, thou fallest from God, who is the

greatest good; thou fallest from his ways, that are the crown and the glory of the soul; and from his truth, the least tittle of which is more worth than heaven and earth. Alas! what are the falls of others to your falls! Alexander the Third, he fell from a pope to be a gardener in Venice; and Valerian fell from a golden chair to an iron cage; and Dionysius fell from a king to be a schoolmaster; and Nebuchadnezzar fell from a mighty prince to be a beast; but what are these falls to thy falls, O apostate! who fallest from heaven to hell—from the greatest good to the greatest evil!

We live in an apostatising age; men wheel and turn about as second causes work, and are not steadfast with their God. These are days wherein grapes are turned into thorns, and figs into thistles; wherein men that were persecuted by others, turn persecutors of others; and men that were smitten by others, now by their pens and tongues bitterly smite others, even their fellow-brethren. These are days wherein lambs are turned into lions, and doves are turned into serpents; and men that have acted like angels for God and his people, are turned to act like devils in respect of their rage and malice against God and his children, and against those ways wherein his people do walk. They are like the taxus of India, which the first year bears fruit, the second year leaves, and the third year poison. Thus it is with apostates of our time. For a time they bear fruit, a little after leaves, and now at last poison, the worst of all. Oh, consider the danger of apostasy! By apostasy you fall from the greatest good, and from the present hope of mercy, and from the future hope of glory; for there is no sin that doth so strip a man of the present hope of mercy, and the future hope of glory, as the sin of apostasy: witness Spira, Judas, &c.

[2.] Then again, in the second place, judge of the dangerous nature of apostasy by the judgments of God that have fallen upon apostates, as upon Julian, Judas, Spira, &c. I remember Mr Foxe makes mention of a smith in King Edward the Sixth's days, who was instrumental to convert a young man; the young man being clapped in prison for the gospel's sake, sent for the

smith, and asked him whether he would encourage him to stand for the truth, and to burn for religion; he answered, his cause was good, and he should do well to suffer for his religion; but for his part he could not bring his heart over to burn for religion. But a little time after his shop was set on fire, and he was burned in the midst of it. Oh! it would take up more time than is now allotted to me to set out the judgments of God that have befallen apostates that have been treacherous and base to God, to his ways, to his saints, and to the trust reposed in them.

[3.] Again, you may judge of the danger of apostasy by its near bordering upon the sin against the Holy Ghost, and by the exceeding difficulty of a man's recovering his ground, when he hath once played the apostate, and turned his back upon God and his ways. Of all sins, the sin of apostasy comes nearest the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost. That soul that hath turned his back upon God and his truth, and the ways of well-doing, because of discouragements, is now upon the borders of that sin, that if God leave him but a little, he may fall into, and then he shall never rise again; which speaks out the dangerous nature of it.

[4.] And to shut up all, judge of the dangerous nature and evil of apostasy by this, that it renders all a man's former righteousness, doings, and sufferings invalid and lost: Ezek. 18:24, 'If a man forsake his righteousness, shall he live?' 'No,' saith God, 'he shall die'—ay, die with a witness: 'in his iniquity which he hath committed he shall die, and his righteousness shall be mentioned no more.' There shall be no more talk—This was a gallant man for God, and this man stood bravely up for his people and his ways, and for the liberty of the nation, suitable to the trust reposed in him. There shall be no mention of this if a man play the apostate. There shall be no pleading—This was once a worthy man, and stood gloriously to it. But now he is turned an apostate: he is turned away from God and his ways. All his righteousness, all his former actings and doings and sufferings shall be lost, and they

shall never go to the grave with him, nor follow him to the judgment-seat of Christ: his apostasy shall follow him indeed, but for his former works of piety, they are all lost. As a soldier when he forsakes his colours and runs to the enemy, all his former good service is lost and buried in oblivion; so men that profess love to God and his people, and at last meet with difficulties and play the apostate, this their apostasy renders all their former service lost.

Thus much by way of motive to move you, Right Honourable, and all you that hear me this day, to hold on in the ways of well-doing, notwithstanding all the afflictions and discouragements that you may meet with in the ways of well-doing.

I shall now lay down a few directions. I shall be brief in them, and so draw towards a close.

1. First, Right Honourable, if you would hold on in the ways of well-doing, notwithstanding all discouragements and afflictions, in which you must expect to have your share as well as others, and haply the greatest, therefore it stands you the more upon to consider of those things that may be of use to bear up your spirits bravely, to carry you through all the trials and troubles you may meet with. To that purpose,

(1.) There are some things that you must carefully decline.

(2.) There are other things that you must carefully practise.

If you will hold on in the ways of well-doing against all oppositions, and notwithstanding all the afflictions and troubles that you may meet with, then,

[1.] First, Take heed of unbelief. There is nothing in the world that doth more damp the heart, that ties the tongue, that binds the hands, that puts fetters on the feet, that puts out the eyes, than unbelief. Unbelief, it blinds the eyes, it ties a man's hands, and causeth a sad and fearful damp to fall upon his heart. It renders the

man utterly unfit to walk in the ways of God, especially when there is a lion in the way, and when the storm begins to rise: Heb. 3:13, 'Take heed lest there be found in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, to depart from the living God.' Unbelief will carry a man to apostasy. It hath been the great reason of many men's apostasy and backsliding from God and his ways, and that trust the nation hath put in them, that they could not hang on God and trust in God by faith; but unbelief was prevalent, and hath carried them from God and all just ways. Therefore take heed of unbelief.

[2.] Secondly, If you would hold on in the ways of well-doing, notwithstanding all the discouragements you may meet with, take heed of an inordinate love to the things of this life. This made Judas play and Demas play the apostate, and Spira play the apostate. 'Demas hath forsaken us' to embrace this present world. He looked upon the world in its pomp, beauty, and glory; and his heart falls off from God and his ways. I remember it is storied of Henry the Fourth of France asking the Duke of Alva whether he had seen the eclipses; he answered, he had so much business to do on earth, that he had no time to look up to heaven. A man whose heart is engaged to the love of the world, will find so much to do in the world, that, with that wicked duke, he will have no time to look up to heaven for strength, to walk in heavenly and holy ways against opposition. It was a good saying of Augustine, *Certe non amant illi Christum qui aliquid plusquam Christum amant*, Surely they do not love Christ who love anything more than Christ. If your hearts are pitched more upon the world, and are engaged more to it than to Christ, you will never be able to hold on in the ways of well-doing.

[3.] Thirdly, If you would hold on in the ways of well-doing, take heed of consulting with flesh and blood: take heed of listening and hearkening to carnal reason and carnal counsel; that is that that hath turned many a man out of the ways of God. When Paul was brought in to Christ—Gal. 1:14–16, 'When it pleased God, that separated me from my mother's womb, to call me by his grace,' as to send me to preach the gospel among the heathen, 'immediately

I consulted not with flesh and blood.' If he had consulted with flesh and blood, he might have made several objections to have kept him off; 'but I consulted not with flesh and blood:' flesh would have told him that the work was too high, too hard, too dangerous for him. 'Oh but,' saith he, 'I consulted not with flesh and blood.'

[4.] Lastly, If you would hold on, notwithstanding all discouragements that may befall you, then take heed of judging of the ways of God, and of the ways of well-doing, by the opinion that wicked men have of them. Alas! wicked men are blind, and see not the beauty and loveliness that is in the ways of God. Wicked men are malicious against the ways of God, and ill-will will never suffer them to speak well of them.

But again, If you would walk in the ways of well-doing against all discouragements, then as you must labour carefully to decline all those things, so you must labour to put in practice these things:—

[1.] Frequently and solemnly cast up what you have gained by walking in the ways of God. Frequently and solemnly cast up your accounts, and see what you have gained by walking in the ways of God. Look over that power against corruptions, that strength to withstand temptations, that power to rejoice in afflictions, that you have gained in the ways of God. Look often over that 'peace that passeth understanding,' and that heavenly joy and those blessed consolations that you have gained in the ways of God and in the ways of well-doing. When the mariner and the shopkeeper cast their eye upon their former gains, it encourageth and enableth their spirits to hold on against all the discouragements and troubles they may meet with in their way; and so it will do with you.

[2.] In the second place, Look that you act and walk in the ways of God, and in the ways of well-doing, from internal and spiritual principles. Oh, I beseech you, Right Honourable, and all that hear me this day, as you would hold on in the ways of well-doing, look to your principles, that you move from spiritual and

internal principles, from the power of the Spirit and the breathings of the Spirit, from love to God and a holy fear of God; and this will carry you bravely on against all discouragements you shall meet with. If you act from carnal and fleshly principles, and for carnal ends, as for honour or favour or profit, &c., you will never be constant in the ways of God; but when these ends cannot be answered, you will turn apostates, and turn back from God. Therefore, as you would hold on, look to your principles that they may be sound.

[3.] Then, in the third place, If you would hold on in the ways of well-doing and in the ways of God, notwithstanding all the afflictions and troubles that may befall you, labour to exercise faith. Faith is a singular means to enable us to walk in the ways of God against all the discouragements that may befall us. I shall open it in those two things, that are worthy of your consideration. Faith will carry the soul through all discouragements and difficulties that the soul can meet with in the ways of God. Thus:—

First, By being conversant about soul-greatening objects. Mark, this is one way by which faith enables the soul to hold on against all discouragements, by raising the soul to converse with soul-greatening objects, as God and Christ, and those treasures, pleasures, and sweetnesses that are in the Lord Jesus Christ. So in 2 Cor. 4 the last three verses, 'Our outward man decays, but our inward man is renewed day by day.' How comes this? 'While we look not at things that are seen, but at things which are not seen.' 'While faith is conversant about things which are not seen:' the word [σκοπούντων] signifies to look as a man looks at a mark. While we keep a fixed eye upon future glory—while our faith is conversant upon that crown that fades not, upon those robes that wither not, upon that kingdom that shakes not, 'the inward man is renewed day by day,' and heavy afflictions are made light, and long afflictions are made short. Thus faith enables the soul, and carries it bravely on against all discouragements, by conversing with soul-greatening

objects. There is nothing so enables the soul, and so divinely greatens the soul and makes it too large, too wide, and too big for troubles and afflictions to bring under, than faith's conversing with those high and glorious objects.

Second, Then faith doth this, in the second place, by appropriating all to itself that it lays hands upon. Faith looks on God, and saith with the psalmist, 'This God is my God for ever and ever; and he shall be my guide unto death.' Faith looks on Christ, and saith with Thomas, 'My Lord and my God.' Faith looks on the promises, and saith, 'These precious promises are mine.' It casts an eye upon the crown of righteousness, and saith with Paul, 'Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.' It looks upon all treasures, pleasures, and sweetness that is in Christ, and that are by Christ prepared for the soul, and saith faith, 'Those treasures are mine, those pleasures are mine, and all that sweetness that is in him is mine.' Thus faith carries on the soul against all discouragements that the soul can meet with.

Third, Then again, in the next place, If you would hold on in the ways of well-doing, labour to increase and abound in love. Oh let your love to God and love to his ways be augmented and increased! Oh look that love do its part, and then the soul will hold on! Cant. 8:6, 7, 'Love is stronger than death: many waters cannot quench it, nor the floods drown it.' If a man would give all the substance of his house for love it would be contemned. *בוז יבוז*, boz jabuzu, contemning it would be contemned, loathing it would be loathed, as the original hath it.

Now I shall shew you how love will enable the soul to hold out in the ways of God, and in the ways of well-doing, against all discouragements: and that it will do thus,

[1.] First, By egging all other graces on to act and operate. Love is a very active grace. It is the great wheel in the soul that sets all other graces on work. Love is like to the virtuous woman, Prov.

9:3, that sets all her maidens at work. Where love is strong in the soul, there no grace shall be idle in the soul. There love will call upon faith, Faith, do you lay hold on that God and on that crown that is set before you; and, Patience, do you wait on God, &c. It calls on all, and sets all on work. And now the more grace is acted, the more its strength is increased; and the more its strength is increased, the more the soul is enabled to walk in the ways of God, against all discouragements that doth or can befall the soul. And,

[2.] Secondly, Love will enable you to hold on in the ways of God against all discouragements, by rendering all the ways of God sweet and pleasant to the soul. Love renders those ways sweet, that men that have no love to Christ look on as bitter ways. Every way is sweet and pleasant, saith love: his yoke is easy and his way is pleasant. As it is in Prov. 3:17, 'Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace:' in the abstract Love saith, This way is a precious way, and the other way of God, oh! it is a heavenly way: I find much sweetness in it, saith Love; and thus it encourageth the soul to hold on in the ways of well-doing. For the more sweet and lovely the ways of God are presented to the soul, the more the soul is raised and encouraged to hold on in those ways of God, notwithstanding any affliction and trouble that the soul meets withal. I remember I have read a story of a Dutch schoolmaster, who, when he was asked whether he loved not his wife and children, thus answered: Were all the world a lump of gold, and in my hand to dispose of, I would lay it down at my enemy's feet, that with freedom and liberty I might live and walk in the ways of God, they are so lovely to my soul.

[3.] And then, thirdly, Love, it will enable the soul to hold on in the ways of well-doing against all discouragements, by making a blessed interpretation and a heavenly construction of the afflictions, sorrows, and discouragements that an upright heart can meet with in the ways of God. All the afflictions and discouragements that upright hearts meets with, love will thus interpret and expound: Oh! saith

the upright heart, all those afflictions are but means that God will use to rub off my dross and filth, to convey more of himself: they are all my friends, and shall work for my good, saith Love. All those cursings God will turn to blessings, saith Love. All these afflictions that befall me are but out of some noble design that God hath to reveal more of himself and of his glory to me. It is but that he may empty me more of myself and of the creature, that so he may communicate more of his own sweetness and fulness to my soul, saith Love. I know, though for the present it be bitter, yet, saith Love, it will be sweet in the end; I know the way to the crown by the cross, saith Love, and I know all those afflictions shall lead me to more heavenly enjoyments of God. This construction David made concerning Shimei's cursing of him, 2 Sam. 16:12: when Shimei cursed him, David expounds it sweetly: ver. 12: 'The Lord,' saith he, 'will look on mine affliction, and requite good for his cursing this day.' This interpretation carries David along on his way, notwithstanding Shimei's cursing of him. Oh! the Lord will turn the curse into a blessing, saith Love; and this carries him on bravely. So in that standing Shimei's 'Love thinketh no evil.' It will make a sweet interpretation a blessing, the afflictions that befalls the soul; and the more sweet and 1 Cor. 13:5, interpretation Love makes of afflictions that befall the soul on of all ways of God, the more the soul is raised and encouraged. Wevenly saith the soul, if it be so, I will go on though the lions roar, &c. That is another means; if you will hold on in the ways of well-do ell! then look that Love do its part: let Love be operative and working &c. your souls.

[4.] Lastly, I have but one thing more that I will press as to thins, and so draw towards a close, and that is this, Look frequently and solemnly upon that 'cloud of witnesses' that have gone before you. It is the apostle's own argument, Heb. 12:1, 2,—he brings down all those instances in the 11th chapter, and sets them before their eyes, and encourageth them from that very consideration—"To run the all race that was set before them with patience, looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who, for the joy that was set be fix he him, endured the cross, and

despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God.' Oh, look upon those glorious worthies go fore held on in the ways of well-doing. Look upon Nehemiah, that held on bravely, and David, who though princes scorned him and persecuted him, yet he held on in the ways of well-doing. So Paul and Jeremiah, &c., notwithstanding all their tossings, afflictions, are is sufferings, yet held on in the ways of well-doing. Oh, why shoul and you degenerate basely from those examples that are your crown and glory to follow? So much by way of direction, as to enable you to hold on in the ways of well-doing against all discouragements that may befall you.

Now, Right Honourable, give me only leave to premise a few things to your considerations, desiring that those considerations may be your daily meditations; and so I shall close at this time.

[1.] The first thing I desire to present to your Honourable considerations is this, The doing of great things is most worthy of great men. Great men should do great things, and account themselves little. Oh, Right Honourable, that by your means 'the angel with the everlasting gospel in his hand might fly through our heavens,' Rev. 14:6; especially that he might fly through those dark corners of the kingdom where you will have thousands that sit in darkness, and in the region and shadow of death, that scarce know whether there be a Holy Ghost or no! O Right Honourable, God is now about a glorious design to exalt his Son, and the children unborn shall rise and call you blessed if you will be instrumental to further this design; and it were better that you had never been born, than that you should be instrumental to hinder those poor souls from enjoying the means of grace, that cry out, 'Bread, bread for our souls,' that say, 'Look upon us, and see if there be any sorrow like our souls' sorrow; if any darkness be like that darkness that is upon us; if any grievance be like that that is in us.' O Right Honourable, the doing of great things is most worthy of great men. The Lord stir up your hearts that you may further that glorious work; and the Lord direct you that you may pitch on some

way or other whereby those that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, may be enlightened, and Christ revealed, and his kingdom exalted in this kingdom! Oh, if you do not labour to keep by the word that you have war by the sword, how long will it be before the sword be sheathed!

[2.] A second consideration that I premise for your honours' meditation is this, That the saints are very dear and precious to the Lord Jesus Christ, and they that shelter them he will shelter. They are his jewels, Mal. 3:17. The word there rendered jewels, *הגלגל*, *segulla*, signifies such particular treasures that he loves and lays up for himself, and for special use. They are 'the apple of his eye,' Zech. 2:8; their service is precious to him, Prov. 15:8; their voice is precious, Cant. 2:14, 'Let me hear thy voice, for thy voice is sweet, and thy countenance is lovely;' their tears are precious, Ps. 56:8, 'He puts them in his bottle;' and their names are precious, for he 'writes them in his book,' Luke 10:20; their very thoughts are precious, Mal. 3:16; and their blood is precious, Ps. 116:15, 'Right dear and precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints,' and they that shelter them God will shelter. Ebed-melech sheltered Jeremiah in the day of the king's wrath, and God sheltered him in the day of God's wrath; Rahab sheltered the spies, and the Lord sheltered Rahab; Obadiah sheltered the prophets, and the Lord sheltered him. Right Honourable, God hath made you in some blessed measure instrumental to shelter his people; and certainly that hath been one great reason that God hath sheltered you, notwithstanding all the designs, plots, and treacheries of men to destroy you. You have sheltered the saints, and God hath sheltered you. They are always precious to him, and they should be always precious to you.

[3.] A third consideration for every day's meditation is, That it is very destructive and dangerous for the powers of this world to engage against the saints of God. Right Honourable, I abhor pleading for any particular interests; I plead for all saints which Jesus Christ hath stamped his image upon, that he

hath taken into union and communion with himself; I plead for them all; for your Honours, and thousands more do know, that those men that go under different names, yet for abilities and holiness they are as precious as any that breathes: for those I plead. And I say it hath been an old design of the devil to dash the powers of this world in pieces, by engaging them against the saints and servants of Christ. Little did Pharaoh know that the devil was in that design when he pursued Israel, 'I will rise and pursue and overtake, my lust shall be satisfied;' but this was Pharaoh's destruction. His engaging against Israel was his overthrow. Haman engaged against the Jews, but this engagement against them was Haman's destruction, as you know.

Those princes (Dan. 6) that engaged against Daniel, and found nothing against him but in the matter of his God, you know their very engagement against him was their destruction. It is dangerous and destructive to the powers of this world for them to engage against the saints of God. I will only point at two or three scriptures: Isa. 8:8–10, 'Associate yourselves together, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces.' Rognu, רגו, from roang, it signifies 'to be broken in pieces, as an army is shattered and broken in pieces with fear.'

The word 'broken' in your English Books is twice more repeated, 'You shall be broken in pieces, you shall be broken in pieces;' but in the Hebrew it is three times more repeated, Vahottu, vahottu, vahottu, 'Ye shall be thrown down, ye shall be thrown down, ye shall be thrown down;' or 'Ye shall be confounded, ye shall be confounded, ye shall be confounded,'—Why? 'For God is with us,' ver. 10. So in Zech. 12:2, 3, 'Jerusalem shall be a cup of trembling;' or 'a cup of poison to all the nations round about; and though all the people of the earth should gather together against her, they shall be dashed in pieces:' Isa. 54:17, 'No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that riseth in judgment against thee shalt thou condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord; and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord.'

[4.] Again, Right Honourable, a fourth consideration for your daily meditation is this, That the power of godliness infinitely transcends and excels all forms of godliness. Alas! what is the shadow to the substance? what is the shell to the kernel? what is the box to the jewel that is in it? No more are forms of godliness to the power of godliness. What is darkness to light? what are counters to gold? what is earth to heaven? No more are forms of godliness to the power of godliness; which doth bespeak you to cherish, nourish, and countenance the power of godliness, and not so to advance forms of godliness as to throw down the power and the glory of holiness.

Right Honourable, it is the power of godliness that is the honour of a nation, it is the power of godliness that is the beauty of a nation, it is the power of godliness that is the safety of a nation. Right Honourable, as you would have joy in life, and peace in death, and boldness before Christ's judgment-seat, oh look to this, that you advance the power of godliness, that you countenance the power of godliness, that you cherish and nourish the power of godliness. Take heed, Right Honourable, of stamping *jus divinum* on anything that Christ hath not in capital letters stamped *jus divinum* upon. Oh take heed of giving a two-edged sword into the hands of any that are hot for forms of godliness, and that love to lord it over the faith and consciences of the saints, lest they, like the giant, cut off all that are higher than themselves in spiritual enjoyments of God, and stretch out all that are shorter than themselves in forms of godliness. I am apt to think that if such men were more careful and skilful in using the sword of the Spirit, they would not be so hot for a temporal sword, neither would they be so angry for the want of it, as they are. A spiritual sword is most suitable to spiritual men, and most suitable to all that spiritual work that God requires of them.

Right Honourable, God is most exalted, Christ is most honoured, the Spirit is most rejoiced, the mouths of the wicked are most stopped, and the saints are most gladdened by the power of godliness, by countenancing, advancing, and cherishing of that. Therefore, as

you would have the Lord exalted and lifted up, and made famous and glorious, oh let the power of godliness be countenanced and cherished throughout the kingdom!

The way of instructing the people of the nation, I leave it with you whom it most concerns, desiring the Lord to direct you into such ways as may be most for the honour of his name, and for the happiness and comfort of the land we live in. That is another consideration.

[5.] One thing more, beloved, and so I shall draw to a close. In the next place, consider this, God hath, and God will save his people and ruin their enemies, by very weak, unlikely, and contemptible means, and by very hidden and mysterious ways. He hath done it: witness his leading of Israel by the hand through the Red Sea, and overthrowing their enemies in a mysterious way. Witness his destroying of that mighty army of the Midianites—which were as grasshoppers, and for multitude without number—by Gideon's three hundred that lapped water like a dog. The story you have in Judges 6 and 7, compared. Witness his delivering his people and ruining their grand enemy, Haman, by Esther's attempting that which was directly against the law of the land, Esth. 4:10, 16. Haman had plotted the ruin of the Jews; all was agreed on; the writings were signed; there was but a step between death and the Jews. Esther adventures and throws herself upon God's providence, and comes to the court, directly cross to the law of the land, to the letter of the law; and by this untrodden way, which one would have thought might have enraged the king to have cut her and her people off, yet, by this untrodden way, God delivered his poor people. And whether he hath not done the same for his people who were sold to slavery, by poor, despised instruments, in our own land, I leave your Honours to judge. I will give you but only two or three texts: Isa. 41:14–16, 'Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel.' 'Fear not, thou worm Jacob.' The original, *tolagnath*, signifies a little worm that springs out of a grave or kernel. 'And ye men of Israel:' *methe*, 'ye dead men of Israel.' What follows?

'Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff. Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them: and thou shalt rejoice in the Lord, and shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel.'

Mountains are high, you know, and mountains are mighty, and mountains are strong; and so are the powers of the world; and yet little worms and dead men shall thresh these mountains, they shall overthrow and bring under even the powers that are high and strong and mighty against Jesus Christ and his ways, as we see this day. He will save his people, and destroy his enemies, though they be mighty and powerful, and in very untrodden and mysterious ways, by little worms, by dead men. So likewise Dan. 2:33, 34, compared with vers. 44, 45, 'Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet, which were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.' Compare those verses with the 44th and 45th verses, 'And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and that kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.' All the kingdoms that are against the kingdom of Christ shall be broken in pieces by this little kingdom. And so likewise in Micah 4, the three last verses, 'Now also many nations are gathered against thee, that say, Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion. But they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they his counsel: for he shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor. Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion; for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass; and thou shalt beat in pieces many people'—or rather, as the Hebrew hath it, 'thou shalt stamp to powder

multitudes of peoples or nations,'—'and I will consecrate their gain unto the Lord, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth.' Many nations are gathered together against thee, that say, Let her be defiled, let her be polluted and profaned, and let our eyes look upon Zion. Oh, but they know not the thoughts of the Lord, what a design God is about, and what a project he hath in hand to advance his name, and to deliver his people and ruin their enemies, and that by the most unlikely and contemptible means that can be!

Therefore, let not men wonder at such and such strange providences as sometimes fall out, but rather consider that God hath, and he will save his people, and ruin their enemies, by very dark and mysterious ways, and by contemptible and unlikely means; and this he will do that no flesh may boast, and that his people may live a life of faith, and that their enemies may be the more dreadfully ashamed and confounded; and mainly that his own name may be alone exalted and magnified.

[6.] Lastly, Right Honourable, it is the earnest desires of the people of God generally, that your hands may further be strengthened, and that your souls may be lifted up in the ways of the Lord, that justice and righteousness may run down now at the last among us as mighty streams. Now, as to this, give me only leave to premise these two cautions, and so I shall have done:—

First, Right Honourable, do justice, but do it with much pity and mercy. Oh! weep over those wounds that the sword of justice makes; mourn over those bones that the sword of justice breaks; lament over those members that the sword of justice cuts off. Look, as justice and mercy meet in God, and kiss in God, and act harmoniously in God; so let justice and mercy meet, and kiss, and act harmoniously in you.

Secondly, Right Honourable, look to this, that you do justice from principles of uprightness, and from the love of justice and

righteousness. Otherwise, remember this, that God may revenge that blood that may be shed upon you, if you do not justice out of a love of righteousness, and from principles of uprightness. It is very considerable in Hosea 1:4, 5, 'And the Lord said unto him, Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little while and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel.' Right Honourable, consider this, that which Jehu did, God himself bears witness to it: 2 Kings 10:30, 'And the Lord said unto Jehu, Because thou hast done well in executing that which is right in mine eyes, and hast done to the house of Ahab according to all that was in my heart, thy children to the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel.' Observe, Right Honourable, Jehu, for the matter of justice, did that which was right in the sight of the Lord. God here approves of it; but Jehu did not do justice from a love of justice, and a principle of uprightness. The matter was good, but his principles were bad. Therefore God tells him that he will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu. The Lord make your Honours wise to consider of these things!

What I have here delivered, Right Honourable, hath been in the discharge of my conscience, that I may give up my account at last with joy, and not with grief; and so I shall conclude with that saying of Augustine, 'Not every one that spareth us is a friend, nor every one that striketh us is an enemy.'

MONERGISM BOOKS

God's Delight in the Progress of the Upright by Thomas Brooks,
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ePub, .mobi & .pdf Editions April 2020, Requests for information should be addressed to: Monergism Books, PO Box 491, West Linn, OR 97068